

English in the Workplace: the Office

Lessons 1 – 12 (10 hours)

Looking for a job (lesson 1)

Imagine that you have left school/university and you are now about to embark on the search for a job.

The first thing to do is to assess yourself and your skills in a frank self-review: what am I good at? What are my strengths? My weaknesses?

Plan a chart that quantifies all your strengths, weaknesses, areas for development, potential, interests that you will be able to use later for constructing a cv. (examples provided)

Now find a job (lesson 2)

Look through the ads in the classified section of the SCMP and decide on a job you would like to do.

Look carefully at the requirements of the position and highlight any words you're not sure about. Now you have to plan the application.

The C.V. (lessons 3 – 4)

construct a cv – examples provided

The letter (lessons 4- 5)

Write a letter of application – you will need to think carefully about this, because the letter is essential for getting an interview. (examples provided)

The interview (lessons 6-12)

Interview techniques – in groups, brainstorm and make a list of the techniques you think you should use in an interview.

Once this is done, each group of four needs to set up an interviewing panel (two/three people) for everybody else in the group.

Each interviewing panel needs to familiarise itself with the information about the job and then construct questions concerning the position.

Draw up between you a list of criteria by which you wish to mark the candidates. You might find that your parents can help you with this.

Where there are two people for the position, both must be interviewed and a decision made as to why one got the job over the other.

Candidates, you may wish to have a powerpoint as part of your presentation.

Once the interviews have been conducted, there needs to be feedback for each candidate – strengths, weaknesses and areas for development. Who got the job and why.

The Office (lessons 13 – 25) – English through drama

As a t.v. company, you have been asked to devise a new drama series called ‘The Workplace’; each episode in the series will concentrate on a different workplace and each must be as convincing as possible so all the dialogue and language must be realistic.

Revise your knowledge about drama scripts: set, stage directions, character directions.

Look at these excerpts from ‘The Office’, ‘30 Rock’, ‘Boston Legal’ ‘E.R.’ etc. and from other soaps. Working together in groups, note down:

What the episode is about

Who the characters are

Specialist language used

What the set looks like

Anything else that will help you write your own ‘soap’

Again, many of your parents will be able to help you with the language used and the ‘events’ that go on.

Choose one of the following workplace locations:

An office; restaurant; a bank; a travel agent; a big store; a lawyers' office or anywhere else

And write the title of the series, then write the script for the episode. Think carefully of a simple plot and the characters in the episode; decide how you will film it.

It must be convincing and should use specialist language of the appropriate workplace. Thus, in an office there will be reference to memos, minutes of meetings, letters dictated and will include face-to-face meeting with members of the public

Submit the script.

This should then be filmed, using as many 'actors' as you need.

This will be assessed according to the following criteria:

Plot – is it convincing and realistic? Is it understandable?

Characters – can they be understood? Do they deliver the lines convincingly?

Language used – is specialist language of the workplace used? Is it grammatically sound?

Remember, the script, the filming and the acting are merely vehicles for language use and it is this aspect that will principally be marked.