

GED: Beyond the Basics Lesson Plans



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GED: Beyond the Basics Lesson Plans

“We should be educating all students according to a common academic expectation; one that prepares them for both postsecondary education and the workforce.” (ACT, 2006) ¹

Lesson Plans for the GED: Beyond the Basics Classroom

Both research and data from national databases such as O*NET and Career InfoNet support the need for adults to have higher-level skills in writing, reading, and mathematics, as well as decision-making, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills, if they are to be successful in today’s workplace.

The benefit of **GED: Beyond the Basics** is to not only provide students with the skills needed to obtain a GED diploma, but also to assist them in attaining the academic and problem-solving skills viewed as necessary by employers. Through the use of authentic materials and problem-focused learning, GED programs can better prepare students for the real world. The integration of workplace academic skills is necessary for all students, not just those who wish to enter the workplace immediately following the obtaining of the GED diploma. By possessing higher-order skills in workplace writing, contextual mathematics, and reading workplace materials, as well as critical thinking and problem solving, students can not only improve those skills necessary for the workforce, but also for postsecondary education.

The **GED: Beyond the Basics** curricula structure should be used with all students – whether their goal is to continue in the classroom or in the workplace. Creating an inextricable link between GED exit expectations and the intellectual challenges that graduates invariably will face in credit-bearing college courses or in high-performance, high-growth jobs is a lofty, but necessary goal for all educators. The commonly held belief that students going directly into the workforce do not need the same rigorous curricula of those students entering college is no longer supported by the research. Employers require the same types of knowledge and skills for their entry-level workers as is required for college-bound students.

This book includes twenty-four lesson plans. Eight plans have been developed for each of the following academic areas: mathematics, writing, and reading. The **GED: Beyond the Basics** lesson plans provide the teacher with a beginning step to implementing the pedagogy that supports the **GED: Beyond the Basics** model. Although developed for a specific academic area, the lessons integrate additional skill areas necessary for higher-order problem solving and critical thinking. All of the lessons are easily incorporated into a GED curriculum and provide the type of authentic skills necessary for “going beyond the basics.”

¹ ACT. (2006). *Ready for college and ready for work: Same or different?* Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 11/21/06 at: <http://www.act.org/path/policy/pdf/ReadinessBrief.pdf>.

Writing Lesson 1: Analyze Your Audience

Beyond the Basics: Writing

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: Reporter, Marketing Specialist, Meteorologists, Advertising Manager

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Determine the audience for specific writing assignments
- Analyze the audience to determine the best approach to take when writing
- Produce work-related texts (for example, memos, e-mails, correspondence, project plans, work orders, proposals, bios) that address audience needs, stated purpose, and context

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A: Workplace Writers
- Handout B: Who Are You and What Do You Want?
- Handout C: Audience Profile Rubric

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Elements of various work-related text
- Planning and organizing text
- Communication skills
- Decision-making skills

Instructional Activities

Introduction

Explain to students that when they write in class, they are usually writing with you, the teacher, in mind. They write based on what they have learned about your expectations. They write what they think you want to hear. Explain that as students enter or advance in the workforce, they will have to write for co-workers, supervisors, and even the public. They will need to understand what a particular audience needs and the purpose for writing.

Have students brainstorm the different types of audiences they encounter in their own jobs. For example, a student who works at a fast-food restaurant would have the following audiences: co-workers, supervisor/shift manager, customers (young people, mature adults, seniors, and children), and suppliers. A student who works as a mechanic might have co-workers (mechanics and non-mechanics), supervisors, customers, suppliers, and local car dealers as their potential audience. Have students discuss how they would write things differently depending on who was going to read their work.

Explain that even though they may not have to write something for each type of audience, they almost always have to talk with each type of audience. Recognizing how the audience expects information to be delivered can help students be more effective when they communicate either in writing or in person.

Overview

Writing is a complex process. An important part of the writing process is planning. When planning their writing, students need to address:

- Who is the intended audience?
- What purpose will the writing serve?
- Why does the reader (audience) need to read the text?
- What does the reader already know about the topic?
- How will the reader (audience) use the information?
- What type of information will the reader (audience) need?
 - Does the reader (audience) need a lot of detail or will more general information be sufficient?
 - Will the information that is already known be sufficient or is research required?
 - How should the information be presented?
 - What format should be used?

Activity

Divide the class into teams of four. Provide each team with a 3 x 5 index card that identifies a workplace writer and situation he/she faces. Give students a few minutes to talk about the workplace writer and what types of audiences the writer may face each day. Provide the teams with copies of **Handout A: Workplace Writers**. Have students work together to identify the audience that each workplace writer will have to face and what that writer will have to take into consideration before writing a workplace text.

Provide each student with a copy of **Handout B: Who Are You and What Do You Want?** When students have completed their questionnaire, have each team present their findings. Discuss the information as a whole group. Have students from other teams make comments and recommendations about each team's audience analysis.

Have students write workplace text for the audience and topic that they discussed. Have students share their workplace text with another group and discuss any issues or concerns that should be added, deleted, or revised.

Evaluation

Use a rubric (**Handout C: Audience Profile Rubric**) to assess the student's work.

Extension

Discuss the challenges students had in developing the text, such as lack of familiarity with the position of the writer or not understanding everything that the job entailed. Have students discuss where they could get additional information that might have helped them with the writing. Explain that employees often conduct research before responding in writing.

References

Online Guide to Writing and Research
http://www.umuc.edu/prog/ugp/ewp_writingcenter/writinggde/welcome.shtml

Writing User Friendly Documents
http://www.blm.gov/nhp/NPR/pe_toc.html

Plain Language
<http://www.plainlanguage.gov>

Handout A: Workplace Writers

Workplace Writers

Restaurant owner who has been steadily losing customers.	Lawyer who has to convince jury of his/her client's innocence.	Warehouse manager who has to put in new safety procedures for 100 employees.
Secretary who has to report on the absenteeism rates of fellow employees just before their annual review.	Fire fighter who has to explain fire safety procedures to a kindergarten class.	Department manager who has to inform sales clerks about new products arriving in the store.
Computer programmer who has to address problems resulting from lack of Internet security software.	Assistant manager of a hardware store who has to announce price increases on basic goods and services.	Taxi driver who has to write a report regarding an accident he/she had that resulted in minor injuries to some passengers and damage to the taxi.
Hospital spokesperson who has to provide information on a series of incidents when patients have been given the wrong medication.	Customer who bought a faulty product and has been unable to get anyone to fix the problem.	Bank teller who has concerns about the end-of-day closing procedures.

Handout B: Who Are You and What Do You Want?

Audience

Primary _____

Secondary _____

What do they need?

What do they already know?

What questions will they have?

What are the main points that I need to cover?

Handout C: Audience Profile Rubric

	Marginal	Adequate	Effective
Audience	Did not clearly identify audience	Identified primary audience and some secondary audience members	Identified primary and secondary audiences
Need	Expressed limited understanding of needs of audience based on scenario provided	Included some of the information that the audience would need in order to resolve the problem or issue that was related in the scenario	Anticipated and responded to the needs of the audience based on information given and personal ability to solve problems or address issues that related to the scenario
Background Knowledge	Did not take into account basic knowledge the audience would have	Identified minimal background information that the audience would have	Anticipated the background knowledge and understanding that the primary and secondary audience would have
Potential Questions	Did not anticipate potential questions of the audience and/or opened opportunities for who, what, when, where, why, and how type questions	Included information that would anticipate and answer basic questions such as who, what, when, and where, but provided limited information that would address why or how questions	Included information that would limit the need for providing follow-up or answering additional questions
Content	Constructed workplace text that did not clearly address the needs of the audience and did not use an appropriate format	Constructed workplace text that was in an appropriate format and generally addressed the needs of the audience	Constructed workplace text that was in an appropriate format and responded effectively to the needs of the audience and the purpose for which it was written

Writing Lesson 2: Could You Repeat That in Plain English?
The Basics of Plain Language
Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: Lawyer, Engineer, Computer Programmer, Physician's Assistant, Teacher, Secretary, Pre-School Director

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Recognize elements of plain language
- Understand how the use of plain language can assist them in being more effective writers in the workplace

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A: Writing Samples Before Using Plain Language
- Handout B: Writing Samples After Using Plain Language
- Handout C: Guidelines for Using Plain Language
- Newspapers or workplace documents, such as emails, letters, brochures, handbooks, and manuals

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Organization
- Active voice
- Sentence structure
- Pronoun usage
- Word choice

Instructional Activities

Write the following sentence on the board or overhead.

You are in an orderly transition between career changes while undergoing a period of non-waged involuntary leisure during your temporary outplacement.

Have students simplify the sentence without changing the meaning. If they have problems with some of the words used in the sentence, refer them to a dictionary or thesaurus. An online dictionary is also available for student use at: <http://dictionary.reference.com/>.

Write the students' responses on the board or overhead. In most cases, students will write something such as: *You have been fired and are currently unemployed*. Discuss with students how writers will often make text more difficult to understand than it needs to be. Ask the students why they think writers do this.

Writing should be clear and concise whether adults are:

- writing an essay for the GED;
- making a list of instructions for co-workers; or
- composing an email in the workplace.

In other words, they should write in plain language so others can easily understand what they are trying to say. Information from government agencies has traditionally been some of the worst writing and most difficult for people to understand. As early as the 1970s, President Carter began looking at ways to simplify text provided by government agencies. In 1998, President Clinton issued a Presidential Memorandum that formalized the requirement for federal employees to write in plain language. The memorandum required that all new regulations be written clearly by January 1, 1999.

Plain language documents have:

- Logical organization
- Common, everyday words, except for necessary technical terms
- “You” and other pronouns
- Active voice
- Short sentences
- Easy-to-read design features

In the workplace, using plain language the first time you write a document means less work in the future. Plain language can help eliminate phone calls or emails (requesting clarification), letters of explanation, and sometimes litigation or lawsuits.

Activity

Distribute **Handout A: Writing Samples Before Using Plain Language**. Divide students into teams of 2 or 3. Have them silently read each example of material written by a government agency before instituting plain language. Have them write down notes about what each example means.

Distribute **Handout B: Writing Samples After Using Plain Language**. Have the students silently read each example of the same material written using plain language. Have them write down notes about what each example means.

Have students compare their notes from Handout A and Handout B. From which format did they get more information? Which was easier to read? Which would they prefer to use in the future?

Explain that when writing an essay for the GED Language Arts, Writing Test, Part II, students should follow the same principles as plain language: organize logically, use everyday words, use appropriate pronouns, write in the active voice, and use well structured sentences. For the essay, students should also use easy-to-read design features, such as indenting paragraphs and using capitals letters in appropriate places

Activity

Distribute **Handout C: Guidelines for Using Plain Language**. Tell students that this is a reference handout that they can use in the classroom or in the workplace. Take time and go over each of the elements included in the handout. If time permits, have students go through newspapers or search the Internet for examples of documents, reports, or other text that is not written in plain language. Discuss how the text could be changed to be more effective and easier to use.

Evaluation

Have students develop a short essay on a prompt that is provided. Have the students assess their word choice and highlight those words and phrases that are not clear. Have the class assist in replacing the highlighted words with more descriptive, but plain words. Students should read the essays with the revised words.

Extension

Note to the Teacher: Students need an opportunity to practice their writing skills on a daily basis. Set aside 5-10 minutes per writing class period to apply these skills using authentic material. Ask students to bring in text from their own workplaces and use that to practice the skills outlined in plain language.

References

Plain Language.gov

<http://www.plainlanguage.gov>

Simple Words and Phrases

<http://plainlanguage.gov/howto/wordsuggestions/simplewords.cfm>

Writing Reader-Friendly Documents

<http://plainlanguage.gov/howto/guidelines/bigdoc/TOC.cfm>

Handout A: Writing Samples Before Using Plain Language

Sample 1 - HUD (Dept. of Housing and Urban Development) Regulation

Sec. 103.40 Date of filing of complaint.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, a complaint is filed when it is received by HUD, or dual filed with HUD through a substantially equivalent State or local agency, in a form that reasonably meets the standards of Sec. 103.30.

(b) The Assistant Secretary may determine that a complaint is filed for the purposes of the one-year period for the filing of complaints, upon the submission of written information (including information provided by telephone and reduced to writing by an employee of HUD) identifying the parties and describing generally the alleged discriminatory house practice.

Where a complaint alleges a discriminatory housing practiced that is continuing, as manifested in a number of incidents of such conduct, the complaint will be timely if filed without one year of the last alleged occurrence of that practice.

What does this mean?

Sample 2 – Jury Instructions for Civil Cases in California

Proof beyond a reasonable doubt.
A preponderance of the evidence.
Failure of recollection is common. Innocent non-recollection is not uncommon
Circumstantial evidence is evidence that, if found to be true, proves a fact from which an inference of the existence of another fact may be drawn. A factual inference is a deduction that may logically and reasonably be drawn from one or more facts established by the evidence.
The amount of caution required of a person whose physical faculties are impaired is the care which a person of ordinary prudence with similarly impaired faculties would use under circumstances similar to those shown by the evidence.
A psychotherapist has no duty to warn third persons of a patient's threatened violent behavior, nor any duty to predict such behavior or to protect third persons from such behavior, unless the patient has communicated to the psychotherapist a serious threat of physical violence against [a] reasonably identifiable potential victim[s]. If a patient has communicated such a threat to a psychotherapist the psychotherapist then has a duty to warn and to protect the reasonably identifiable potential victim[s]. If you find a psychotherapist had this duty, it is satisfied and there is no liability if the psychotherapist made reasonable efforts to communicate the threat to the victim or victims and to a law enforcement agency.

What do these instructions mean?

Sample 3 – Secretary of the Interior

When the process of freeing a vehicle that has been stuck results in ruts or holes, the operator will fill the rut or hole created by such activity before removing the vehicle from the immediate area.

What does this mean?

Handout A: Writing Samples Before Using Plain Language

Sample 4 – Department of the Internet Off-Reservation Lands

Under 25 CFR §1.4(b), the Secretary of the Interior may in specific cases or in specific geographic areas, adopt or make applicable to off-reservation Indian lands all or any part of such laws, ordinances, codes, resolutions, rules or other regulations of the State and political subdivisions in which the land is located as the Secretary shall determine to be in the best interest of the Indian owner or owners in achieving the highest and best use of such property.

What does this mean?

Sample 5 – Over-the-Counter Drug Label

Allergy Tablets

INDICATIONS: Provides effective, temporary relief of sneezing, watery and itchy eyes, and runny nose due to hay fever and other upper respiratory allergies.

DIRECTIONS: Adults and children 12 years and over—1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours, not to exceed 6 tablets in 24 hours or as directed by a physician. Children 6 to 11 years—one half the adult dose (break tablet in half) every 4 to 6 hours, not to exceed 3 whole tablets in 24 hours. For children under 6 years, consult a physician.


EACH TABLET CONTAINS: Chlorpheniramine Maleate 4 mg. **May also contain** (may differ from brand): D&C Yellow No. 10, Lactose, Magnesium Stearate, Microcrystalline Cellulose, Pregelatinized Starch.

WARNINGS: May cause excitability especially in children. Do not take this product unless directed by a physician, if you have a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis, or if you have glaucoma or difficulty in urination due to enlargement of the prostate gland. **May cause drowsiness;** alcohol, sedatives and tranquilizers may increase the drowsiness effect. Avoid alcoholic beverages, and do not take this product if you are taking sedatives or tranquilizers without first consulting your physician. Use caution when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery. As with any drug, if you are pregnant or nursing a baby, seek the advice of a health professional before using this product. Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children. In case of accidental overdose, seek professional assistance or contact a Poison Control Center immediately.

Store at controlled room temperature 2°-30°C (36°-86°F).

- Use by expiration date printed on package.
- Protect from excessive moisture.
- For better identification keep tablets in carton until used.

Made in U.S.A.


N
3 111111 11111 8

What should a consumer know about these allergy tablets?

Handout B: Writing Samples After Using Plain Language

Sample 1 - HUD (Dept. of Housing and Urban Development) Regulation

Sec. 103.18 Is there a time limit on when I can file?

Yes. You must notify us within one year that you are a victim of discrimination. If you indicate there is more than one act of discrimination, or that it is continuing, we must receive your information within one year of the last incident.

What does this mean?

Sample 2 – Jury Instructions for Civil Cases in California

Proof that leaves you with an abiding conviction that the charge is true.

More likely than not.

People often forget things or make mistakes in what they remember.

Some evidence proves a fact directly, such as testimony of a witness who saw a jet plane flying across the sky. Some evidence proves a fact indirectly, such as testimony of a witness who saw only the white trail that jet planes often leave. This indirect evidence is sometimes referred to as "circumstantial evidence." In either instance, the witness's testimony is evidence that a jet plane flew across the sky.

A person with a physical disability is required to use the amount of care that a reasonably careful person who has the same physical disability would use in the same situation.

[Name of plaintiff] claims that [name of defendant] was negligent because [he/she] did not warn [name of plaintiff] or a law enforcement agency about [name of third party]'s threat of violent behavior. To establish this claim, [name of plaintiff] must prove all of the following: 1. That [name of defendant] was a psychotherapist; 2. That [name of third party] was [name of defendant]'s patient; 3. That [name of third party] communicated a serious threat of physical violence to [name of defendant]; 4. That [name of defendant] knew or should have known that [name of plaintiff] was [name of third party]'s intended victim; and 5. That [name of defendant] did not make reasonable efforts to warn [name of plaintiff] and a law enforcement agency about the threat.

What do these instructions mean?

Sample 3 – Secretary of the Interior

If you make a hole while freeing a stuck vehicle, you must fill the hole before you drive away.

What does this mean?

Handout B: Writing Samples After Using Plain Language

Sample 4 – Department of the Internet Off-Reservation Lands

Section 1.4(b) of 25 CFR allows us to make State or local laws or regulations apply to your off-reservation lands. We will do this only if we find that it will help you to achieve the highest and best use of your lands.

What does this mean?

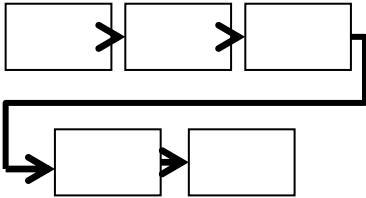
Sample 5 – Current Standard Over-the-Counter Drug Label

Drug Facts	
Active ingredient (in each tablet)	Purpose
Chlorpheniramine maleate 2 mg.....	Antihistamine
Uses temporarily relieves these symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allergies: ■ sneezing ■ runny nose ■ itchy, watery eyes ■ itchy throat	
Warnings Ask a doctor before use if you have ■ glaucoma ■ a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis ■ trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking tranquilizers or sedatives	
When using this product ■ drowsiness may occur ■ avoid alcoholic drinks ■ alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness ■ be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery ■ excitability may occur, especially in children	
If pregnant or breast-feeding, ask a health professional before use. Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.	
Directions	
adults and children 12 years and over	take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours
children 6 years to under 12 years	take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours
children under 6 years	ask a doctor

Drug Facts (continued)
Other information ■ store at 20-25° C (68-77° F) ■ protect from excessive moisture
Inactive ingredients D&C yellow no. 10, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, pregelatinized starch

What should a consumer know about these allergy tablets?

Handout C: Guidelines for Using Plain Language

<p>Organization</p>	<p>People read documents to get answers. Documents should be organized to help them find information as quickly and efficiently as possible. Plain language recommends the following types of organizational structure in workplace documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronological order which tells the reader what to do and the order in which to do it. Information is presented in a series of steps that are provided in the order that the reader needs to follow. • General information should always be presented first to give people an overview of the document. Specialized information should follow the general information. Any exceptions to the information should come at the end of the document. This structure helps people find information quickly and in some cases eliminates the need to read the entire document. • Separate sections should be provided for different audiences. If there are two or more audiences that will need the information, separate the information so neither will have to wade through the entire document to find what they need. For example, if providing information to homeowners and renters, put the homeowners' information in one section and the renters' information in another. • Use a graphic organizer, such as the following, to lay out the information in chronological order before writing. 				
<p>Common, Everyday Words</p>	<p>Writing in the workplace does not have to be filled with multi-syllabic words designed to impress people. In deciding what words to use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select familiar or frequently used words rather than unusual or obscure words that the reader may or may not recognize and understand • Omit unnecessary words <table border="1" data-bbox="625 1367 1425 1728"> <thead> <tr> <th>No</th> <th>Yes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a number of • a sufficient number of • at this point in time • is able to • on a monthly basis • on the ground that • an amount of X • be responsible for • in order to </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • several, a few, many • enough • now • can • monthly • because • X • must • to </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid excessive modifiers such as <i>absolutely</i>, <i>actually</i>, <i>completely</i>, <i>really</i>, <i>quite</i>, <i>totally</i>, and <i>very</i> 	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a number of • a sufficient number of • at this point in time • is able to • on a monthly basis • on the ground that • an amount of X • be responsible for • in order to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • several, a few, many • enough • now • can • monthly • because • X • must • to
No	Yes				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a number of • a sufficient number of • at this point in time • is able to • on a monthly basis • on the ground that • an amount of X • be responsible for • in order to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • several, a few, many • enough • now • can • monthly • because • X • must • to 				

<p>Active Voice</p>	<p>When writing in the workplace, use the active voice. “You must do it.” versus “It must be done.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In an active sentence, the person, company, or agency that's acting is the subject of the sentence. • In a passive sentence, the person or item that is acted upon is the subject of the sentence. • Passive sentences often do not identify who is performing the action. <table border="1" data-bbox="630 386 1386 873"> <thead> <tr> <th>Passive Voice</th> <th>Active Voice</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>The lake was polluted by the company.</td> <td>The company polluted the lake.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New regulations were proposed.</td> <td>We proposed new regulations.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The following information must be included in the application for it to be considered complete.</td> <td>You must include the following information in your application.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Regulations have been proposed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.</td> <td>The Department of Veterans Affairs has proposed new regulations.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Passive sentences have two basic features, although both may not appear in every passive sentence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A past participle (generally with “ed” on the end) • A form of the verb “to be” 	Passive Voice	Active Voice	The lake was polluted by the company.	The company polluted the lake.	New regulations were proposed.	We proposed new regulations.	The following information must be included in the application for it to be considered complete.	You must include the following information in your application.	Regulations have been proposed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.	The Department of Veterans Affairs has proposed new regulations.
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Regulations have been proposed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.	The Department of Veterans Affairs has proposed new regulations.										
<p>Pronoun Usage</p>	<p>Pronouns help readers relate better to your documents. In the workplace, using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You” pulls readers into the document and helps them understand what they are responsible for doing. • “We” to refer to your company or agency enables you to write more concise sentences that are easier to understand. • Pronouns when you write for an individual reader so you can think about what that reader needs to do and what he/she needs to know. <table border="1" data-bbox="625 1312 1382 1444"> <thead> <tr> <th>No</th> <th>Yes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Copies of employment forms must be maintained.</td> <td>You must maintain copies of your employment forms.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>If there is more than one “you,” it is important to clearly define the “you” and the “we” in a document. When this is done, it becomes much easier to write through the rest of the document</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="625 1604 1382 1940"> <thead> <tr> <th>No</th> <th>Yes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Loan applications will be reviewed to ensure that procedures have been followed.</td> <td>We will review your loan application to ensure that you have followed our procedures.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Office of Consumer Affairs will process your application within 30 days after receipt.</td> <td>We will process your application within 30 days of receiving it.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No	Yes	Copies of employment forms must be maintained.	You must maintain copies of your employment forms.	No	Yes	Loan applications will be reviewed to ensure that procedures have been followed.	We will review your loan application to ensure that you have followed our procedures.	The Office of Consumer Affairs will process your application within 30 days after receipt.	We will process your application within 30 days of receiving it.
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<p>Short, Concise Sentences</p>	<p>Short and concise sentences are better for conveying complex information It is suggested that writers generally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • express only one idea in each sentence; and • avoid long, complex sentences that may confuse the reader. <table border="1" data-bbox="630 321 1386 726"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="630 321 1008 365">No</th> <th data-bbox="1008 321 1386 365">Yes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="630 365 1008 726">For good reasons, the Secretary may grant extensions of time in 30-day increments for filing of the lease and all required bonds, provided that additional extension requests are submitted and approved before the expiration of the original 30 days or the previously granted extension.</td> <td data-bbox="1008 365 1386 726">We may extend the time you have to file the lease and required bonds. Each extension will be for 30 days. To get an extension, you must write to us explaining why you need more time. We must receive your extension request in time to approve it before your current deadline or extension expires.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid the use of double negatives which should be read as positives. <table border="1" data-bbox="630 821 1386 1098"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="630 821 1024 865">No</th> <th data-bbox="1024 821 1386 865">Yes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="630 865 1024 926">no fewer than ...</td> <td data-bbox="1024 865 1386 926">at least</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="630 926 1024 984">has not yet attained</td> <td data-bbox="1024 926 1386 984">is under</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="630 984 1024 1043">may not ... until</td> <td data-bbox="1024 984 1386 1043">may only ... when</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="630 1043 1024 1098">is not ... unless</td> <td data-bbox="1024 1043 1386 1098">is ... only if</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No	Yes	For good reasons, the Secretary may grant extensions of time in 30-day increments for filing of the lease and all required bonds, provided that additional extension requests are submitted and approved before the expiration of the original 30 days or the previously granted extension.	We may extend the time you have to file the lease and required bonds. Each extension will be for 30 days. To get an extension, you must write to us explaining why you need more time. We must receive your extension request in time to approve it before your current deadline or extension expires.	No	Yes	no fewer than ...	at least	has not yet attained	is under	may not ... until	may only ... when	is not ... unless	is ... only if
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no fewer than ...	at least														
has not yet attained	is under														
may not ... until	may only ... when														
is not ... unless	is ... only if														
<p>Easy to Read Design Format</p>	<p>Plain language requires the use of a format that is easy to read and understand. This does not mean developing elaborate tables, charts, or graphs, but rather simple things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting the topic sentence first in each paragraph (if possible). This helps the reader get a good overall understanding of the document by merely skimming. • Using transition words to connect information within paragraphs as well as from one paragraph to another. The following chart provides some basic transition words that may be helpful. <table border="1" data-bbox="630 1499 1386 1923"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="630 1499 1008 1543">If</th> <th data-bbox="1008 1499 1386 1543">Use</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="630 1543 1008 1665">Adding a point</td> <td data-bbox="1008 1543 1386 1665">Also, and, in addition, besides, what is more, similarly, further</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="630 1665 1008 1753">Giving an example</td> <td data-bbox="1008 1665 1386 1753">For instance, for example, for one thing, for another thing</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="630 1753 1008 1841">Restating information</td> <td data-bbox="1008 1753 1386 1841">In other words, that is, in short, put differently, again</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="630 1841 1008 1923">Introducing a result</td> <td data-bbox="1008 1841 1386 1923">So, as a result, thus, therefore, accordingly, then</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	If	Use	Adding a point	Also, and, in addition, besides, what is more, similarly, further	Giving an example	For instance, for example, for one thing, for another thing	Restating information	In other words, that is, in short, put differently, again	Introducing a result	So, as a result, thus, therefore, accordingly, then				
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using vertical lists help the reader focus on important material. Vertical lists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight levels of importance Help the reader understand the order in which things happen Make it easy for the reader to identify all of the steps in a process Add blank or white space for easy reading Laying out material visually through the use of tables, charts, or graphs. One very useful type of table in the workplace is the “if-then table.” An “if-then” table organizes information by a situation (something is the case) and the consequence (then something else happens). 									
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>If</th> <th>And</th> <th>Then</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>You exceed the speed limit</td> <td>A highway patrol officer is present</td> <td>You will get a ticket</td> </tr> <tr> <td>If you eat too much</td> <td>Avoid exercising</td> <td>You will gain weight.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	If	And	Then	You exceed the speed limit	A highway patrol officer is present	You will get a ticket	If you eat too much	Avoid exercising	You will gain weight.
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Adapted from Office of the Federal Register, *Document Drafting Handbook*, 1998, MMR 4.
<http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/write/handbook/> and *Writing Reader-Friendly Documents*,
<http://plainlanguage.gov/howto/guidelines/bigdoc/TOC.cfm>

Writing Lesson 3: Multiple Personalities – Which One is Right for Your Writing? Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: Clerk, Receptionist, Administrative Assistant, Reporter

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Differentiate among different styles of writing, including: friendly versus aloof, precise versus general, serious versus humorous, conversational versus business
- Determine appropriate styles for writing workplace materials
- Write in a variety of styles based on the situation presented

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A: Writing Personality and Characteristics
- Handout B: Personality Choice Matching (adapted from Persuading on Paper by Marcia Yudkin, 2001)

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Word choice
- Style
- Problem-solving skills
- Decision-making skills

Instructional Activities

Write the following on the board or overhead.

AYEC, I would like to have a F2F with you A3 about problems in the office. AAF, it is JMO that if we don't do something ASAP, we will have even more problems. The n00b is creating a major hassle over some of the office policies and has interrupted BAU around this place. BM&Y, I think the n00b should OOH. Sometimes I have to SMHID at problem. TLK2UL8R.

Translation

At your earliest convenience, I would like to have a **face-to-face** with you **anytime, anywhere, anyplace** about problems in the office. **As a matter of fact**, it is **just my opinion** that if we don't do something **as soon as possible**, we will have even more problems. The "**newbie**" is creating a major hassle over some of the office policies and has interrupted **business as usual** around this place. **Between me and you**, I think the **newbie** should be out of here. Sometimes I have to **scratch my head in disbelief** at the problem. **Talk to you later**.

If you have younger students in your classroom, they will probably be able to translate this message very quickly. In fact, they may be so used to text messaging friends and family that they view this type of writing as normal. However, it is important that students understand that writing in this manner is not going to score them big points in the workplace.

Explain that the voice they choose for writing must match:

- the purpose for which they are writing; and
- the people for whom they are writing.

Discuss with students the difference that voice or personality can make in writing. For example, would they want to receive a thank-you note that sounded angry and upset? How about a humorous newspaper article about a natural disaster? Would they want to interview someone for a job if that person had written a casual letter filled with text messaging abbreviations that they didn't even understand?

Activity

Provide students with **Handout A: Writing Personality and Characteristics**. Have students brainstorm what writing would look like using each of the personality choices. For example, have them list characteristics of commanding writing, such as: gives orders, doesn't say please or thank you, or demands action.

Divide the students into teams of two. Have each team write sentences for 4-6 of the personality types listed on **Handout A: Writing Personality and Characteristics**. Teams may use the characteristics they brainstormed as a reference. When students have completed their sentences, have them discuss the types of:

- words they had to use when creating sentences for each personality choice.
- sentence structure they had to use, such as short, concise directions (commanding writing) or longer sentences that include clichés or sayings (folksy writing).

Have each team share their sentences and vote for the most effective sentence for each personality type. Discuss why they selected a particular sentence.

Evaluation

Cut the sentences and personality types on **Handout B: Personality Choice Matching** into single strips. Place the strips in an envelope. Divide the students into teams of 3-4. Provide each team with an envelope. Have them match the sentence with its correct personality type. First team to correctly match all sentences wins.

Extension

Provide copies of letters to the editor from a local or national newspaper such as *USA Today*. Have the students identify the personality or voice of each letter. Discuss how they reached their conclusions about each letter.

References

Personality Choices in Business Writing

http://www.esc.edu/esonline/across_esc/WritingResources.nsf/frames/Personality+Choices+in+Business+Writing?OpenDocument

Teaching that Makes Sense – Writing with an Appropriate Voice

http://www.ttms.org/writing_quality/voice.htm

Text Messaging Abbreviations

http://www.webopedia.com/quick_ref/textmessageabbreviations.asp

Handout A: Writing Personality and Characteristics

Writing Personality

Characteristics

Friendly

Aloof

Precise

General

Serious

Light-Humorous

Chatty

All Business

Commanding

Beckoning

Veiled

Candid

Folksy

Sophisticated

Handout B: Personality Choice Matching

Personality Type	Example
Friendly	I'm really looking forward to meeting you at the conference. It is always a pleasure to meet new people who share the same passions about our business.
Aloof	After our meeting, I believe that we will be able to come to a satisfactory business arrangement. It is important that business partners share the similar values and goals.
Precise	For our next meeting, please bring copies of the employee manual, timesheets, and report forms. Please make sure that all materials are up-to-date.
General	At our next meeting, we will need copies of employee materials. Please make sure that you bring everything you believe we need for this review.
Serious	It is essential that everyone stay focused on the goal of increasing sales. I understand that this has been a difficult time, but if we do not stay focused we could end up with much graver problems in the future.
Light-hearted or humorous	Sales may be sliding, but as the old saying goes, tomorrow is another day. Let's just keep working and see if we can't make our problems go away.
Chatty	I am so glad that we had a chance to get together for coffee the other day. We just don't have enough time to really talk about stuff from work. It just seems that we both stay so busy; we never have time for anything else.
All-Business	No time for chit-chat. We have a long agenda today. Let's get to work.
Commanding	Bring those sales figures now.
Beckoning	Sarah, could you come in the office and bring the sales figures with you?
Veiled	Are you sure that you didn't say something to that customer? I've never had a problem with her.
Candid	Mrs. Ellis will not come back to this store as long as you are working here. You blew it with her by not providing the assistance she needed.
Folksy	Why Mr. Johnson is just as sweet as pie. He would do anything to help a new employee learn the ropes.
Sophisticated	If one wishes to get ahead in this business, one must persevere when others falter and lack the will to meet the challenges of the position.

Writing Lesson 4: Simplifying Your Writing Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: Writer, Editor, Secretary, Legal Assistant, Marketing Specialist, Human Resources Specialist, Government Agency Employee

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Revise text in order to improve clarity
- Recognize active and passive forms of verbs
- Change sentences from passive to active voice
- Use appropriate format for writing business text, including emails, business letters, and memos

Materials Required for This Lesson

- 3 x 5 index cards for entry and exit tickets
- Handout A: Review of Active and Passive Voice
- Handout B: Workplace Writing Scenarios
- Handout C: Sample Business Documents

Materials Needed from Prior Lesson – Could You Repeat That in Plain English? The Basics of Plain Language

- Handout C: Guidelines for Using Plain Language– students should have copies in their own folders from this previous lesson

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Active voice
- Passive voice
- Format of business text
- Problem-solving skills
- Decision-making skills

Note to the Teacher: *This is a follow-up to **Could You Repeat That in Plain English? The Basics of Plain Language**. Students should have been introduced to plain language before beginning this lesson.*

Instructional Activities

Provide each student with a 3 x 5 index card. Explain that this is an entry ticket for class. Ask the students to write a few sentences describing what they already know about plain language. Select a recorder who will write down each student's response on chart paper or the board. This activity provides information about what students know and what may need to be reviewed.

Ask students to retrieve their copies of **Handout C: Guidelines to Using Plain Language** from the previous lesson on **Could You Repeat That in Plain English? The Basics of Plain Language**. Explain that during this lesson, they are going to work on areas that will help them improve their writing skills for the GED Test as well as for the workplace.

Active versus Passive Voice

Have students define the words *active* and *passive*. Discuss with students the difference between active and passive voice when writing.

Active voice – the subject performs the action expressed by the verb.

The engineers conducted stress tests on the new synthetic material to determine its strength.

Passive voice – the subject receives the action expressed in the verb.

Stress tests were conducted by the engineers to determine the strength of the new synthetic material.

As a group activity, have students brainstorm examples of sentences that use active voice. Have students rewrite the sentences using the passive voice. Explain that the active voice is preferred in most workplace writing. Sentences written in the passive voice are often longer, more complicated, and more difficult to understand.

Divide students into teams of 2. Give an Active/Passive Review envelope to each team. Explain to students that they need to separate the sentences by category – Active or Passive. The first team to categorize all sentences correctly wins. Have students debrief the activity by explaining how they determined which sentences were active and which were passive. The strips for this activity are found in **Handout A: Review of Active and Passive Voice**.

Have students brainstorm different document formats used in the workplace. Write the students' responses on the board. Have them discuss why certain formats would be used. For example, emails provide quick updates to staff; whereas, business letters present information in a more formal manner. Talk briefly about basic formats, such as: emails, letters, memos, notices, and policies. Show examples of business documents so that students can see the differences among each of the formats.

Evaluation

Distribute **Handout B: Workplace Writing Scenarios** to the students. Have each student select a scenario and prepare a written response to it. Students should respond using the format provided, except in Scenario 3 where the student decides the format he/she thinks would be most appropriate. Have students share their responses.

Check students' scenario responses for use of active voice. If students are still having difficulty with active voice, review the information from **Handout C: Guidelines for Using Plain Language**. Check responses for grammatical and spelling errors. Highlight error patterns and provide additional practice in those areas, such as subject/verb agreement or pronoun reference.

Extension

Have students bring in samples of business letters they received through the mail, such as invitations to open a new credit card account. Have the students review the letter for format and passive or active voice. Have students discuss how the letters could be revised to make them more user-friendly and easier to understand.

References

Micron – Writing in the Workplace
<http://www.micron.com/k12/writing/index>

OWL at Purdue University
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts>

Plain Language.gov
<http://www.plainlanguage.gov>

Handout A: Review of Passive and Active Voice

Cut the sentences into strips. Place all of the strips in an envelope. Divide the students in teams of two; have them place each sentence in the correct category – Passive or Active. First team to categorize all sentences correctly wins.

Passive	Active
The instructions have been changed.	Someone changed the instructions.
She will have to be taught how to operate the new assembly robot.	Someone will teach her how to operate the new assembly robot.
This car was manufactured in Japan by Toyota.	Toyota manufactured this car in Japan.
Last year 2,000 new units had been produced by the time we introduced the new design.	We produced 2,000 new units by the time we introduced the new design last year.
Casual clothes must not be worn on staff meeting days.	You must not wear casual clothes on staff meeting days.
\$400,000 in profit has been reported this year.	The company reported \$400,000 in profit this year.
The word processing test will be given at five o'clock this afternoon by the human resources department.	The human resources department will give the word processing test at five o'clock this afternoon.
Employees are required to wear the company uniform when on the job.	The company requires employees to wear uniforms when on the job.
The rumor about lay-offs must have been started by our competitors.	Our competitors started this rumor about lay-offs.
All design work will have been completed by six o'clock this evening.	You must complete all design work by six o'clock this evening.
We were told to wait here for the next facility tour.	Someone told us to wait here for the next facility tour.
Staff development sessions are recorded and posted on the Internet.	They recorded and posted staff development sessions on the Internet.

Handout B: Workplace Writing

Select one of the following scenarios. Write a response to the scenario using the writing format indicated. Be sure to use the active voice when writing.

Scenario 1

You were promoted to shift manager at a retail store four weeks ago. You are responsible for supervising 12 employees who work from 3:00 – 9:00 p.m. Five of the employees are high school students who started with the store about three weeks ago; the remainder of the employees have been with the store for more than six months. You have noticed problems with some employees:

- Arriving late to work
- Leaving before their shift is over
- Taking breaks that are too long
- Taking breaks during the busiest hours of the evening
- Asking for changes in their weekly schedules

Write a memo that addresses the store's policy regarding time and attendance. Use the active voice to make sure that everyone understands his/her responsibilities.

Scenario 2

You are employed with the housekeeping department of a large hotel. You have been employed with the hotel for three years and have always received excellent evaluations and performance reports. You have noticed that some of the newer employees are cutting corners and not following all of the safety procedures for using cleaning chemicals, especially bleach and ammonia. Bleach and ammonia, if not handled properly, can be very dangerous. You have some real concerns about your personal safety and that of other employees and hotel guests.

Getting an appointment with the housekeeping manager can sometimes be difficult and take a few days, but this issue needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Write an email to the housekeeping manager outlining your concerns and possible actions that can be taken to alleviate the problems.

Scenario 3

Rumors about possible lay-offs are running rampant at the manufacturing plant. As the plant manager, you recognize that these rumors impact productivity and the morale of employees. You know that lay-offs are a possibility, but you have been working with company headquarters to try and avoid lay-offs if at all possible.

Write a notice to employees that will help put a stop to the rumors. Use a format that you feel would be most appropriate for the employees.

Scenario 4

A new voicemail system has just been installed in your office. It is your job to let everyone know the types of information that should be included in personal greetings. The company president is adamant that no "cutesy" greetings be included on the system. At a minimum, she wants the following information on each greeting: company name, employee's name, and directions for accessing the company operator. However, you think that more information should be provided or customers calling into the system may get frustrated.

Write a one-page handout for employees that explains what they can and cannot do when setting up their personal greetings on the voicemail system.

Handout C: Sample Business Documents

Sample Email

From: Human Resources
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2003 8:35 AM
To: All U.S. Micron Supervisors
Subject: Reports Available on Performance Management Tracking Tool

Reporting functionality is now available for U.S. supervisors on the Performance Management Tracking Tool. Remember that you can view reports for only those U.S. team members who eventually report to you.

Reports Available:

- All direct reports
- Individual only
- Percentage of performance plans complete for your direct reports
- Percentage of performance plans complete for your supervisors' direct reports

Double click on a person's name to drill down into the reporting structure.

These reports are intended to be tools to assist you and your management team in your Performance Management process. More information about the Performance Management process is on the Performance Management Web site.

If you have suggestions to improve the Performance Management Tracking Tool on Workplace, or Micron's Performance Management Process in general, please send those suggestions to Corporate Training & Education Manager.

Sample Business Letter

**Document Makers
2398 Red Street
Salem, MA 34588**

March 10, 2001

Thomas R. Smith
Drivers Co.
3489 Greene Ave.
Olympia, WA 98502

Dear Mr. Smith:

Are you having trouble getting your important documents formatted correctly? If you are like most business owners, you have trouble finding the time to economically produce good-looking documents. This is why it is important to have a specialist take care of your most important documents.

At Documents Makers, we have the skills and experience to come in and help you make the best possible impression. May we stop by and offer you a FREE estimate of how much it would cost to get your documents looking great? If so, give us a call at and set up an appointment with one of our friendly operators.

Sincerely,

(signature here)

Richard Brown
President

Sample Memo

TO: Kelly Anderson, Marketing Executive
FROM: Jonathon Fitzgerald, Market Research Assistant
DATE: June 14, 2006
SUBJECT: Fall Clothes Line Promotion

Through market research and analysis, it has been discovered that the proposed advertising media for the new fall lines need to be reprioritized and changed. Findings from focus groups and surveys have made it apparent that we need to update our advertising efforts to align them with the styles and trends of young adults today. No longer are young adults interested in sitcoms; instead, they watch reality television shows. Also, it has become increasingly important to use the internet as a tool to communicate with our target audience to show our dominance in the clothing industry.

Internet Advertising

XYZ Company needs to focus advertising on Internet sites that appeal to young people. According to surveys, 72% of our target market uses the Internet for five hours or more per week. Shifting our efforts from our other media sources such as radio and magazine to these popular Internet sites will more effectively promote our product sales. As the trend for cultural icons goes digital, so must our marketing plans.

Television Advertising

It used to be common to advertise for our products on shows like *Friends* and *Seinfeld* for our target audience, but even the face of television is changing. Young adults are tuning in to reality television shows for their entertainment. Results from the focus group show that our target audience is most interested in shows like *American Idol*, *The Apprentice*, and *America's Next Top Model*. At Blue Incorporated, we need to focus our advertising budget on reality television shows and reduce the amount of advertising spent on other programs.

By refocusing our advertising efforts we will be able to maximize the exposure of our product to our target market and therefore increase our sales. Tapping into the trends of young adults will help us gain market share and sales through effective advertising.

Attachments: Focus Group Results, January- May 2006; Survey Findings, January - April 2006

This is a sample memo; facts and statistics used are fictional.

Sample documents retrieved from:

<http://www.micron.com/k12/writing/index>
http://esl.about.com/library/writing/blwrite_sales.htm
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/>

Writing Lesson 5: RAFTS for Writing Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: Accountant, Police Officer, Fire Fighter, Reporter, Teacher, Teacher Assistant, Screenwriter

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Assume a specific role when writing
- Write for a specific audience
- Write using a variety of formats
- Respond to a specific topic
- Incorporate strong action verbs when writing

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A: Compare/Contrast Graphic Organizer
- Handout B: Write Your Own RAFTS Prompts
- Handout C: RAFTS Prompts

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

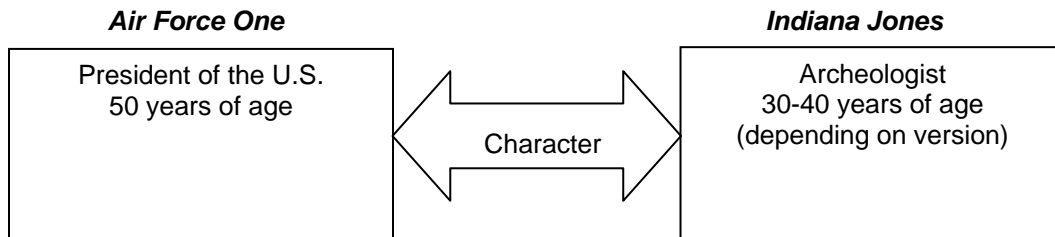
- Point-of-view
- Tone
- Compare and contrast
- Problem-solving skills
- Decision-making skills

Instructional Activities

Introduction

Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students. Have each group select a particular actor and the movies or shows in which he/she has appeared over the years. For example: Harrison Ford has starred in *Air Force One*, *Indiana Jones*, *Firewall*, and *The Hunt for Red October*. Each of these is a very different type of movie, but each has a number of common elements. Have students discuss how the actor they have chosen has taken on a role for each movie and how those roles are similar and how they are different.

Provide students with a copy of **Handout A: Compare/Contrast Graphic Organizer**. As a group, brainstorm characteristics to include in the “with regard to” arrows in the graphic. For example, students might include: age played within each role, character played, tone of the movie, or setting. An example of the graphic from page 139 of the **Florida GED: Beyond the Basics Resource Guide** is provided below.



Have the students compare/contrast their actor’s role in each of the identified movies. Discuss with students that just like actors everyone plays different roles at different times.

Overview of Lesson

Explain that writing in the workplace is different from writing in class. In class, students write for their teachers. As employees, adults often have to write in a manner that may or may not reflect who they are as individuals, but rather who they are within the work environment. This lesson introduces students to a writing technique entitled RAFTS. This technique was developed by the Northern Nevada Writing Project. This lesson provides students with practice in assuming different personas or roles as they write for an imaginary audience based on a specific topic and required format.

In the workplace, adults assume a variety of roles, from customer service representative to shift supervisor, from project manager to team leader, or from executive assistant to mailroom clerk. Whatever their position, adults are often required to write. It may be a simple phone message or a complex cost analysis for a new project. However, writing is rarely done for just one person (as students do in the classroom when they write for the teacher). Instead, writing in the workplace will be read by a variety of fellow employees (the audience) – each of whom may need the information for a different reason.

RAFTS prompts require writers to:

- Assume a role (other than themselves) before they write
- Write for a specific audience (imaginary)
- Use a specific format for writing, such as a letter, report, commercial
- Focus on a specific topic or problem
- Write with a strong verb in mind in order to write for a specific purpose, such as to persuade, convince, or inspire

Write the following RAFTS prompt on the board.

Role: a bookkeeper

Audience: company's manager, baker, and sales representative

Format: a one-page summary report

Topic: current status of the company's income and expenditures

Strong verb: persuade

Have students brainstorm a scenario that matches the RAFTS prompt. Have students think about what the bookkeeper would know about the company and its finances. Write out the scenario in paragraph form. This provides the basis for the students' writing. The following is an example of the RAFTS prompt in paragraph form.

You are a bookkeeper for a small bakery that provides a variety of baked goods, including cookies, muffins, and brownies, to local childcare providers. The cost for ingredients, such as milk and eggs, has steadily increased over the past 6 months. However, there has been no price increase to local customers. The company manager has refused to increase prices because the manager is afraid that customers will switch to another bakery. After analyzing the costs and the income for the last six months, you know that something must change or the company will see a lot of red ink. Write your one page summary report so that it persuades the leadership team to take action.

Discuss with students what should be included in a summary report. Have students write their reports and then share them with the rest of the class. As a group, determine which report is the most persuasive. Have the students identify elements within the report that make it persuasive.

Provide students with time to edit their own reports to strengthen any areas that might be weak. Focus on the content rather than specific grammatical or spelling errors. When students are happy with the content, shift the focus to grammatical or spelling errors that distract from the overall effectiveness of the writing. When addressing grammatical or spelling errors, focus on specific

error patterns, such as:

- lack of subject-verb agreement;
- lack of parallel structure;
- overuse of commas; or
- misuse of homonyms.

This activity helps students practice their writing skills in a real-life context. While the students are writing more real-life material, they are also using skills that are essential for writing an effective essay, including:

- Responding to the prompt
- Organizing in a clear and logical manner
- Using Edited American English
- Making effective word choices
- Developing in a coherent manner with details and specific examples

Evaluation

- Review the written response to the prompt
- Check for the following:
 - Focus, staying on topic
 - Appropriate use of format
 - Voice, point of view
 - Word choice
 - Edited American English
- Discuss response with the student, focusing first on content and then on EAE

Extension

Have students create their own RAFTS prompts using **Handout B: Write Your Own RAFTS Prompts**. On a regular basis, pull a prompt and have students first develop the paragraph version of the prompt and then write to that prompt.

References

The Voice Page

<http://www.writingfix.com/6Traits/Voice.htm>

RAFTS – Northern Nevada Writing Project

<http://www.writingfix.com>

RAFTS Prompts for Mathematics

http://www.writingfix.com/WAC/Writing_Across_Curriculum_RAFTS_Math.htm

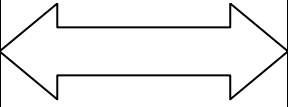
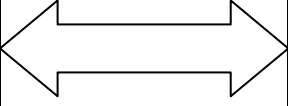
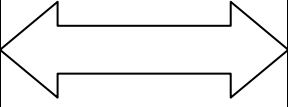
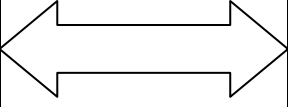
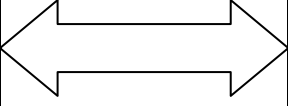
RAFTS Prompts for Science

http://www.writingfix.com/WAC/Writing_Across_Curriculum_RAFTS_Science.htm

RAFTS Prompts for Social Studies

http://www.writingfix.com/WAC/Writing_Across_Curriculum_RAFTS_Soc_Studies.htm

Handout A: Compare and Contrast

	with regard to	
		
		
		
		
		

Handout B: Write Your Own RAFTS Prompts

Role
Audience
Format
Topic
Strong Verb
Paragraph Version of Prompt

Handout C: RAFTS Prompts

<p>Role: a customer service agent</p> <p>Audience: an angry customer</p> <p>Format: a letter of apology</p> <p>Topic: a product that did not work</p> <p>Strong verb: apologize</p> <p>Scenario</p>	<p>Role: a nursing supervisor</p> <p>Audience: recently hired CNAs (Certified Nursing Assistants)</p> <p>Format: instructions/directions</p> <p>Topic: distributing medication to patients</p> <p>Strong verb: care</p> <p>Scenario</p>
<p>Role: a marketing assistant</p> <p>Audience: customers</p> <p>Format: a 60-second commercial</p> <p>Topic: a new toy for children ages 2-4</p> <p>Strong verb: entice</p> <p>Scenario</p>	<p>Role: a lawn maintenance company owner</p> <p>Audience: board of a home owner's association</p> <p>Format: one-page proposal</p> <p>Topic: hiring company to provide lawn care for 50 homes</p> <p>Strong verb: convince</p> <p>Scenario</p>

Writing Lesson 6: Using Graphic Organizers to Improve Writing Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: Administrative Assistant, Manager, Salesperson, Realtor, Paralegal

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Recognize a wide range of graphic organizers that can be used to help them write workplace documents
- Select an appropriate graphic organizer to help them plan their writing
- Take information from a graphic organizer and write workplace text

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A: Types of Graphic Organizers
- Handout B: Sample Completed Graphic Organizers

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Pre-writing skills
- Organizing information
- Using graphic organizers

Instructional Activities

An essential part of writing is the planning process. Inadequate planning results in ineffective writing. Unfortunately, many students in GED classes do not know how to plan and organize text. When given a topic, they merely start free-writing. The result of this free-writing is a document that is unorganized with no unity or coherence.

Graphic organizers are excellent tools to help students improve their writing. However, many students have limited exposure to graphic organizers. They don't know that there are many different types of graphic organizers that can help them plan and organize their writing to make it more effective. Students also think that the use of a graphic organizer just creates more work when the opposite is true. A graphic organizer can save students time and energy.

Distribute copies of **Handout A: Types of Graphic Organizers** to the students. Have students look at the various graphic organizers and talk about the ones they have seen or used.

This activity is designed to be a round-robin. Divide students into teams of 3-4. Each team will need two pieces of chart paper and a unique color of marker (Team 1 – orange, Team 2 – blue, and so on). Before the round robin begins, have the students draw a copy of their assigned graphic organizer at the top of the chart paper (only one graphic organizer per sheet). After brainstorming their own graphic organizer, students should move to the next table and add their thoughts to the previous groups. When the round-robin is finished, there should be a fairly substantial list of ideas for when each graphic organizer should be used.

When students have completed preparation work, tell them that their task is to brainstorm when they would use the graphic organizer. For example: The cause and effect graphic organizer might be used to plan a report addressing a specific problem at work such as a drop in sales. The graphic organizer could be used to list why sales have dropped or possibly the results of a drop in sales, such as lay-offs or pay reductions.

Give each group about 2-3 minutes per graphic organizer to make their lists and then have teams move to the next table and do the same for a new set of graphic organizers. When the round-robin is complete, post all of the charts on the wall. Give students time to review each one and add any additional items to the lists.

Distribute copies of **Handout B: Samples of Completed Graphic Organizers** to each student. Ask students to spend about 5 minutes looking over each of the completed graphic organizers. When they have finished, have them discuss what they could write based on the information provided within each graphic organizer. Have students select one of the completed graphic organizers and write an email to an imaginary co-worker that covers the information in the selected graphic organizer. The email should be 2-3 paragraphs in length and should follow the standard email format.

Evaluation

Provide students with a workplace scenario and have them select a graphic organizer that is most appropriate for that particular situation. When students complete the graphic organizer, have them use the information to write a brief workplace document. Check for the appropriateness of the graphic organizer selected, as well as the content included. Check the workplace document for format and content and if it matches that of the graphic organizer.

Extension

Give students a few minutes to think about various situations in their own jobs where they could use a graphic organizer to help them write a workplace document, such as a letter, email, memo, report, or brochure. Have each student select the graphic organizer that is most appropriate for that particular situation and complete it.

References


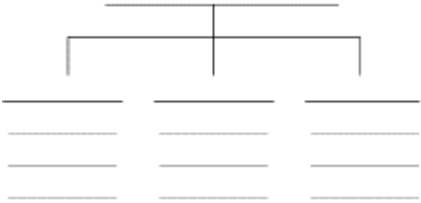
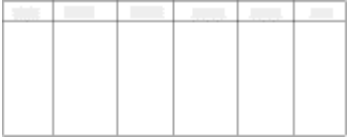


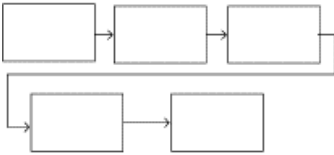
Graphic.org

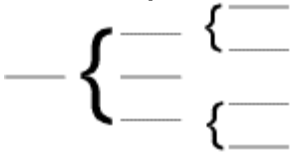
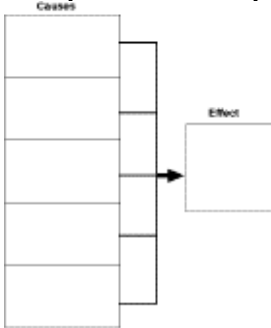
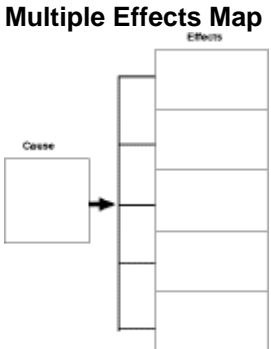
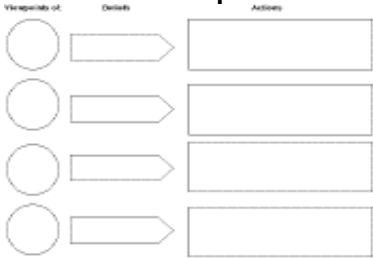
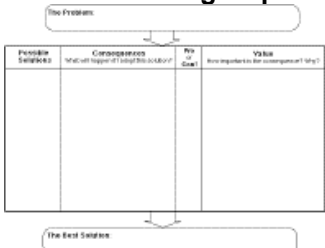
<http://www.graphic.org/goindex.html>

Freeology.com

<http://www.freeology.com/graphicorgs/>

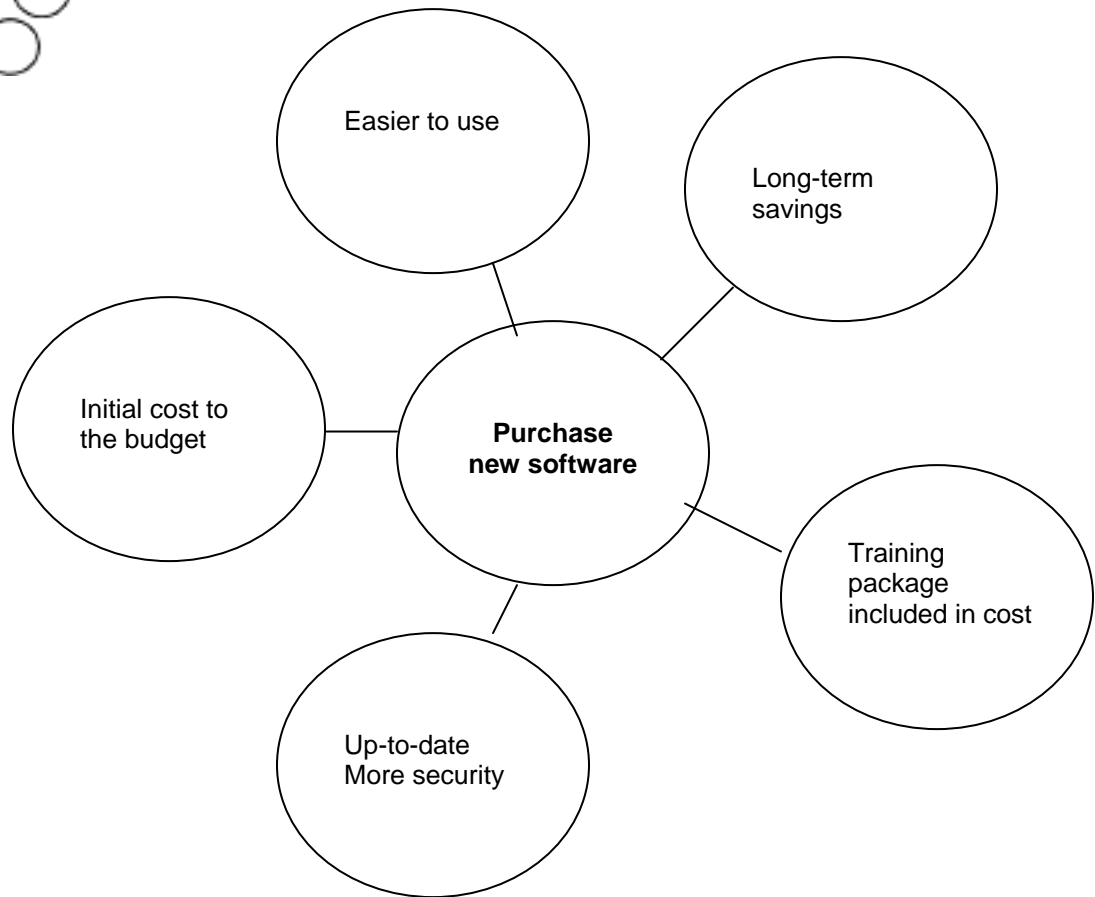
Handout A: Types of Graphic Organizers

Thinking Skills	Questions	Graphic Organizers/ Thinking Maps
Describing Qualities	What are you describing? What are its qualities?	Bubble Map 
Classifying/ Categorizing	What sort of thing is this? What are the sub-categories? What other things can go into these sub-categories?	Tree Map  Chart 
Compare and Contrast	What are the similar and different qualities of these things? What qualities of each thing correspond to one another? In what way?	Modified Venn 
Sequencing	What happened? What is the sequence of events? What are the substages?	Timeline  Flow Chart 

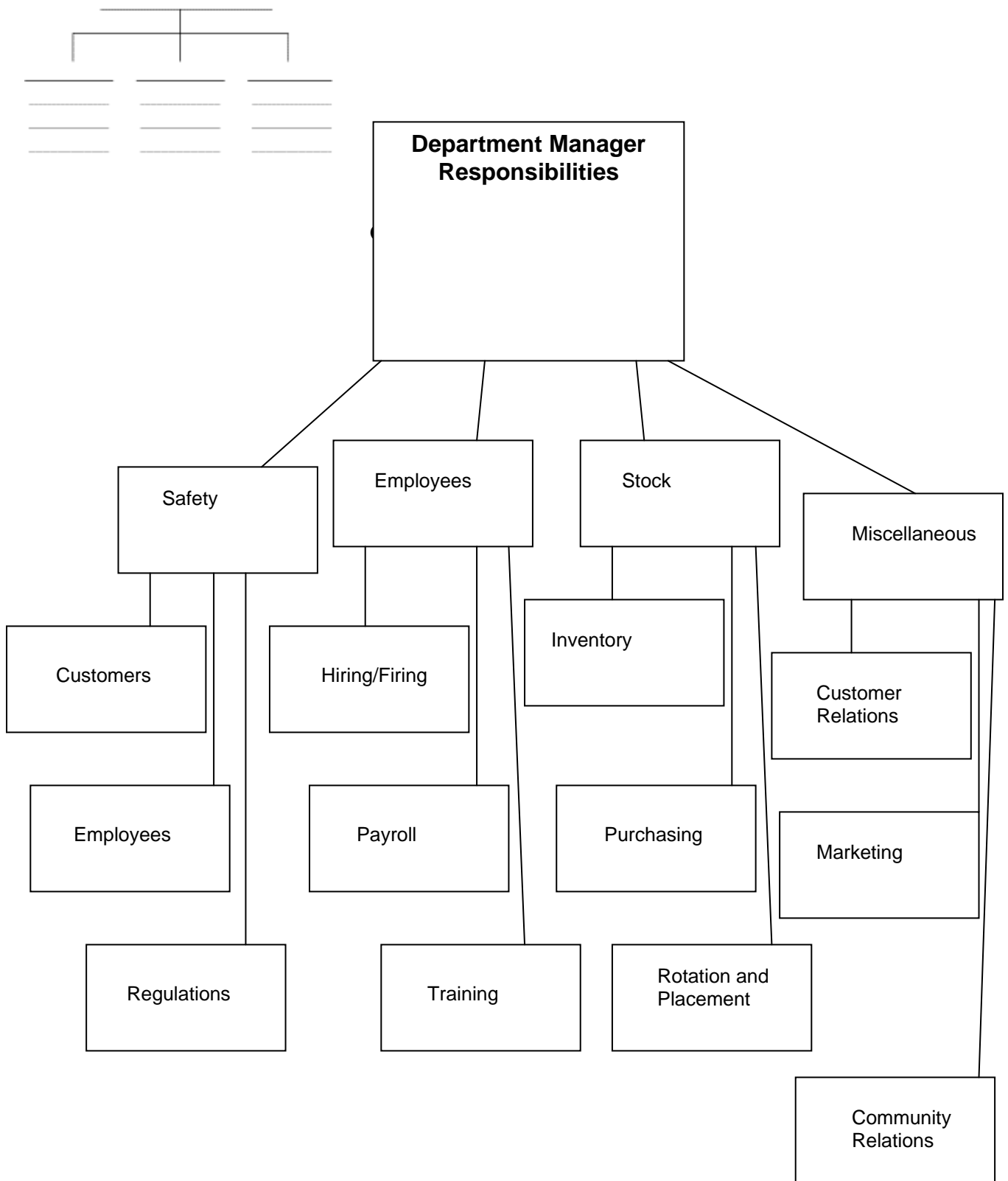
<p>Part to Whole</p>	<p>What is the whole object or concept? What are the major parts of it? What are the subparts of each major part (if any)?</p>	<p>Bracket Map</p> 
<p>Cause and Effect</p>	<p>What are the causes and effects of this event? What might happen next?</p>	<p>Multiple Causes Map</p>  <p>Multiple Effects Map</p> 
<p>Point of View</p>	<p>What are the various perspectives? How do they impact behavior? What contributed to their development?</p>	<p>Point of View Map</p> 
<p>Problem Solving</p>	<p>What is the problem? What are the possible solutions? Which solution is best? How will you implement this solution?</p>	<p>Problem-Solving Map</p> 

Handout B: Sample Completed Graphic Organizers

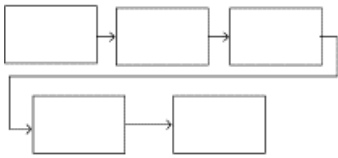
Bubble Map – describe qualities or characteristics



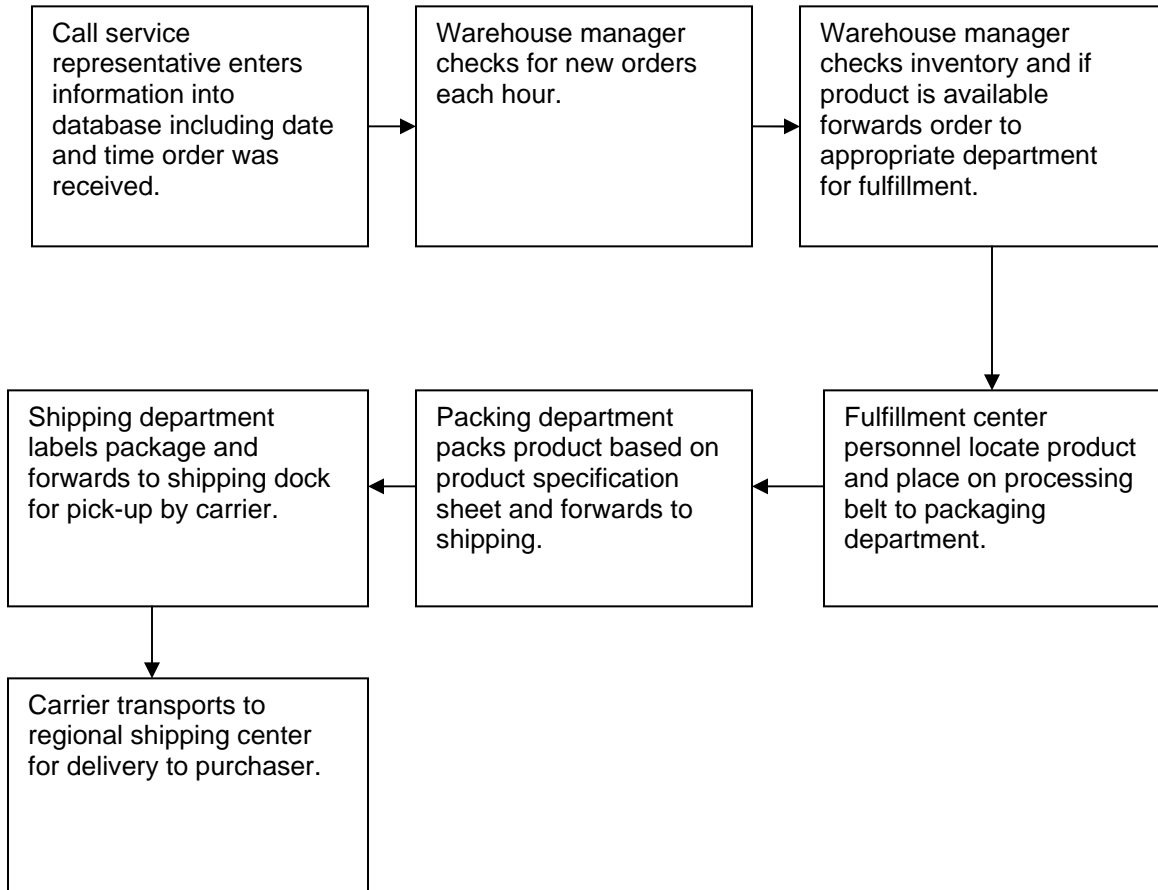
Tree Map – categorize, classify items, ideas, people, positions, etc.



Flow Chart – sequence of events, order in which something must be completed



Processing of Phone Orders



Writing Lesson 7: Writing Letters Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: Secretary, Manager, Customer Service Representative

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Organize information
- Use the appropriate format when writing a business letter
- Use the appropriate tone when writing a letter

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A – Sample Letter of Complaint
- Sample business letters (sample letters are available at:
http://www.io.com/~hcexres/textbook/models.html#complaint_letters)

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Letter writing
- Tone

Instructional Activities

Distribute **Handout A: Sample Letter of Complaint** to the students. Have students read the letter and make a list of items they would change. Have students share their lists with the rest of the class. Make a master list on chart paper, the board, or an overhead. If students identify the same types of problems, add a mark to indicate each time that is mentioned. This activity is designed to find out what students already know about letter writing, specifically writing a letter of complaint. Problems identified by students should include:

- No return address or date the letter was written
- No contact number even though a phone call is requested
- No closing, such as “sincerely”
- Tone is inappropriate

Discuss with students the importance of being able to write effective letters for the workplace, as well as for their own personal use. Although more people use the phone to communicate with others, a need still exists to write effective letters.

Show students copies of effective business letters. These can include letters received through the mail or at work. Review with students the standard components of a business letter, including the:

- Date
- Sender’s address
- Inside address (recipient)
- Salutation (title and name)
- Body of the letter
- Closing
- Enclosures (if included)

Have students brainstorm why they would write a letter in the workplace. Students should include reasons, such as: to file a complaint, to get information, or to provide information.

When writing letters, one of the most important elements is tone. Tone refers to the writer's attitude toward the reader and the subject of the message. Students need to understand that the wrong tone sends the wrong message to the reader and can produce an ineffective letter. If students have difficulty understanding tone, make the comparison to your tone of voice when you are angry, happy, sad, frustrated, calm, or harsh.

Explain to students that in order to set the appropriate tone in a workplace document (email, memo, brochure, or report), they need to ask themselves the following questions:

- Why am I writing this letter?
- Who am I writing to and what do I want them to understand?
- What kind of tone should I use?
- What kind of tone would I want to see if I were receiving this letter?

In general, business letters should present a tone that is:

- Confident
- Courteous
- Sincere

Divide the students into teams of two. Have each team review and revise the sample business letter and address any problem areas. Have students share their results. Compare the revised letters from each team. Are there similarities? Differences? Have students reach consensus on which of the team's letters is the most effective and most likely to get the results that are wanted.

Evaluation

Have students write a letter about a product they have recently purchased. The letter can express how much they like the product or concerns they have about the product. Review the letters for appropriate format and content. Check for grammatical and spelling errors. Highlight any specific error patterns that you find. Error patterns refer to items that consistently cause the students difficulty, such as subject/verb agreement or misuse of commas.

Extension

Provide students with copies of letters to the editor from the local paper. Have students identify the tone of each letter and discuss how they might have written the letter differently to make it more effective.

References

OWL – Online Writing Laboratory at Purdue University

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts>

Plain Language.gov – Writing Effective Letters

<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/guidelines/letters.cfm>

Online Technical Writing

<http://www.io.com/~hcexres/textbook/acctoc.html>

Handout A: Sample Letter of Complaint

Jason Richards
Datacom Services
1454 Madison Way
Alton, MA

Dear Jason,

I bought the Datacom 365 a few weeks ago. It doesn't work. I called the store and they said that I had to write a letter about this and that they couldn't do nothing about it. They gave me your name and said that I had to write you.

Your product is worthless and I want my money back. I set it up like my friends told me to and it just gives me an error message.

Give me a call and let me know what I need to do to get my money back.

Jeremy Wickham

Writing Lesson 8: Editing and Revising – What’s the Difference? Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: Reporter, Editor, Sales Manager, Public Information Officer, Teacher

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Distinguish between editing and revising
- Edit documents to address grammatical, spelling, and word usage errors
- Revise documents to improve clarity, unity, and coherence

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A: Sample GED Essay
- Handout B: Proofreading Checklist
- Handout C: Sample Documents for Editing

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Grammar, mechanics, and usage
- Word usage
- Organization
- Proofreading
- Editing
- Revising

Instructional Activities

Introduce the lesson by asking the students to define each of the following terms:

- Edit
- Revise

Don't be surprised if students have difficulty distinguishing between the two. In most cases, students look at revising as correcting spelling errors, adding or deleting punctuation, or changing verb tense. What they don't understand is that editing and revising are two very different skills they need to master for the GED essay, as well as for writing in the workplace. This lesson will focus on editing and revising a sample GED essay. The lesson may be extended to enable students to practice editing and revising workplace documents.

Editing results in changes to correct obvious mistakes. Usually it involves rearranging what is already on the document. Examples of editing include:

- Deleting unnecessary words
- Correcting spelling errors
- Correcting punctuation, such as commas, apostrophes, quotation marks, and periods
- Changing the format of text (for example, changing text from a paragraph to a bulleted list)
- Correcting grammatical errors such as subject/verb agreement, verb tense, pronoun reference
- Changing fragments to complete sentences
- Correcting run-on sentences

Editing makes a document more effective and easier to understand. However, students also need to learn how to revise documents. Revising a document changes what the document says.

Examples of revision include:

- Changing a paragraph or even the entire document from passive to active voice
- Reorganizing the paragraph so it flows better and is easier to understand
- Providing additional information to support a point or to give more details and examples
- Deleting sentences or paragraphs that are not relevant

Distribute **Handout A: Sample GED Essay** and **Handout B: Proofreading Checklist**. Have students work in teams of two to edit the sample essay. Debrief the activity by having students share their edits. Discuss the edits students made and why. Check for:

- Beginning and ending punctuation
- Commas – words in series, introductory phrases, appositives
- Fragments and run-on sentences
- Spelling errors
- Misuse of words – homonyms, pronouns, verb tense
- Text divisions – splitting or combining paragraphs

Explain that you are going to read the edited essay aloud. Students should listen and make notes about the essay, such as:

- What is missing?
- What could be said more clearly?
- What details or examples could be provided that would give the reader more information?
- Should the essay be organized differently?
- Is there something that just doesn't make sense?

Have students share their thoughts about the essay. Explain that merely editing a document does not make it easier for someone to read and understand. In many cases, students will have to revise documents to improve their clarity, unity, and coherence.

Have students return to their teams and revise the essay using their comments and recommendations. When students have finished, make copies of the revised essays and share them with the group. Talk about the changes that were made to the essay and what those changes could mean to the reader.

Discuss the importance of editing and revising for the GED Language Arts, Writing Test. Students should understand that both parts of the test require the ability to edit and revise text – Part I in multiple choice format and Part II through the essay.

Evaluation

Distribute **Handout C: Sample Documents for Editing** to the students. Have each student select one of the workplace documents and then edit and revise it. Students should be able to identify errors and make corrections, as well as revise the text to make it more effective.

Extension

Provide students with a topic for a workplace document, such as a letter, memo, or email. Have the students write the text and then give the text to another student for recommended edits and revisions. Discuss the recommendations and have the original writer make the changes.

References

OWL – Online Writing Lab at Purdue University
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/general/gl_edit.html

Proofreading – The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/proofread.html>

Handout A: Sample GED Essay

Prompt

If you could make one positive change in your life, what would that change be?

In your essay, identify the one change you would make. Explain the reasons for your choice. Use your personal observations, experience and knowledge.

Sample Essay

If I could make one positive change in my life the change would be in my attitude. I would change my attitude toward people and life. My attitude toward certain people I think is outrageous. This certain people are those people who thin they're god's gift to the world and I would also change my attitude toward people who are of my age but, act so child like. I would change my attitude toward these people because in the future I may need some of these people that I've treated so negative. If I continued to treat these people badly, I may not amount to anything in the future. My attitude toward life would also have to change I think because I'm doing so well at this point in my life. Life I think is just a game that everyone has to play in order to survive. I'm not playing to survive I playing only to get bye. I feel if my attitude doesn't change at this point I will never be able to survive the game. The above things about my attitude have to be my positive change in my daily life.

Handout B: Proofreading Checklist

Proofreading Checklist

___ Have you spelled all words correctly? Use the following tips:

- Use spell check if working on the computer.
- Circle words that might be wrong and look them up.

___ Does each sentence end with the correct punctuation mark?

___ Have you begun all sentences with a capital letter?

___ Check comma usage:

- Commas separate items in a series.
- Commas precede coordinating conjunctions (and, but, so, for or, nor, yet) in compound sentences.
- Commas DO NOT separate two complete sentences. (This is called a comma splice.)

___ Have you used apostrophes to show possession, to mark contractions, or to show missing numbers (as in '06 for 2006)?

___ Are all proper names of people, places, and things capitalized?

___ Do subjects and verbs agree in tense and in number?

___ Do pronouns and antecedents agree?

___ Do you have any run-ons, comma splices, or sentence fragments?

___ Do all of your paragraphs:

- support the prompt or topic?
- contain a topic sentence?
- contain only sentences (3-5) that support the topic sentence?
- use effective transitions between ideas?

___ Have you read your paper out loud (or had it read to you) to listen for confusing wording or missing ideas?

___ Does your document meet the assignment requirements? (format, content)

Handout C: Sample Documents for Editing

Sample 1 – Informational Material

Women and Heart Attack

Women account for nearly half all heart attack deaths. There is differences in how women and men responds to a heart attack. Women are less likely than men to believe that their having a heart attack and more likely to delay seek emergency treatment. Further, women tends to be about 10 year older. When men have a first heart attack. They are more likely to have other conditions, such as diabetes high blood pressure, and congestive heart failure. Making it all the more vital that they get proper treatment fast. As with men, women's' most common heart attack symptom are chest pain or discomfort. However, women are somewhat more likely then men to experience some of the other symptoms such as shortness of breath; nausea/vomiting; or back or jaw pain.

Adapted from an American Heart Association Flyer

Sample 2 – Letter of Invitation

Mr. Joseph Alu
234 Anywhere Avenue
Anytown, FL 33444

Dear Joe,

The enclosed Enrollment Application make it easy for you to apply for \$50,000 in life insurance. No medical exam for FLAAC members. You will be approved based on your answer to three health questions.

You can apply for Term Life by mail in just a matter of minutes and approved in a matter of days. This policy is underwritten by Anywhere Life and Casualty Company. This is an easy way and inexpensive way to add to an exiting plan or get new coverage. The current rates are: \$10,000 for \$24.85 a month, \$30,000 for \$66.55 a month, and \$50,000 for \$118.95 a month.

This is a smart choice to help take care of bills you left behind or to give to a charity. Apply by February 1 to get this special deal.

Sincerely,

Sakira Iman
Assistant Vice President, Anywhere Life and Casualty Company

Reading Lesson 1: Too Much Information! Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: Manager, Supervisor, Receptionist, Researcher, Teacher

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Scan different types of workplace information
- Identify different informational clues to use when scanning
- Apply scanning techniques to different workplace documents

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A: Hints and Tips for Better Scanning
- Handout B: Forms, Forms, Forms!
- Sample Employee Handbooks
- Workplace Documents
- W-4 form (available on the web at: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw4.pdf>)
- Sample Purchase Order Form – local forms can also be used (<http://www.businessownersideacafe.com/fridge/forms/po.html>)
- Sample Requisition for Purchase Order –local forms can also be used (http://www.uwosh.edu/departments/admin_serv/formspg.htm)

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Scanning skills
- Comprehension

Instructional Activities

Ask the class to think about themselves as new employees in a company. What are some of the things that they would want and need to know about their new company? Answers may include: the company's product(s), work schedules, pay scales, attendance policies, and benefits. Ask the class to identify a good source for finding answers to the many questions that they might have as a new employee. Student answers should include that they would use an Employee Handbook.

Ask how many students have read in its entirety an Employee Handbook. Most students will probably answer that they have not or may not even know whether one exists. Discuss that many employees do not read certain materials in their entirety, but rather use these materials as resource guides to locate specific information. Scanning is a reading technique used to look for specific information in a text. Ask students when they might use scanning rather than a more intensive reading strategy. Answers may include: looking up a phone number, reading through the want ads in the newspapers, browsing television schedules for a favorite show, looking through a catalogue – the list is endless.

Discuss that scanning is an important skill in the workplace when one is looking to quickly find specific information, as there may not be time to read every word.

Share with students the information on **Handout A: Hints and Tips for Better Scanning**. Discuss the different hints. Have students brainstorm additional ways that they effectively scan materials.

When developing the skill of scan reading in class, it is important for students to practice the skill. One technique is to provide students with a list of questions to answer in a specific time limit. Provide each student with sample completed forms (W-4 form, purchase order, requisition for purchase order). The teacher will need to have completed the forms prior to the class session. Sample forms from the Internet or from local businesses may be used.

Give each student **Handout B: Forms, Forms, Forms!**. Set a timer and have students scan the forms to answer the questions. Remind students to use their best scanning skills. Scanning activities can be made into contests where the first student who correctly completes the form wins.

Discuss any difficulties or problems in finding the information. Debrief the activity by having students suggest forms that they have had to complete, either in their work or personal life. Use these forms for future scanning activities.

Evaluation

Provide students with an employee handbook and a list of policy topics. Have students scan the handbook to locate each policy. Students should indicate the page number and the “gist” of the policy. Depending on the handbooks used, topics could include: open door policy, amount of annual vacation time, visitor policy, orientation period, number of days of personal leave, normal work hours, pay date, health care plan name.

Extension

Every workplace has its own special vocabulary. The job terms may describe people, equipment, tools, materials, instructions, or any number of work-related practices. For example, in a hardware store, individuals may be referred to as customers; in a doctor’s office they are considered patients; and lawyers have clients.

Provide each student with an article, magazine, manual, or brochure that is related to a specific occupation. Give them a list of job-related vocabulary words. Students should scan the reading material to find each of the words. Have students document the page on which they found each word. Next have students return to each page and scan the material for a definition – either direct or in context. Discuss how scanning is often used in the workplace when specific information is needed.

References

Partnership for Reading: The National Institute for Literacy
<http://www.nifl.gov/>

Wisconsin LEARNS (Literacy Education and Reading Network Source)
<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=73>

Handout A: Hints and Tips for Better Scanning

Scanning is a fast reading technique. It is a technique you often use when looking up a word in the telephone book or dictionary. You search for key words or ideas. In most cases, you know what you're looking for so you concentrate on finding that particular answer. Scanning involves moving your eyes quickly down the page seeking specific words and phrases. Scanning is often used when you first find a resource to determine whether it will answer your questions. Once you've scanned the document, you might go back and skim it.

Hints and Tips for Better Scanning

1. Don't try to read every word. Instead, let your eyes move quickly across the page until you find what you want.
2. Use clues on the page to help you find information, such as headings and titles.
3. Use "header" words to help you scan, such as the bold type at the top of each page.
4. Look for the writer's use of organizers, such as numbers, letters, steps, key ideas in the margins, signal words (first, second, next), and different types of font (bold faced, italics, size, style, color)
5. If you are reading for a workplace project, start by thinking about some of the questions that you will want to answer. Doing this can focus your mind and help you find the facts or information that you need more easily.
6. Many types of materials use alphabetical order, such as technical manuals and indexes to guides.
7. Practice, practice, practice! It takes practice and time to improve your scanning skills. The more you practice, the more efficient you will become in finding just the perfect answer to your workplace question.

Handout B: Forms, Forms, Forms!

W-4 Form

1. What is the title of the form?
2. Who needs to complete the form?
3. Why does the form need to be completed?
4. Who receives the form when you have completed it?
5. Do you need to sign the form?

Purchase Order

1. What is the title of this form?
2. To whom is the form directed?
3. When was the form written?
4. When is the order to be delivered?
5. What are the terms of the purchase?
6. What is being purchased?
7. What quantity is being purchased?
8. How is the payment to be made?
9. What is the purchase order number?

Requisition for Purchase Order

1. What is the title of this form?
2. Who is ordering?
3. Where should the order be shipped?
4. What is the description of the article(s) requested in the order?
5. What is the date on which this requisition was made?
6. To what purchase order number does this requisition apply?
7. To what account number should this order be charged?

Reading Lesson 2: The 5 Ws Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: All workers in positions where reading and decision-making skills are necessary

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Comprehend a workplace problem scenario
- Answer the 5 Ws
- Craft a conclusion to a problem

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A: Solving Workplace Problems Through Analyzing the 5 Ws
- Handout B: Problem/Solution

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Questioning Skills
- Comprehension
- Problem Solving

Instructional Activities

Introduce the lesson by asking students to define the word “summarization.” Answers should include that summarization is restating the essence of a text or an experience in as few words as possible, while keeping the meaning of what has been read or experienced. Discuss with students that a summary is a brief statement or set of statements used to show how a reader has condensed information to get to the central message of a larger “chunk” of information. Sometimes this central message is called the gist of the text. A summarization strategy is a set of steps that a student follows to determine the gist of the “chunk” of information that is being summarized. Different summarization strategies may be required for different types of text and different lengths of text. Summarizing is an effective tool to help them identify main ideas, generalize, remove redundancy, integrate ideas, and improve memory for what is read. Summarizing can also be used to generate and answer questions.

Ask students what elements are necessary in a summary. Answers should include that a summary is composed of the “who,” “what,” “when,” “where” and “why” of the reading selection. The “how” is also sometimes included in a summary.

Share with students that many well-known businesses (e.g., Honda Motor Company, Worthington Industries, Target) analyze situations and solve problems using the 5 Ws strategy, similar to the comprehension strategy that they use when reading text. Provide students with **Handout A: Solving Workplace Problems Through Analyzing the 5 Ws**. Have students read the workplace scenario and answer the 5 W questions. Students should also provide a conclusion of the problem and predict what will occur in the future.

Debrief the activity by having students share their answers. Discuss adding an “H” to the process and “how” students would solve the workplace problem of increased customer complaints.

Evaluation

Monitor student comprehension of different types of reading materials by using a during- and post-reading strategy. One technique is to use a modified version of the 5 Ws graphic organizer used in this lesson. Sample graphic organizers that can be used to evaluate a student's comprehension skills are located in the ***Florida GED: Beyond the Basics Resource Manual***.

Extension

Have students reread the scenario with Alison. Next have them complete the graphic organizer located in ***Handout B: Problem/Solution***. Debrief the activity by having students compare and contrast the two formats for solving workplace problems.

References

Morrow, Cherie. Reading for Information: Targets for Learning. Teaching Workplace Reading Skills. ERIC Document ED444012
http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/22/42/12.pdf

Partnership for Reading: The National Institute for Literacy
<http://www.nifl.gov/>

Wisconsin LEARNS (Literacy Education and Reading Network Source)
<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=73>

Handout A: Solving Workplace Problems Through Analyzing the 5 Ws

Directions: Read the following workplace scenario. When you have finished, help Alison complete her analysis by completing the **5 Ws Problem Analysis Form** on the next page. When you have finished, develop a conclusion as to why the problem occurred and predict what will happen in the future.

Problem: Client Complaints Increased by 10% Yesterday

As the senior customer service representative for an insurance firm, it is Alison's task to review customer complaints on a daily basis. The customer service department prides itself on excellent service for all clients. During the past year, the department received a commendation for having a 99% customer satisfaction rate. Due to the rapid growth of the company, the firm has added new employees. New employees are provided with a comprehensive orientation program during their first month of employment, as well as on-the-job training.

As Alison is reviewing yesterday's call log, she notices that there were numerous customer complaints during the afternoon hours of 1:00 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. The number of complaints was much greater during these three and a half hours than during the past entire week. In fact, customer complaints increased by ten percent! Puzzled, Alison decided to use the 5Ws to analyze what had happened. Before she started to analyze the problem, she quickly scanned the questions for which she would be seeking answers and added some initial thoughts:

- What was different about yesterday (e.g., clients, staff, services)?
- When were complaints received (e.g., early, late, throughout the day)?
- Where were complaints received (e.g., switchboard, front desk)?
- Who received complaints (e.g., all staff equally or most were received by a few staff members)?
- Why were complaints received (e.g., what were complaints about)?

What was different about yesterday? The company had not added any new services. However, there were a couple names Alison did not recognize. She looked at the recently hired list and noticed that two employees started work yesterday. They attended orientation in the morning and then worked at the agent windows in the afternoon. Alison looked at where the complaints were received and noted that most complaints were indeed at the agent windows.

Alison quickly reviewed her list again to see whether it was the new employees who received the complaints and what complaints were received. She noticed that there were many different types of complaints and those customers primarily dealt with a new employee and a veteran employee. Alison was puzzled. She knew Derek's work quite well. He was one of the senior agents for the company and extremely competent. What was going on with Derek? Did he have a "bad" day or was something else going on with him? Alison decided that in order to draw an informed conclusion about what had happened yesterday she needed to first talk with Derek. A quick phone call was all that Alison needed to finish her analysis. Derek had spent so much time assisting the new employee who was having a difficult time in retaining business information that he had not been able to provide his usual high-quality customer service.

Now it was time for Alison to document what she had learned about yesterday's events so that she could report to her supervisor the reason for the ten percent increase in customer complaints.

5 Ws Problem Analysis Form

Question	Answer	Relevant Facts
What		
When		
Where		
Who		
Why		

Conclusion:

**Handout A: Solving Workplace Problems Through Analyzing the 5 Ws
Sample Answers**

Question	Answer	Relevant Facts
What	Two new employees	Started yesterday
When	Majority were after lunch	New employees in orientation and training until after lunch
Where	At agent windows	New staff worked agent windows during the afternoon
Who	1 new employee; 1 veteran	Veteran employee trained new employee all day; reported new employee unable to retain information
Why	Varied	No trend, other than "who"

Conclusion: Increased complaints were experienced because a new employee was not retaining the information necessary to answer customer questions; and a veteran employee was distracted from his duties by having to repeat instructions and information to the new employee. This situation will be monitored to ensure that the new employee is able to satisfactorily complete his/her job. With additional training and time on the job for new employees, the percentage of customer complaints should decrease in the upcoming weeks barring additional problems.

Handout B: Problem/Solution

Problem:

Causes of the Problem

-
-
-
-
-

Possible Solutions

-
-
-
-
-

Handout B: Problem/Solution Sample Answers

Problem:

Increased customer complaints during the previous workday.

Causes of the Problem

- addition of new employees
- veteran employees needing to assist new employees rather complete than their own jobs
- new employees unable to retain information
- growth of company and increase of number of customers
- lack of time for adequate training of new employees

Possible Solutions

- have new employees complete orientation prior to on-the-job training
- add mentors or trainers so that current employees do not have to train new employees
- have new employees role play situations prior to working with clients
- assess knowledge-base of new employees prior to their having contact with clients
- monitor new employees while they are completing their tasks
- terminate employees who receive poor customer service ratings

Reading Lesson 3: Comprehending Technical Texts Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: All workers in positions where reading and decision-making skills are necessary

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Identify different types of technical reading for different occupations
- Define technical reading
- Complete a Mind/Concept Map for a technical reading

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A: Reading in the Workplace
- Handout B: Skills Needed for Technical Reading
- Handout C: Samples of Mind/Concept Maps
- Handout D: Web Graphic Organizer
- Handout E: Tree Graphic Organizer
- Handout F: Rubric for Scoring Concept Maps
- Samples of technical reading materials, such as manuals, brochures, and guides

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Types of technical reading
- Mind/Concept Mapping

Instructional Activities

Introduce the lesson by having students complete **Handout A: Reading the Workplace**. Have students discuss their answers and brainstorm additional workplace reading documents. Add these documents to the list.

Note to the Teacher: By completing this exercise and comparing their work to the key, students will expand their understanding of the wide range of documents found in the workplace and the jobs that use them. The exercise is not designed by the author as a paper and pencil test for which the goal is to get as many correct answers as possible. The provided key is intended to be used as only a guideline.

Ask students what the differences are between reading for pleasure and workplace or technical reading. Discuss that technical reading involves focusing on writing that communicates specific information. This information is found in a large variety of formats, such as directions, memos, reports, letters, proposals, prescriptions, charts, graphs, and spreadsheets. These commonly used workplace formats may be unfamiliar to the reader who is familiar only with typical fiction and nonfiction patterns and structures. Being able to read technical writing is a necessary literacy skill for the workplace.

Have students think about the remote control for their television. Ask how many buttons are on their remotes. How many do they know how to use? Ask whether they have read the manual that accompanied the remote and whether or not they understood the directions. This type of manual is an example of technical reading. Tell students that there are times in the workplace when it is prudent to ask questions of others to clarify technical reading materials that they must use. Verbalizing and discussing technical material is one strategy that is helpful in understanding this type of text.

Share with students that technical information is typically less friendly than other information. It is often complex and assumes a high level of initial knowledge. Manuals may be poorly written – a manual is often supplied with a product purely because it is expected. In many cases, the development of this type of manual is given to a junior member of staff to prepare, and may not have been properly edited or reviewed.

Show students how to use the table of contents and index to find the appropriate section referring to

specific information. Let students know that if they are reading large amounts of the material, it may be effective to photocopy the glossary and keep it with them as they read. When reading technical material, it is also useful to note key concepts and refer to them when necessary. An effective way of making notes is to use Mind Maps, often termed Concept Maps.

Model for students how to use a Mind or Concept Maps. Use a technical brochure as your source.

Handout D: Web Graphic Organizer and **Handout E: Tree Graphic Organizer** provide two beginnings for a Mind or Concept Map that can be used to demonstrate the use of this technical reading strategy or students can use a mind map similar to the first model completed.

To begin, write the title of the subject or document in the center of the page and draw a circle around it.

- For the first main heading of the subject, draw a line out from the circle in any direction, and write the heading above or below the line (*Use single words or simple phrases for information* in order to not clutter the map.)
- For sub-headings of the main heading, draw lines out from the first line for each sub-heading, and label each one.
- For individual facts, draw lines out from the appropriate heading line. Arrows can be used to show cause and effect.

Pair students in the class. Provide them with a technical writing sample and have them create their own Concept or Mind Maps. Have them post their results and compare and contrast the different types of information obtained from the different maps. Use a short excerpt or a brochure so as not to overwhelm students with the process.

Evaluation

Check student comprehension of technical documents by assessing the accuracy of their Concept or Mind Maps. A sample rubric for evaluating student comprehension is included in **Handout F: Rubric for Scoring Concept Maps**.

Extension

Have students bring examples of technical writing that they experience in the workplace or their community. In small groups, have them identify the different parts of each type of technical writing. Example: Employee manuals are divided into chapters and follow an outline format. A table of contents and glossary are provided to assist the employee in locating specific information.

References

Morrow, Cherie. Reading for Information: Targets for Learning. Teaching Workplace Reading Skills. ERIC Document ED444012
http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/08/22/42/12.pdf

Partnership for Reading: The National Institute for Literacy
<http://www.nifl.gov/>

Wisconsin LEARNS (Literacy Education and Reading Network Source)
<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=73>

Handout A: Reading in the Workplace

Directions: The job titles and documents listed are only a sampling of thousands found in the workplace. Completing this worksheet will provide you with a sense of the types of documents handled in different jobs. For each workplace document listed, write the letter of the jobs that most frequently use the document. Some documents will match with more than one job title.

- A. Air Traffic Controller
- B. Every Worker
- C. Assembler
- D. Automotive Technician/Mechanic
- E. C.E.O.
- F. Chef
- G. Construction Worker
- H. Day Care Teacher
- I. Department Head
- J. District Attorney
- K. Doctor
- L. Electrical Engineer
- M. Fast Food Grill Cook
- N. Finance Manager

- O. Foreman
- P. Insurance Claims Adjuster
- Q. Legal Secretary
- R. Meter Reader
- S. Nurse
- T. Receptionist
- U. Robot Operator
- V. Salesperson
- W. Tax Accountant
- X. Telephone Operator
- Y. Truck Driver
- Z. Waiter/Waitress

- ___ Accident Incident Report
- ___ Accounting Practices Manual
- ___ Annual Business and Budget Plan
- ___ Appliance Operating Instructions
- ___ Attendance Policy
- ___ Automobile Operating Manual
- ___ City Code
- ___ Claims Procedure
- ___ Company Newsletter
- ___ Company Party Announcement
- ___ Email Correspondence
- ___ Employment Advertisement
- ___ Health Insurance Benefits Description
- ___ Heavy Equipment Manual
- ___ Internet Data (e.g., product descriptions, abstracts, articles)
- ___ Job Description
- ___ Job Procedure
- ___ Job Training Materials
- ___ Letter Memorandum
- ___ Medical Report
- ___ Medical Textbook
- ___ Mortgage or Personal Loan Agreement
- ___ Notice of Personnel Change
- ___ Office Equipment Manual (e.g., fax, copier, computer)
- ___ Professional Journal for the Food Service Industry
- ___ Profit & Loss Report
- ___ Recipe
- ___ Safety Regulation
- ___ Supplier Contract
- ___ Tax Guide
- ___ Travel and Business Expense Policy

List any occupations that require *little or no technical reading*.

Morrow, Cherie. *Reading for Information: Targets for Learning. Teaching Workplace Reading Skills.* ERIC Document ED444012.

Handout A: Reading in the Workplace

Directions: The job titles and documents listed are only a sampling of thousands found in the workplace. Completing this worksheet will provide you with a sense of the types of documents handled in different jobs. For each workplace document listed, write the letter of the jobs that most frequently use the document. Some documents will match with more than one job title.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| A. Air Traffic Controller | O. Foreman |
| B. Every Worker | P. Insurance Claims Adjuster |
| C. Assembler | Q. Legal Secretary |
| D. Automotive Technician/Mechanic | R. Meter Reader |
| E. C.E.O. | S. Nurse |
| F. Chef | T. Receptionist |
| G. Construction Worker | U. Robot Operator |
| H. Day Care Teacher | V. Salesperson |
| I. Department Head | W. Tax Accountant |
| J. District Attorney | X. Telephone Operator |
| K. Doctor | Y. Truck Driver |
| L. Electrical Engineer | Z. Waiter/Waitress |
| M. Fast Food Grill Cook | |
| N. Finance Manager | |

O, P, S	Accident Incident Report	B	Job Procedure
N, W	Accounting Practices Manual	B	Job Training Materials
E, L, Z	Annual Business and Budget Plan	A, E, H, I, J, K, L, N, P, Q, S, T, V	Letter Memorandum
F, M, Z	Appliance Operating Instructions	K, S	Medical Report
B	Attendance Policy	K, S	Medical Textbook
D	Automobile Operating Manual	N, Q, W	Mortgage or Personal Loan Agreement
G, J, R	City Code	E, I, N, O, T, X	Notice of Personnel Change
K, P, S	Claims Procedure	Q, T	Office Equipment Manual (e.g., fax, copier, computer)
B	Company Newsletter	E, Z	Professional Journal for the Food Service Industry
B	Company Party Announcement	E, N, W	Profit & Loss Report
B	Email Correspondence	E, H, M	Recipe
B	Employment Advertisement	A, G, H, L, O, U, Y	Safety Regulation
B	Health Insurance Benefits Description	N, V	Supplier Contract
C, D, G, O, U	Heavy Equipment Manual	W	Tax Guide
J, K, L, P, Q, V	Internet Data (e.g., product descriptions, abstracts, articles)	E, G, I, J, K, L, N, P, Q, V, W, P	Travel and Business Expense Policy
B	Job Description		

List any occupations that require **little or no technical reading**.

Students may find jobs that they feel require no reading; however, the vast majority of students must acquire reading for information skills to succeed on the job.

Morrow, Cherie. *Reading for Information: Targets for Learning. Teaching Workplace Reading Skills.* ERIC Document ED444012.

Handout B: Skills Needed for Technical Reading

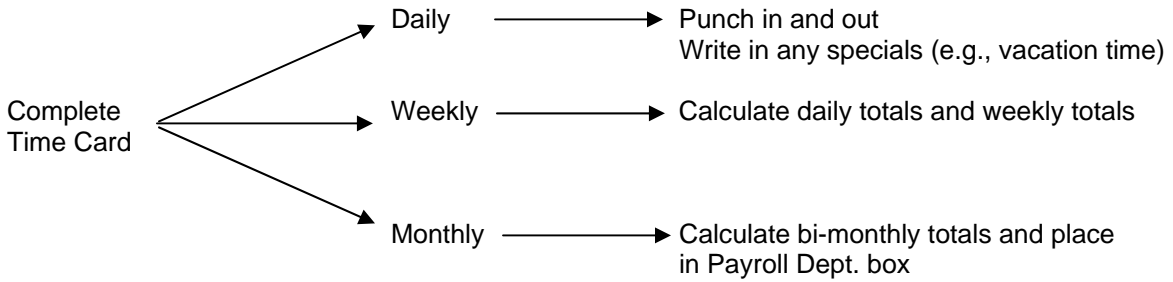
When reading technical materials, an individual must:

- Follow step-by-step directions
- Be able to read and comprehend multiple step directions
- Be aware of highly technical vocabulary-- each technical field has its own jargon
- Be able to read succinct writing – technical writing is often written in brief phrases or incomplete sentences
- Use reading as a tool to accomplish a task
- Read critically and use reasoning skills
- Apply problem-solving abilities:
 - Reading numbers, symbols, graphics
 - Being aware of one's prior knowledge and background experience in order to monitor one's understanding
- Recognize the various formats of technical writing:
 - Step-by-step directions
 - Text that is answered-orientated (typical questions asked and answers to those questions)
 - Visual representations to clarify and reinforce directions
- Be able to interpret abbreviations and acronyms
- Adjust speed (rate) of reading to accommodate different formats used in technical writing

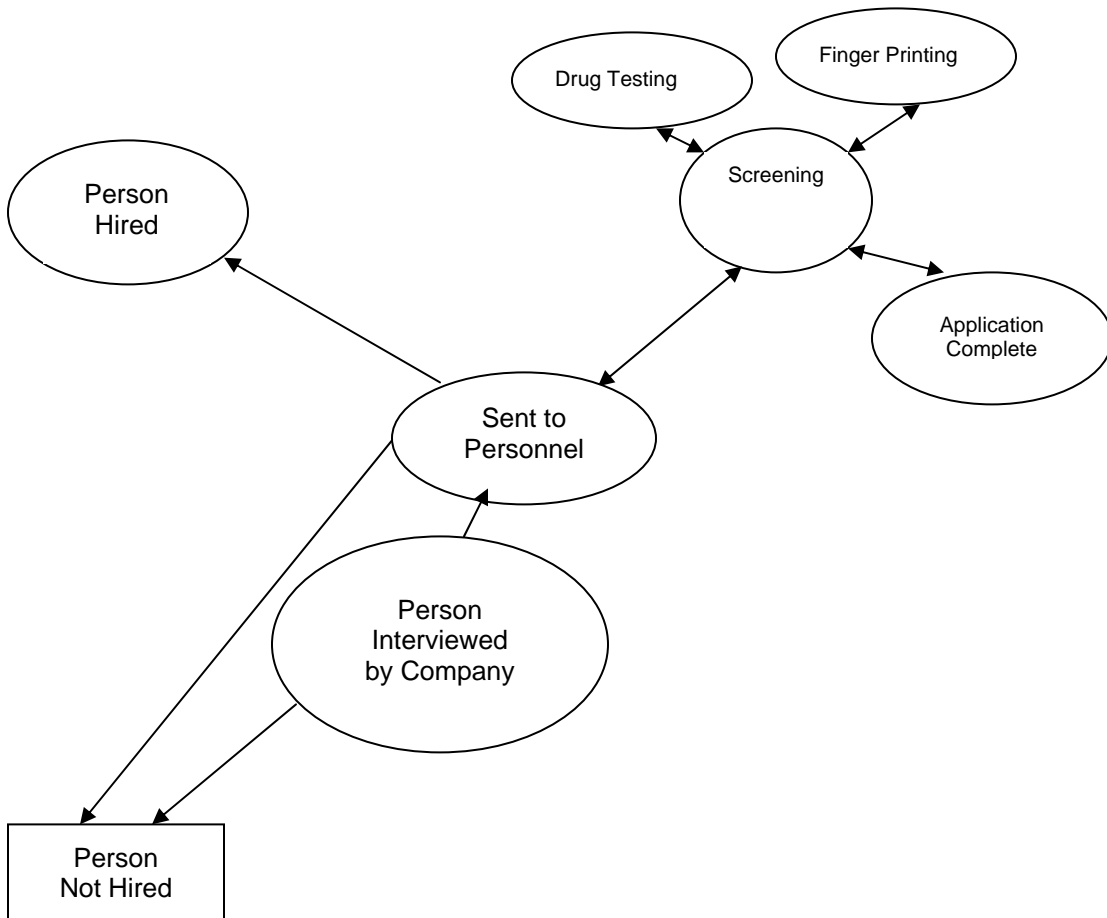
Types of technical readings can include such things as:

- Work-related procedures
- Corporate annual reports
- Case studies
- Feature design documentation
- Functional specifications
- Getting started cards or guides
- Hardware maintenance and repair procedures
- Industrial film or video scripts
- Installation guides
- Magazine articles
- Network administrators' guides
- Network configuration guides
- Network recovery guides
- Policies and procedures manuals
- Presentations
- Proposals
- Reference documents
- Release notes
- Reports
- Requirements documentation
- Scientific reports
- Site preparation guides
- Specifications
- Technical papers
- Training materials
- Troubleshooting guides
- Tutorials (multimedia)
- User guides
- White papers
- User Interface test reports

Handout C: Samples of Mind/Concept Maps



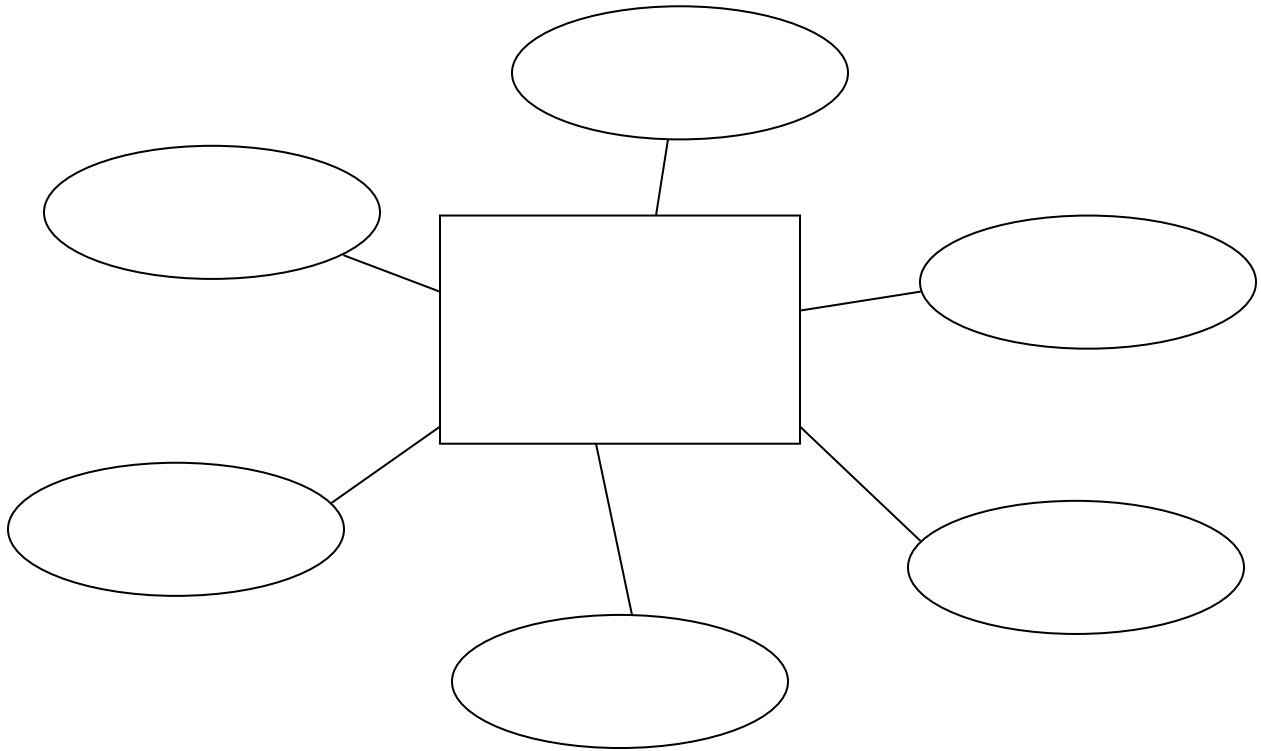
The above is a sample mind or semantic map illustrating the process for processing time cards for a company.



The above is a sample concept map illustrating a partial hiring process as stated in a company's policy and procedure manual.

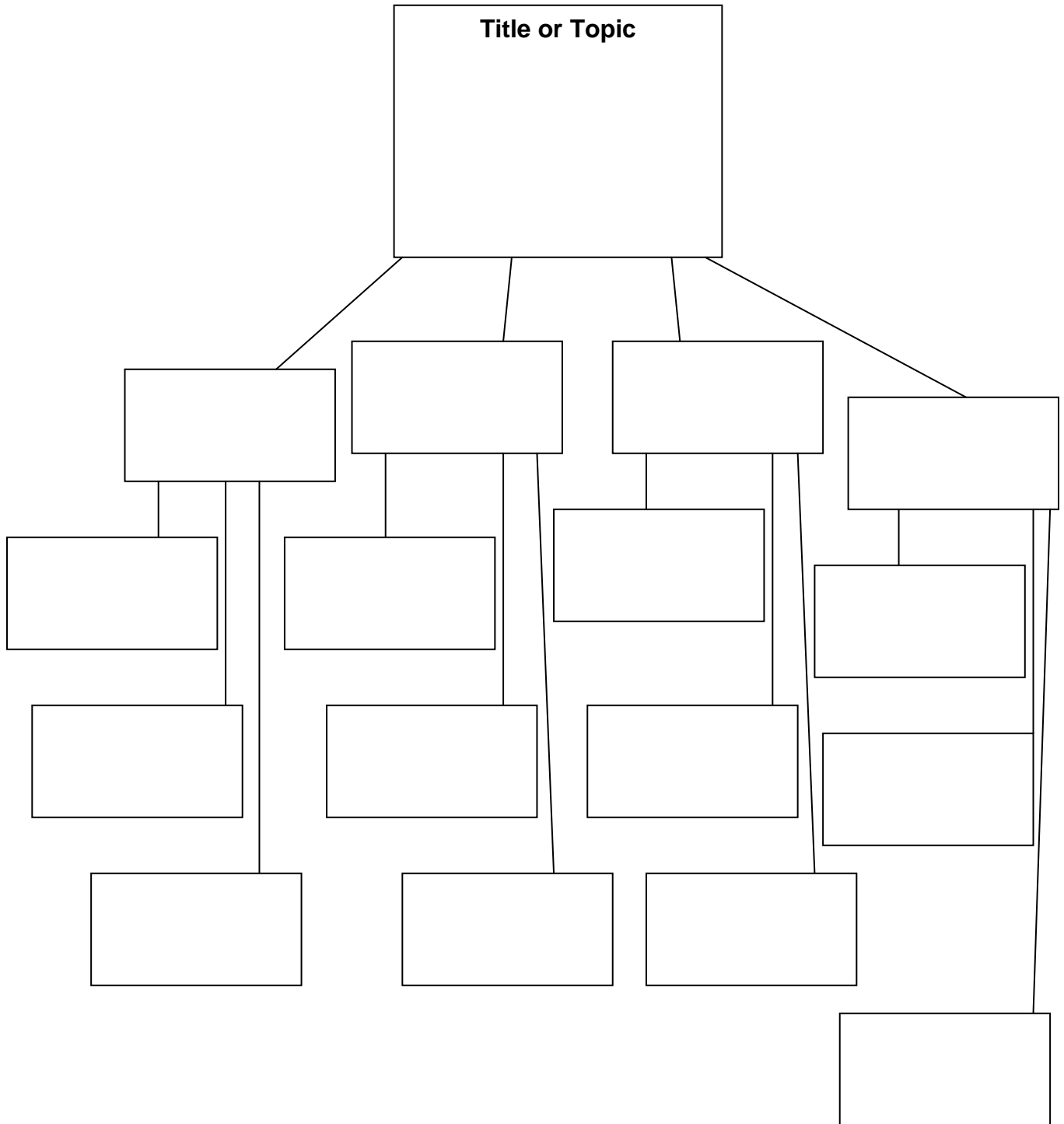
Handout D: Web Graphic Organizer

Use the following organizer to develop your ideas or concepts. Identify your topic or task in the middle box. Add ideas about the topic/task in each of the circles.



Handout E: Tree Graphic Organizer

Use the following to help you connect different ideas and details about a topic.



Handout E: Rubric for Scoring Concept Map

	4	3	2	1	0
Hierarchy	Complete, meaningful, and valid.	Most, but not all are present and valid.	Some are present and valid.	Few are present and/or valid. Several concepts are missing.	Hierarchy is missing or not valid.
Branches	All are appropriate, meaningful, and valid.	Most are appropriate, meaningful, and valid.	Some are appropriate, meaningful, and valid.	Few are appropriate, meaningful, and valid.	Missing, inappropriate, or invalid.
Differentiation of Concepts on Each Branch	All valid.	Most are valid.	Some are valid, but some subconcepts are invalid.	Few subconcepts are present and/or are invalid or trivial.	Subconcepts are missing.
Examples	Examples are complete, illustrative, and significant.	Most examples are complete, illustrative, and significant.	Incomplete set of examples, but some are present, illustrative, and significant.	Incomplete sets, few are present or valid.	Examples are missing.
Degree of Conceptualization	Evidence of clear understanding of the concept.	High degree, but not complete, understanding of the concept.	Moderate degree of understanding of concept with some faulty perceptions.	Low degree of understanding of concept with several faulty perceptions.	Evidence of complete lack of understanding of concept.

Reading Lesson 4: Informational Text: It Reads Differently Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: All workers, regardless of position

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Identify different organizational structures in information/workplace documents
- Read with better comprehension
- Identify purpose of informational texts

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A: Sample Questions Focusing on Patterns of Organization
- Handout B: Text Structure Outline
- Handout C: Samples of Informational Text

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Text organization
- Reading comprehension
- Chronological order, enumeration, cause/effect, comparison/contrast

Instructional Activities

To understand informational text, readers need to identify the major concepts in the selection and the important details that support each major concept. The manner in which these major and supporting ideas are organized can vary. An author writes an informational selection to provide information for the reader. The nature of that information and the author's specific purpose determine how the writer organizes concepts and ideas. What the reader intends to achieve determines how the material is read.

If students know something about the organization of a text before they begin the reading process, their minds will begin to make sense of what they are about to read.

Introduce the lesson by asking students if they have ever experienced frustration with trying to read something that they did not understand. What happened? Answers may include that they tried to tackle it or that they became discouraged and gave up because the material was too inaccessible or that they were confused about what they had read. Discuss that new reading tasks are generally difficult and confusing. However, once a reading type is practiced and mastered, the task becomes much easier and even enjoyable.

Have students brainstorm the types of clues that they use when they begin to read new material. Answers should include: connect new material to what they know or have read before; preview the text by scanning introductions, head notes, footnotes, and illustrations; thinking about the titles and making assumptions about the reading; highlighting or underlining words or phrases not understood.

Discuss with students that the organizational structure of a document is another important skill for better comprehension. Unlike narrative text that has one predominant structural pattern; informational text has several possible organizational structures. Four of the major patterns of organization of ideas in informational texts are:

- **Chronological/Sequential Order:** A main idea is supported by details that must be in a particular sequence.
- **Enumeration/Description:** A major idea is supported by a list of details or examples.
- **Cause/Effect:** The supporting details give the causes of a main idea or the supporting

details are the results produced by the main idea.

- **Comparison/Contrast:** The supporting details of two or more main ideas indicate how those concepts are similar or different.

Although most students are aware of text structure in narratives, that is not true necessarily for informational text. This is because informational text is structurally more complex and because students have not been exposed to nearly as many good examples of informational texts as fictional texts. To read informational materials effectively, students must become adept at detecting the relationships among the main ideas and their supporting details.

Teach each of the following patterns to students one at a time and in the following sequence:

- Chronological/sequential order
- Enumeration
- Cause/effect
- Comparison/contrast

When teaching each organizational pattern, use short, easy paragraphs from informational/technical readings. Provide guided practice in identifying organizational structure by having students read paragraphs representing all four patterns. Ask them to describe how the ideas are organized and why this method was used. Do they agree or disagree that this is the appropriate organizational pattern?

Students should:

1. Look for the most important idea in the selection. Note any signal words that indicate an overall organizational pattern.
2. Locate additional important ideas and identify their relationships to the most important idea.
3. Outline or diagram these ideas and visually represent them in some way the super-ordinate and subordinate concepts.

Note to Teachers: A word of caution: Identifying patterns of organization is not the ultimate goal of text structure teaching. This ability is only beneficial as students internalize knowledge about text structure and subsequently use it to enhance their comprehension. Teach students to use the patterns of organization to improve their comprehension.

Activity

Divide the class into small groups of 3-4 students. Use each of the individual templates in **Handout A: Sample Questions Focusing on Patterns of Organization** and **Handout B: Text Structure Outline** to teach organizational structure of text. It is recommended that students master each type of organizational structure prior to attending to the next type of text.

Example: Provide students with a text that uses chronological order, such as the one included in **Handout C: Samples of Informational Text**. Students should scan the text and answer the questions from **Handout A: Sample Questions Focusing on Patterns of Organization**. Give students only those questions that support the particular type of informational text being used. Example: Cut out the section of the handout that includes those questions that reference chronological/sequential order when providing text that uses chronological/sequential order.

Once students have answered the questions, have them complete the outline/template for that specific text (**Handout B: Text Structure Outline**). Discuss as a group the primary characteristics of informational documents that use chronological order. Have students locate additional workplace/information documents that fit this structure and share them with the class.

Once students are comfortable in identifying chronological/sequential order in texts, complete a similar process for enumeration, cause/effect, and comparison/contrast – in that order.

Evaluation

Provide students with sample informational texts and have them identify the organizational structure of each. Teachers may wish to use examples that students have provided.

Extension

Have students predict the type of organizational structure of informational texts prior to reading. Upon completion of the reading, discuss whether or not their predictions were correct. Students may identify different text structures, dependent on the reading. Remember that paragraphs or readings may not have a readily discernible text structure. However, where more than one text structure is present, a major or overall structure usually can be identified. Have students discuss why they selected a particular structure as the primary organizational structure of the text and how it assisted them in better comprehending necessary information.

References

Pennsylvania Reading Instructional Handbook
<http://www.smasd.org/pssa/html/Reading/pdf/rihand.pdf>

Wisconsin LEARNS (Literacy Education and Reading Network Source)
<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=73>

Handout A: Sample Questions Focusing on Patterns of Organization

Chronological/Sequential Order

- What is being described in sequence?
- Why did a chronological order pattern emerge?
- What are the major steps in this sequence?
- Why is the sequence important?

Enumeration

- What is being described by the author?
- What are the supporting ideas?
- Why is sequence important or not important?

Cause and Effect

- What is the cause/effect process the author is describing?
- Why did a cause/effect structure emerge?
- What is the cause?
- What is the effect?

Comparison/Contrast

- What is the author comparing/contrasting?
- Why is the author comparing/contrasting these things?
- Why did the comparison/contrast structure emerge?
- What are the advantages of...? the disadvantages of...?

Handout B: Text Structure Outline

Text Structure: Chronological/Sequential Order

Author's Purpose:

Major Idea:

Supporting Details

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Important Vocabulary

Clues for Reader (Comprehension Aids)

Text Structure: Enumeration

Author's Purpose:

Major Idea:

Supporting Details

Major Idea:

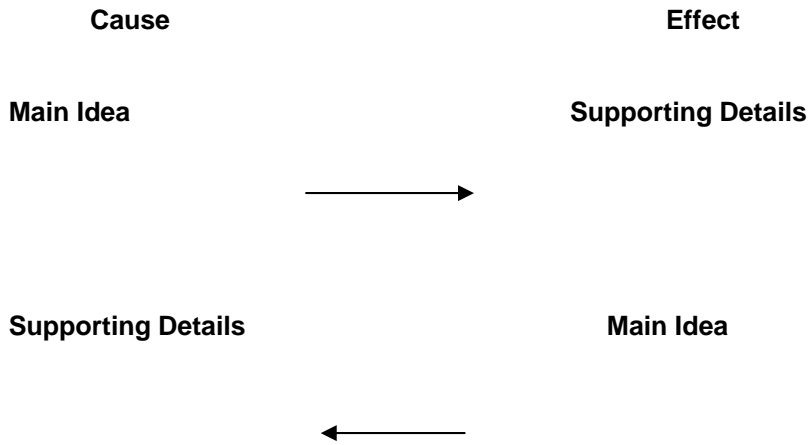
Supporting Details

Important Vocabulary

Clues for Reader (Comprehension Aids)

Text Structure: Cause/Effect

Author's Purpose:



Important Vocabulary

Clues for Reader (Comprehension Aids)

Text Structure: Comparison/Contrast

Author's Purpose:

Supporting Details	Major Idea	Major Idea
Attribute 1		
Attribute 2		
Attribute 3		
Attribute 4		
Attribute 4		

Important Vocabulary

Clues for Reader (Comprehension Aids)

Handout C: Samples of Informational Text

Chronological/Sequential Order

06/01/2007

To: School Site Administrators
From: J. D. Sullivan, Regional Supervisor
Re: Hurricane Procedures

Hurricane season is upon us! Due to the severe weather experienced by our school district last year, it is necessary to implement new hurricane procedures for the 2007 season. Please ensure that your school-based plan is posted and reviewed at your next faculty meeting.

In order to facilitate communication following a hurricane, please implement the following procedures. As soon as the storm abates, you must:

- Call one of the following individuals:
 - your director
 - another director if your director is unavailable
 - the regional supervisor
- Implement the school's phone tree to initiate communication with staff

As soon as the storm is over and it is daylight and safe to travel:

- Report to your school and complete a damage survey form or make arrangements with a designee to report to the school and complete a survey form. Remember that it is the principal's responsibility to continue to survey the school. All information must be verified by the principal
- Provide continuous phone updates with the regional supervisor and as requested, written reports
- Continue to keep staff apprised of developments via the school's phone tree

As we enter the new hurricane season, please make sure that you are prepared by keeping a digital camera accessible to take pictures of any potential damage to the school site. Also, make sure to keep your cell phones and pagers charged and on at all times. Adequate preparation will be our best ally in effective communication during the upcoming months.

Sample Enumeration Text

Requirements for Admission to the Graduate School of Education

All applicants to the College of Education are required to present numerous materials prior to being admitted as a full-time student. In order to ensure quality, consistency, and equity, all registrars must prepare individual student files that include those items necessary for processing. Each folder will be reviewed by the registrar supervisor before student letters of acceptance are approved. Materials to be included in the applicant files include: a copy of the check showing payment of the \$50 application fee, three official copies of transcripts from each undergraduate and graduate institution attended by the student, a photocopy of an individual's Alien Registration Card for U.S. Permanent Residents, copies of scholarly or professional written work completed (articles, reports, project summaries), three letters of recommendation on the approved Recommendation Form (R.C. 20-0301), and a completed Graduate School of Education Application Form (R.C. 20-0208). All materials must be originals, with the exception of payment of the application fee, the individual's Alien Registration Card (if applicable), and any scholarly/professional work submitted. It is the responsibility of the registrar to ensure that all materials are current and that the date of initiation is no more than one year prior to the submission of the completed files for approval.

Sample Cause and Effect Text

The following is an excerpt from a journalist's writings regarding his Mt. Everest Expedition. This material was used as part of a newspaper article.

Journal 11: Jim Wickwire's Departure
by Jim Wickwire

September 5, 2001

Seattle, Washington

Greetings from Seattle. Yes, Seattle.

I am sorry to report that I have had to leave the 2001 American/Canadian Mt. Everest Expedition for reasons beyond my control.

Five days after we established base camp, I walked up a short hill for a radio call and noticed I was unusually short of breath for the 17,000 foot altitude. Immediately, I was struck with the most severe headache in the back of my head that I've ever experienced. Nothing like this has ever happened on over 20 major expeditions in 41 years of climbing. In fact, I've almost never been troubled by high altitude headaches, a malady that affects most climbers at one time or another.

After communicating via satellite phone with neurologists in the United States, it was suspected that I had a broken cranial blood vessel or possibly an aneurysm. It was imperative to seek medical assistance as our team did not have a doctor in camp. After 20 hours of Jeep travel across Tibet and detouring around several landslides, I reached Kathmandu where I underwent preliminary testing. It was recommended that I travel home for more extensive tests. The Kathmandu doctors had not been able to completely rule out more serious medical problems.

Back in Seattle I was hospitalized for three days, undergoing a series of CT scans, an MRI and an angiogram. Although the doctors have now ruled out a brain hemorrhage or aneurysm, I am undergoing further neurological testing to determine exactly what the problem is.

So, for now, I am communicating with Ed Hommer and the team on a daily basis. My intimate knowledge of Mt. Everest will still allow me to help the expedition, even in the comforts of my own home 12,000 miles away.

I am quite disappointed that I had to leave the team on Everest. However, I keep each and everyone of them in my heart and look forward to their safe and successful return.

--Jim Wickwire, 2001 American/Canadian Team Leader

Retrieved from the World Wide Web at: <http://www.everestquest.com/journal11.htm>

Sample Comparison/Contrast Text

Healthcare Insurance Options

AnyCompany, Incorporated offers employees a choice of two health-care plans as part of their full-time benefits. Employees must annually sign-up for their choice of plan, no later than the end of January each year. The plans offered through AnyCompany, Inc. are the Point of Service (POS) HealthCare Plan and the Health Maintenance (HMO) HealthCare Plan. Both plans are offered at no cost to the employee. The following is information on both plans.

The Point of Service (POS) allows employees the flexibility to use either in- or out-of-network providers without the need for a referral. The annual medical deductible cost is \$500 per covered person per calendar year, not to exceed \$1,000 for all covered persons in a family. Co-pay per visit to in-network providers is \$15 with a 70% allowance for out-of-network providers once the deductible is met. Emergency room co-pay is \$100 with hospital room and board at \$150 co-pay per day. Prescription drugs at a network pharmacy have a co-pay of \$30 for a one-month's supply, with an alternative mail away program available at \$60 for a three-month's supply

The Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) allows the employee to visit any network provider without the need for a referral. However, a referral is required for any out-of-network provider. The annual medical deductible cost is \$250 per covered person per calendar year, not to exceed \$500 for all covered persons in a family. Co-pay per visit is \$20 for all providers approved. Emergency room co-pay is \$100 with hospital room and board at payment of 20% of eligible expenses after the annual deductible. Prescription drugs can be obtained at any pharmacy with a \$30 co-pay for a one-month's supply

Reading Lesson 5: Fact or Opinion? Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: Doctor, Pharmacist, Public Relations Specialist, Social Worker, Reporter, Restaurant and Food Service Manager

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Understand the basic differences between fact and opinion
- Recognize clue words that signify an opinion
- Evaluate evidence that supports or contradicts facts or opinions

Materials Required for This Lesson

- News articles and letters to the editor or editorials that cover the same topic (at least one article that outlines the facts and one letter that states an opinion)
- Handout A: Fact or Opinion – You Decide
- Handout B: Fact and Opinion Graphic Organizer

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Clue or signal words
- Facts and opinions
- Values and judgment
- Decision-making skills

Instructional Activities

Have students write three facts about themselves and three opinions that they have. Have students share their facts and opinions with the rest of the class or in groups of 3-4. Have students discuss the differences between their facts and their opinions. Answers should include: a fact is information that can be proved true through real, objective evidence; and an opinion is a belief, judgment, or conclusion that cannot objectively be proven to be true.

The ability to distinguish between fact and opinion is an important reading skill for adults in the workplace. Employees often spend a lot of their time reading material and then making decisions based on what they have read. Basing decisions on opinions, rather than facts, can create problems for employees.

Introduce students to clue words that can be used to identify opinions. These include:

- Words that interpret, label, or place a value on something, such as: pretty, ugly, safe, dangerous, evil, honest, attractive, well-dressed, good, bad, disgusting, wonderful
- Words that qualify a statement, such as: probably, perhaps, usually, often, sometimes, on occasion
- “I” expressions such as: I believe, I think, in my opinion, I feel, I suggest
- Words that mask the opinion, such as: in point of fact, the truth of the matter
- Words that indicate what must be done or thought by someone else, such as: should, ought

Provide each student with a copy of **Handout A: Fact or Opinion – You Decide**. Have them read each item and then determine whether the information is based on fact or opinion. Remind students to watch for clue words that help identify opinion statements. Make sure students indicate why they determined an item was fact or opinion. Discuss students’ results. If there are disagreements among students, refer them back to the item to make a final decision.

Ask students to define the term *informed opinion*. Explain that the distinction between fact and opinion is not always clear. Just because something is an opinion does not mean it isn't valid. Have students discuss some opinions they may have expressed during the day. Why did they have those opinions? Were there facts that lead them to form those opinions? Explain that adults as students, parents, and members of the workforce need to make and use *informed opinions*. *Informed opinions* are based on facts from direct observation, expert opinion, and research. In the workplace, informed opinions can be invaluable to co-workers, supervisors, and customers. The key is to recognize that these types of opinions have a sound basis in fact and are not just "feelings or instinct."

For the activity, collect recent newspaper editorials. Provide students with copies of the editorials. Ask them to select one. Distribute **Handout B: Fact and Opinion Graphic Organizer** to the students. Explain that their job is to analyze the editorial by categorizing each sentence as: fact, opinion, or fact + opinion. Provide ample time for students to complete their analysis. Have each student present his/her editorial to the rest of the class with a summarization of whether the editorial is sufficiently based on facts and is an *informed opinion*. Have students indicate whether they agree or disagree with the writer's opinions.

Evaluation

Select a letter to the editor and have students use **Handout B: Fact and Opinion Graphic Organizer** to analyze the letter. Have students determine whether facts exist to back up the opinions stated in the letter or if the letter is only focused on emotions. Have students write a short summary of the letter in which they highlight the author's main points.

Extension

Today, more and more companies are using the media to advertise the latest, greatest ways to lose weight, sleep more soundly, or feel younger. People see the ads in newspapers and on television and often jump to the conclusion that since the medication or supplement is new it might be just what they need. If it is over-the-counter medication, they rush right out and buy it. If it requires a prescription, they go to their doctor and request it.

Have students work in teams to review print ads for new medication or health supplements. Have them determine whether the information included is based on fact or opinion. Have students discuss the problem that might arise if doctors and pharmacists base their decisions on these new ads.

References

Ten Steps to Improving College Reading Skills
<http://www.townsendpress.com>

Critical Reading: Fact or Opinion – University of Alabama, Center for Teaching and Learning
<http://www.ctl.ua.edu/CTLStudyAids/StudySkillsFilers/Reading/criticalreading.htm>

Lesson 3 – Facts versus Opinion Carhart National Wilderness Training Center
<http://carhart.wilderness.net/docs/curriculum/3-2.pdf>

Education Oasis – Fact versus Opinion
http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/LP/LA/fact_vs_opinion_part_II.htm

Handout A: Fact or Opinion – You Decide

F or O	Restaurant Guide for a Local Area
	<p>Jim's Sweet Shop located at 480 Hampton Avenue serves coffee, donuts, soup, and sandwiches. Customers can eat in or take out.</p> <p>Why?</p>
	<p>Maria's Deli located at 735 North Front Street is the area's best place for homemade soup and sandwiches.</p> <p>Why?</p>
	<p>The Club Room located at the corner of Rainer and Duncan is the place to see and be seen. Enjoy fabulous desserts after a five-star dinner featuring fresh seafood, steaks, and wild game.</p> <p>Why?</p>
	<p>Renaldo's located at the Westend Country Club is a full service restaurant. Soups and desserts made daily. Private room available for small parties.</p> <p>Why?</p>
	<p>Book Review (indicate whether the review is based on fact or fact plus opinion.)</p>
	<p>From June 1942 to August 1944, Anne Frank, a young Jewish girl, lived everyday in fear of arrest by the German Nazis. All Jews in Nazi-occupied lands and anyone else the Nazis considered inferior were being arrested and sent to concentration camps. Anne went into hiding with her sister and parents in Amsterdam two days after her thirteenth birthday. They were concealed upstairs behind a folding bookcase and aided by Dutch men and women. Soon they were joined by a second family and a bachelor who were also avoiding arrest. In <i>The Diary of a Young Girl</i>, Anne describes her hopes, secrets, and feelings during over two years in hiding.</p> <p>Why?</p>
	<p>In his book <i>Amazing Grace</i>, Jonathan Kozol brings us face to face with the daily lives and seemingly endless struggles of the people who live in Mott Haven, a desperately poor neighborhood in the South Bronx. The book reminds us that the residents, like those in poor communities throughout the country, are not a breed apart but human beings like the rest of us, with feelings, needs, hopes, and dreams for their children. As human beings they have the right in this wealthy country to adequate shelter and food. They have the right to accessible health care and education that will enable them to survive in the twenty-first century. This is a painful and necessary book to read at an increasingly cold hour of our nation's history.</p> <p>Why?</p>

	Articles
	<p>(1) A storm carrying the threat of more snow and ice moved across the Southern Plains on Friday as more than 100,000 homes and businesses remained in the dark from earlier blasts of cold, wet weather. (2) Winter storm warnings covered much of New Mexico and parts of Texas and Oklahoma, with a half-foot to more than a foot of snow and sleet expected. (3) In Texas, 90 National Guard members were activated. (4) It is possible that even more will be needed. (5) At a plaza in El Paso, where large crowds usually gather near bus stops and restaurants, only a few people braved the biting wind. (6) "We prepared, getting all our winter clothes out, but it's difficult because the bus is late," said Alicia Lozano, 62, who wrapped a purple scarf around her head.</p> <p>(7) In tiny Oaks in northeastern Oklahoma, carpenter and rancher Garland Whorton has been without power for a week. (8) He spent three days using a chain saw to cut a path through the ice to his barn so he could reach his horses and mules. (9) "When that snow hits, it's going to finish us off," said Whorton, 59.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Adapted from article at USAToday.com</i></p>
	<p>Determine whether each sentence is a fact or an opinion and then tell why.</p>

Handout B: Fact and Opinion

Topic/Name of Article _____

Statement	Fact	Opinion

Reading Lesson 6: So What Is the Author Really Saying? Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: Social Worker, Teacher, Government Agency Worker, Police Officer, Fire Fighter, Legislator, Retail Sales Worker, Secretary

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Identify the author's purpose
- Recognize what the author expects them to know (background knowledge)
- Understand what the author is trying to say to them

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A: Workplace Rules
- Handout B: Sample Workplace Text
- Handout C: QtR Template
- Sample documents from the workplace: letters, memos, emails, handbooks, policies

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Point of view
- Purpose
- Comprehension
- Inference

Instructional Activities

Questioning the Author (QtR) is a series of questions that students make about the text they are reading. The QtR strategy is designed to help students think beyond the words that they see and figure out the author's purpose for writing and what the author expects the reader to take away from the text. Students look at the author's purpose and the author's writing style, organization, and ability to present information in a clear and understandable fashion.

To use the QtR process, students need to read a few paragraphs of the text and then answer five standard questions:

1. What is the author trying to tell you?
2. Why is the author telling you that?
3. Does the author say it clearly?
4. How could the author have said things more clearly?
5. What would you say instead?

Students may have difficulty understanding what the text means. According to McKeown, Beck, and Worthy, who developed the QtR strategy, the student may not have a problem with comprehension but rather that the author may have not clearly expressed him/herself. The QtR strategy is designed to help students "shift from trying to understand text to making text more understandable."

To help students get started with the process, distribute **Handout A: Workplace Rules**. Have the students read the brief text. Working in groups of 3-4, students then answer each of the questions. Have students share their answers and concerns. Compare and contrast the students' responses to the last question.

Explain that this process can be used with any type of text. This process allows students to go beyond a literal to a more inferential meaning. As students work with more complex, technical text, you may wish to

model your own thinking through using QtR with the text. Students should understand that everyone struggles to find meaning in text. However, with the right strategies students can make the process less time-consuming and frustrating.

Distribute **Handout B: Sample Workplace Text** and **Handout C: QtR Template**. Have students respond to the QtR questions. When all students have finished, pull the students into groups based on the text they questioned. Have students share their interpretations of the text. As a group, have students determine the:

- Author's purpose
- Most important points of the text

Evaluation

Provide students with a policy from your school district, community college, or agency. You may wish to select one that deals with sick leave, family leave, employee benefits or whatever you believe will be of most interest to your students. Have them read the policy and complete a QtR. Discuss their findings.

Extension

Many employers provide new hires with an employee handbook that outlines benefits, policies, and general company information. However, many new employees never read their company's handbook. Therefore, they don't have a clear understanding of company policy, except for what they learn from co-workers. Have students bring in their employee handbooks and use the QtR to analyze the information and what is expected of them in the workplace.

References

Florida Center for Reading Research Questioning the Author

<http://www.fcrr.org/FCRRReports/PDF/QuestioningAuthorFinal.pdf>

Questioning the Author Process

<http://www.bcpl.net/~dcurtis/psd/handouts/s1-11/proc.html>

Critical Analysis – Questioning the Author/Questioning the Book

http://www.esiponline.org/classroom/foundations/reading/critical_analysis.html

Questioning the Author – Maine Department of Education

www-tep.ucsd.edu/EDS161AFa06/

Handout A: Workplace Rules

Each employee of the Sanders Department Store must perform his/her duties in a professional manner. All employees must treat customers in a professional and courteous manner. All employees must speak respectfully and professionally at all times. Employees must never argue with a customer but rather refer the customer to a supervisor. While it is important that employees be friendly, employees must not cross the line into flirtatious behavior or make inappropriate advances to a customer. Employees who fail to adhere to store policy will face consequences including possible termination of employment.

What is the author trying to tell you?

Why is the author telling you that?

Is it said clearly?

How might the author have written it more clearly?

What would you have wanted to say instead?

Who was the author of this text? _____

Handout B: Sample Workplace Text

Sample 1

Safety Alert

In recent months, more customers are exhibiting extreme behavior toward ticket agents. The port authority has taken steps to ensure the safety of ticket agents confronted by angry customers, including posting additional security officers. Please cooperate with our efforts by following these instructions:

1. Don't panic when confronted by an angry customer. Often, you can de-escalate the situation by maintaining a calm voice and body language.
2. If the agitated customer persists, tell him/her: "Let me contact my supervisor to help you." Be sure to use a sincere and kind tone. Do not talk down to the customer because the customer is likely to become more agitated.
3. If working at an isolated gate, always keep another employee with you. If no one from your airline is available, contact security for back-up coverage.
4. If a flyer's angry behavior continues to escalate, push the silent alarm. If you suspect a weapon, push the alarm immediately.

Sample 2

Allied Technologies Drug Policy

Workers should be aware that using a controlled substance during off-work hours may affect performance on the job. Therefore, drug usage during off-work time may subject a worker to disciplinary procedures up to and including termination. In addition, use of any controlled substance in the workplace and/or during work hours will not be tolerated. Any worker found to be using a controlled substance in the workplace and/or during work hours will be subject to immediate termination.

Any worker performing duties for a federal contract or at a government facility where such work is being performed must notify his/her manager of any criminal drug statute conviction for a drug-related offense committed at the workplace within five (5) days after the conviction. Failure to report said conviction within the required period will result in immediate termination. Allied will report the conviction to the appropriate federal agency.

If job performance or behavior indicates drug abuse (abuse of a substance controlled by any law), Allied will immediately initiate a drug test, as required by the Department of Defense and by Allied. Such drug test is mandatory for all workers. Refusal to submit to a drug test in such situations is cause for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Disciplinary actions include temporary suspensions, probation, or termination. Participation in a treatment plan may be required. Non-completion of a mandatory rehabilitation program will result in termination. If a worker violates Allied's drug policy more than once, that worker will be terminated immediately.

Handout C: QtR Template

Summary of the Text:	
What is the author trying to tell you?	
Why is the author telling you that?	
Is it said clearly?	
How might the author have written it more clearly?	
What would you have wanted to say instead?	

Who was the author?

What are the most important points included in the text?

Reading Lesson 7: Using Graphic Organizers in Reading

Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: Consultant, Director, Engineer, Conservation Scientist, Meteorologist, Sales Clerk, Customer Service Representative

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Recognize signal words used by the author as part of the organizational structure of the text
- Select an appropriate graphic organizer to assist in comprehension

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A: Types of Informational Text
- Handout B: Signal Words and Graphic Organizers
- Copies of Graphic Organizers from **Florida GED: Beyond the Basics Resource Guide**, including:
 - Web
 - Venn diagram
 - Compare/Contrast
 - Cause/Effect
 - Sequence or Timeline
- Sample real-life informational text such as advertisements, brochures, pamphlets, articles, recipes, forms, flyers, and job descriptions

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Word clues
- Comprehension
- Graphic Organizers

Note to the Instructor: This lesson can be used as a follow-up to Reading Lesson 4. Prior to the lesson, gather samples of real-life document such as those described on Handout A: Types of Informational Text

Instructional Activities

Research has shown that the majority of text adults read is nonfiction or informational text. In fact, approximately 95% of the text found on the internet is informational. Distribute **Handout A: Informational Text** which provides a list of informational text that most adults encounter in their daily lives. Have students work in pairs to identify the use of each type of informational text. Have students share their results with the rest of the class. Discuss how common each of the texts are in daily life and the workplace and how they would get up-to-date information if those forms of text were not available. Have students keep the handout for use later in the lesson.

Understanding the organizational pattern of informational text can help students improve their comprehension skills. The text that most adults interact with in the workplace is informational in nature. Informational text can be organized in a number of ways. Review with students the four major patterns of organization that they are likely to encounter.

- **Enumeration/Description** – main idea is supported by a list of details or examples
- **Chronological/Sequential Order** – main idea is supported by details that must be in a particular order or sequence
- **Comparison/Contrast** – supporting details of two or more main ideas show how those concepts are similar or different
- **Cause/Effect** – supporting details give the causes of a main idea or the supporting details are the results produced by the main idea

To be more effective readers, students must learn how to identify the relationships among the important ideas included in informational text and their supporting details. Research has shown that to develop this skill, students need practice reading informational text on a daily basis, as well as narrative selections that are normally provided in the classroom.

Divide students into teams of 3-4. Have them discuss each type of informational text and how they believe the text would generally be structured. Have team members come to consensus and write down their ideas in Column 3 of **Handout A: Types of Informational Text**. When the teams have finished, have students discuss their decisions. See where there was agreement and disagreement over a predicted pattern of organization. Have students explain why they selected a particular pattern for certain types of informational text. Remind students to keep **Handout A: Types of Information Text** for later in the lesson.

One way for students to quickly identify a pattern of organization is to look for word clues in the text. Signal words provide the reader with direction. They let the reader know what is coming next and also how ideas are related to each other. Provide students with a copy of **Handout B: Signal Words and Graphic Organizers**. Students should keep this handout as a reference tool that they can use whenever they read information text.

Divide students into teams of 3-4. Provide each team with access to 3-4 different informational texts such as those included on **Handout A: Types of Informational Text**. Have the students read the text and underline signal words that were used by the author. Based on the signal words found in the text, have students identify the pattern of organization for that particular text. Check to see if their prediction about the pattern of organization for that particular text held true.

Evaluation

Based on the pattern or organization, have students use the appropriate graphic organizer as they read through the text. Have students write a brief summary of the important points of the text.

Extension

Have students bring in materials from their own place of employment. Have them share the text with the rest of the class, identifying:

- the pattern of organization that was used; and
- any signal words that helped them better understand the text.

References

Reading Instructional Handbook

<http://www.smasd.org/pssa/html/Reading/rihand14.htm>

Reading Instructional Handbook – Informational Text

<http://www.smasd.org/pssa/html/Reading/rihand12.htm>

College Reading Skills Program – Techniques for Skillful Reading

http://www.csupomona.edu/~lrc/crsp/handouts/recognizing_words2.html

Words That Signal A Text's Organizational Pattern

<http://www.somers.k12.ny.us/intranet/reading/signalwords.html>



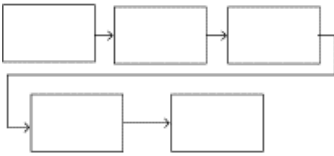
Informational Text


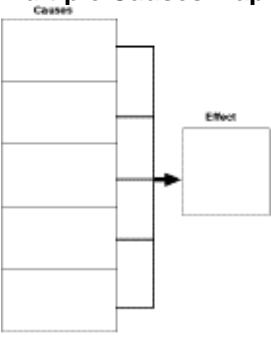
http://mdk12.org/instruction/curriculum/reading/clg_toolkit.html

Handout A: Informational Texts

Type of Informational Text	Used for...	Most Likely Organizational Structure
Advertisements		
Applications		
Articles		
Atlases		
Directions		
Editorials		
Flyers		
Forms		
Instructional manuals		
Invitations		
Job descriptions		
Menus		
Pamphlets		
Posters		
Questionnaires		
Recipes		
Rules		
Schedules		
Science investigations		
Surveys		
References		
Technical manuals		
Trade journals or books		
Web sites		

Handout B: Signal Words and Graphic Organizers

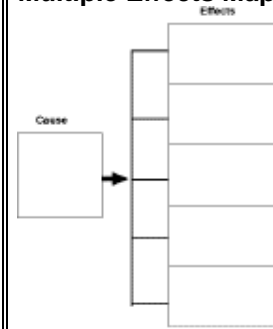
Text Organization	Questions and Description	Graphic Organizers/ Thinking Maps
<p>Enumerate/ Describe</p>	<p>Supporting details or examples of a major idea within the text.</p> <p>A list of characteristics. Detailed description of items in succession.</p>	<p>Bubble Map</p> 
	<p>Signal Words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for instance • for example • such as • to illustrate • most important • in addition • another • furthermore • and then • specifically • much like • in the same way • a key feature • the significant factor • especially important 	
<p>Sequence</p>	<p>Supporting details that must be accomplished or presented in a particular order or sequence.</p> <p>What happened? What will happen? What is the sequence of events? What are the sub-stages?</p>	<p>Timeline</p>  <p>Flow Chart</p> 
	<p>Signal Words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first • next • then • initially • before • after • when • finally • preceding • following • for one thing • until • since • earlier 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • while • during • later 	
<p>Compare and Contrast</p>	<p>Supporting details of two or more ideas that indicate how the important ideas are similar or different.</p> <p>What are the similar and different qualities of these things? What qualities of each thing correspond to one another? In what way?</p> <p>Signal Words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • different from • same as • similar to • as opposed to • instead of • although • however • compared with • as well as • either... or • neither...nor • less than • more than • too • best • analogous to • much as 	<p>Modified Venn</p> 
<p>Cause and Effect</p>	<p>Supporting details that give the causes of the important ideas or the supporting details that are the results produced by the important ideas.</p> <p>What are the causes and effects of this event? What might happen next?</p>	<p>Multiple Causes Map</p> 

Signal Words

- because of
- as a result of
- in order to
- may be due to
- effects of
- therefore
- consequently
- for this reason
- if ... then
- thus
- so
- since
- resulting from

Multiple Effects Map



Reading Lesson 8: What Does It Mean To Me? Beyond the Basics

Sample Occupations That Require These Skills: All workers in positions where reading and decision-making skills are necessary

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will be able to:

- Determine what is important in text
- Recognize the differences between primary and secondary details
- Recognize features of text that highlight items of importance

Materials Required for This Lesson

- Handout A: Consumer Information from the Federal Citizen Information Center
- Sample documents from the workplace: letters, memos, emails, handbooks, policies
- Local or national newspapers such as *USA Today*

Concepts/Skills Covered in This Lesson

- Comprehension
- Analysis

Instructional Activities

Ask students to brainstorm ideas about why they read information. If students indicate that they don't read, ask them "why?". Write the students' ideas about why they read on chart paper. The list should include such reasons as: entertainment, learn something new, find information about a specific topic, or for a class. Explain that the purpose for reading helps to determine what is and is not important in the text.

Ask students to brainstorm ideas about why they read information. If students indicate that they don't read, ask them why not? Students often state that they don't read. However, ask them how they got their driver's license or how they know which television show to watch or even how they know whether a certain piece of mail is for them. Many people do not sit down and read a novel in the evening. However, most people do read for information on a daily basis. Write the students' ideas about why they read on chart paper. The list should include such reasons as: entertainment, learn something new, find information about a specific topic, or for a class. Explain that the purpose for reading helps to determine what is and is not important in the text.

Readers need to determine what is important in text. This is especially true in the workforce where most people want to get to the "bottom-line." Employees don't have a lot of time to waste trying to determine what is important and what is not. In the first reading lesson, students were introduced to the skill of scanning for information. This lesson will take those skills and explore how to separate important information from information that may be good to know but really is not essential.

Text features can help students identify important information. Provide students with **Handout A: Consumer Information from the Federal Citizen Information Center**. Have them scan through the text and identify the specific text features that they find, such as: headings, words in bold or italic print, quotations, and Internet addresses.

Ask students what they know about the text based on the headings. Ask students what questions they could answer about the text just from the headings. If they were searching through material about employment, would they be interested in the information provided? Some students would be interested and others would not because each would have a different purpose for reading. Someone who is interested in re-entering the workforce after being laid off might be very interested in the information. However, someone

who has a job and is not looking to make a move would probably not be interested.

Have students read the first section of **Handout A: Consumer Information from the Federal Citizen Information Center** and circle or highlight what they believe is the most important information in that section. When they have found the most important information, have them underline details that support that information.

In the first section – a reader may identify the sentence: *“Being able to explain job hopping or gaps in employment, and providing assurance that the pattern is not likely to continue, improves the chances of getting a job.”* Supporting details may include: *“different ways of writing a resume, using a functional not chronological resume, not having to account for all of your time.”* Have each student indicate what he/she wanted to get out of that section. Have students share their responses with the rest of the class. Discuss how the purpose for reading made a difference in identifying what was important to the reader.

Have students continue through the rest of the article using the same technique. When they have finished, have them write a summary of the text based on each of the items they determined to be important. Have students identify the “common thread” that runs throughout the text. Answers should be similar to the following: *no matter what challenges a person faces, there are resources a person can access in order to find employment.*

Evaluation

Have students select an article from the newspaper and follow the reading strategy provided in the lesson. Have students first identify their purpose for reading. Next, they should check out the text features to find clues and finally determine what the important information and the supporting details are in the text.

Extension

Have students bring in materials from their own place of employment. Have them share the text with the rest of the class, identifying:

- Text features that can help them identify items of importance
- The most important elements within the text

References

Wisconsin Literacy Education and Reading Network Source (WILEARNS)

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/Print.asp?=&cid=123>

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/Print.asp?=&cid=783>

Handout A: Consumer Information from the Federal Citizens Information Center

Re-entry Strategies for Jobseekers Who Have...

Spotty work histories

Jobseekers who have not maintained steady employment should pause to think about why. It may be that the types of jobs a person has held have not been well suited to him or her. This is one reason that employment counselors stress the importance of jobseekers exploring what they want to do as a step toward finding a job for the long term.

Jobseekers need self-knowledge so that they can be advocates for themselves. Most employers are reluctant to hire and train someone who will not stay in the position very long. Being able to explain job hopping or gaps in employment and providing assurance that the pattern is not likely to continue, improves the chances of getting a job.

Additionally, jobseekers can avoid having to reveal the full extent of an intermittent employment past. Counselors note that there are a lot of different ways to write a resume, so jobseekers need to create one that makes the most of their skills without emphasizing their employment history— using a functional rather than a chronological format, perhaps, or providing only years of employment instead of including months and days. After all, a person does not have to account for every minute of his or her time.

Re-entry strategies for jobseekers who are... Seeking skills

Everyone has abilities that are valuable in the workplace. Some people just need to recognize their work-related abilities, both those that they have and those that they need to develop.

Often, skills are transferable from one experience to another. By describing their performances on similar tasks in the past, jobseekers can demonstrate that they will be able to do what is required in a new job.

Re-entrants who lack recent work experience should evaluate areas of their lives in which they have been successful— such as raising children, maintaining a household, or making ends meet—to identify their skills. Organizational, personal management, decision-making, and negotiation skills are just a few of the strengths that people can discuss outside of an employment context.

Some people might need to update their skills. Certain types of jobs—including those dealing with technology, computer science, and engineering—change more rapidly than others. As a result, these fields are more difficult to re-enter after an absence. But jobseekers who find themselves in this situation should identify the skills needed and work toward getting them.

The U.S. Department of Education has information and resources for aspiring students on a variety of topics, including choosing and paying for career or technical training; planning for, enrolling in, and paying for college; and returning to school.

For more information, write to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20202; call toll-free, 1 (800) USA-LEARN (872-5327) or TTY 1(800) 437-0833; or visit online at: www.ed.gov/students.

Re-entry strategies for jobseekers who have... Too little or too much work experience

When applying for some positions, jobseekers who do not have much practical experience may feel that they lack options. The same is often true for jobseekers who have more experience than a position requires. In both situations, jobseekers should show a willingness to acquire new skills.

Too little work experience. People who have a limited employment history can still have a significant work history. Jobseekers should think about the skills they use in what they do and where they go in their everyday lives. Some of those skills might qualify as experience that can be applied in a job. Unpaid work, such as volunteering or performing community service, often allows people to gain experience.

Employment counselors say that jobseekers who have little or no employment history should look for an entry-level position— especially one that provides an opportunity for some on-the-job training— and should try to convey to employers that they are eager to learn new skills.

Too much work experience. The opposite problem of having too little experience is having too much. In an interview, an employer might say something off-putting, such as, “You’re overqualified” or “We can’t pay you what you’re accustomed to.” When responding to comments of this nature, jobseekers might want to let the interviewer know that they are aware of what the job involves or what its general level of pay is, that they want the job, and that they are a good fit for it—and why.

Jobseekers who have significant experience may encounter some degree of age bias. One way in which more experienced jobseekers can respond is to redirect the prospective employer’s attention by discussing how their skills can benefit the employer’s organization. Counselors suggest saying something like, “I have experience, but I also have enthusiasm and up-to-date skills, and I learn new tasks quickly.”

Older workers may want to keep some dates off their resume. For example, by the time jobseekers are in their 50s, they probably do not need to include the date they graduated from high school or college. It is important, however, to highlight recent classes or skill upgrades. As is the case for jobseekers who have little work experience, experienced jobseekers can demonstrate their motivation and ability to pick up new skills.

More information for workers aged 50 and older is available by writing to AARP, 601 E Street NW., Washington, DC, 20049; calling toll-free, 1 (888) OUR-AARP (687-2277); or visiting online at: www.aarp.org/careers.

Re-entry strategies for jobseekers who've been... Fired or laid off

It is never easy to lose a job, but there is an upside, employment counselors say: job loss provides an opportunity to find something better.

Fired. Often, a firing is a sign of a poor job match. Understanding the reasons behind a termination can help people avoid similar situations in the future. Counselors advise against using the word “fired” during the hunt for the next job. “Job ended” or “involuntary separation” are alternative answers jobseekers can put on an application that asks about the reason for leaving. Using these less volatile terms increases the likelihood of being invited for an interview, during which an employer has the option of asking for more details. It is a good idea to be honest during an interview. No matter what the reason behind the firing—even if it’s something serious, such as stealing, abusing drugs or alcohol, or doing a bad job—it is better to be upfront. Mention the cause of the problem without going into too much detail, and then return to solid ground by talking confidently about personal strengths and the skills obtained at the job prior to the termination. Jobseekers are also advised never to speak poorly of a former employer. In fact, fired jobseekers should try to remain on good terms. Even if the circumstances surrounding a departure were less than favorable, some employers may still be willing to act as a reference or write a letter of recommendation for former employees.

Laid off. Many people have experienced involuntary layoffs, so future employers are likely to understand and sympathize with jobseekers who are in this situation. However, laid-off workers should probably look for another job as soon as possible to avoid large gaps in employment, as such gaps may be negatively construed. The U.S. Department of Labor and State Unemployment Insurance agencies offer help and information to those who have been, or anticipate being, laid off. Retraining might be an option for some people and, in certain cases, this training may be provided at no cost through One-Stop Career Centers.

For more information, write to the U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20210. Jobseekers may also call toll-free, 1 (877) US-2JOBS (872-5627) or TTY 1 (877) 889-5627, or visit the Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration online at: www.doleta.gov/jobseekers/laidoff_workers.cfm.

Re-entry Strategies for Jobseekers with Disabilities

When (or whether) to disclose a disability to a potential employer depends on the individual and his or her situation. People who have a noticeable impairment should be prepared to talk about it within the context of convincing an employer that they will be able to do the job. Like all jobseekers preparing for an interview, individuals with disabilities should find out as much as possible about a position for which they are applying. This is particularly important for people who might require workplace accommodations, so that they can better explain their specific needs to the employer.

Generally, employment counselors say it is not necessary to mention a disability in a cover letter or resume unless the disability directly relates to a person's work qualifications. The jobseeker should focus on his or her abilities and how they relate to a position. Resources that are mentioned in the article can be helpful to people with disabilities who are returning to work. Vocational Rehabilitation agencies help people with disabilities through a variety of services, including job placement, on-the-job training, and financial assistance with education-related or job-training expenses for eligible jobseekers.

For information, write to the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20202-7100; or call (202) 245-7468 or TTY (202) 205-5637. A list of State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies is available online at: bcol02.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org_list.cfm?category_ID=SVR.

The Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service provides a variety of employment services for veterans who have U.S. Armed Forces-connected disabilities. A list of offices by State is available online at: www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/emp_resources.htm.

Adapted from Getting Back to Work a publication from the Federal Citizen Information Center
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/employ/bktowork/bktowork.htm