



**The Minnesota Literacy Council created this curriculum with funding from the MN Department of Education. We invite you to adapt it for your own classrooms.**

# **MASTER**

## **On The Job: Week 1 of 3**

### **Unit Overview:**

This three-week unit will focus on using English at work.

**Week one of this unit has a reading and writing focus.** Students will use and write about various written materials commonly found in the workplace (paychecks, timesheets, signs). Students will also write notes to a supervisor.

**Week two of this unit has a speaking and listening focus.** Students will say and write phrases and dialogues for common interactions in the workplace (asking questions, reporting problems, reporting mistakes). Students will leave (simulated) voicemail messages for a supervisor.

**Week three of this unit has a focus on workers' rights.** Students will read and listen to information about workers' rights topics (wages, overtime, workers' comp, safety and health, unions). Students will watch a video about workers' compensation.

Throughout the three weeks of this unit, students will use regular and irregular past tense verbs, both in writing and speaking.

### **Unit Objectives:**

- Students will discuss and use appropriate vocabulary and phrasing to use when speaking with a supervisor or manager in English.
- Students will read, comprehend and fill out written materials on the job, including paychecks, timesheets and signs.

- Students will write for a work context, especially notes to supervisors.
  - Students will be able to listen and ask questions about workers' rights.
  - Students will use past tense in the context of writing about and talking about what happened on the job.
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## **MATERIALS**

### **BOOKS**

Robinson, C and Rowekamp, J. Speaking Up at Work. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. ISBN: 0-19-434196-8

Sabbagh, S and Jenkins, R. Stand Out 3 USA: Heinle, 2002 ISBN: 08388422209

Newman, C. Lifeprints 3 New York: New Readers Press, 2002. ISBN:1-56420-314-x

### **VIDEO SERIES**

Division of Adult Career Education (DACE) of the Los Angeles Unified School District. English for All. Los Angeles, 2003.

## On the Job: Monday, Week 1 of 3

Reading and writing English on the job (Day 1 of 4)

Lesson Objectives:	Materials
Students will <b>discuss</b> the topic of using English at work. Students will <b>read and understand paychecks</b> . Students will <b>write notes to a supervisor</b> .	<u>Paychecks:</u> <b><i>Speaking Up at Work: 50-56</i></b>

### Activity Ideas:

#### Discuss:

1. Lead a class discussion, using the following questions or some of your own:  
Do you have a job? What do you do in your job? What job do you want to have in the future?  
Do you use English at your job? Who do you talk to in English? Do you have to read, write, talk, listen to English?  
Is it difficult to speak/understand English at work? Why or why not?  
If you learn more English, can you get a better job? Why?
2. Brainstorm together several examples of the following. (Note: Encourage Ss who don't have a job to think of possible job situations they might have in the future):  
When do you need to SPEAK English at work?  
When do you need to LISTEN and UNDERSTAND English at work?  
When do you need to READ English at work?  
When do you need to WRITE English at work?

#### Paychecks:

Use ***Speaking Up at Work***, pages 50 - 56 to see several examples of paychecks and discuss important information. Include the following activities:

1. Using handouts and an overhead of the paycheck on page 50, discuss 5 or 6 important vocabulary terms (listed on page 52 - select the ones you feel are most useful/common, or the ones used in the activity on p. 53).
2. Do a vocabulary review activity to make sure Ss have grasped most of this vocab. Use the following idea, or one of your own:  
Put all the words on the board. Have Ss put away their handouts. Assign one term to pairs of students and have them write a definition. Circulate and give assistance. When all have finished, pairs read their definition out loud, and other students guess the word.
3. Do the practice activity on pg. 53.

#### Writing notes to a supervisor:

1. Put up the overhead of the paycheck (pg. 50) again. Tell students that this is their paycheck and that there is a problem with it! (You decide what the problem is - not enough hours, too many deductions, etc.) Facilitate the class writing a letter to their supervisor together on the board or on large paper. (If possible do this on chart paper so that you can leave it up for the following classes this week. Erase or take down the shared letter but post words or phrases that will be useful for the students to refer to as they write their own

letters.)

Now, identify a different problem with the paycheck. Instruct Ss (alone or in partners) to write a note to their supervisor explaining the problem and asking for help. Give them the first sentence to get started:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ ,

There is a problem with my paycheck....

2. After students have had some time to write, have them compare with each other. Then have some students read their note aloud. Discuss together good elements and mistakes.

### On the Job: Tuesday, Week 1 of 3

Reading and writing English on the job (Day 2 of 4)

Lesson Objectives:	Materials
Students will <b>read paychecks and answer comprehension questions using paycheck related vocabulary.</b> Students will <b>write notes to a supervisor.</b>	<u>Paychecks:</u> <b>Stand Out 3:</b> 124-126 <b>Speaking Up at Work:</b> 52

#### Activity Ideas:

Paychecks: (continued from yesterday)

1. Review vocab from paychecks (see the list on **Speaking Up at Work**, pg. 52, review the 5-6 terms introduced yesterday. If needed for the standout activity and if students are ready for it you might introduce 2-3 more terms.)
2. Choose some of the activities from **Stand Out 3**, pgs 124 - 126.

Writing notes to a supervisor: (continued from yesterday)

*Note: Ss did a similar writing activity last night. DO NOT let them copy what they did in class last night, but ask them to produce a new, original writing. (This is good practice to see if they absorbed what they learned last night.)*

1. Put up the overhead of a paycheck from Stand Out 3 (pg. 124 or 126). Tell students that this is their paycheck and that there is a problem with it! (You decide what the problem is - not enough hours, too many deductions, etc.)

As a whole class, compose together a note to the supervisor. Ask the students what they would write and have them come up to the board and write the sentences. Assist as necessary, but remember its OK not to correct every aspect of the student's writing. (If possible do this on chart paper so that you can leave it up for the following classes this week. Erase or take down the shared letter but post words or phrases that will be useful for the students to refer to as they write their own letters.)

2. Instruct Ss to write a note to their supervisor explaining the problem and asking for help. Give them the first sentence to get started:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ ,

There is a problem with my paycheck....

3. After students have had some time to write, have them compare with each other. Then have some students read their note aloud. Discuss together good elements and mistakes.

### On the Job: Wednesday, Week 1 of 3

Reading and writing English on the job (Day 3 of 4)

Lesson Objectives:	Materials
Students will <b>read, comprehend and answer questions about timesheets.</b> Students will <b>write notes to a supervisor.</b> Students will identify past tense verbs and use the <b>past tense</b> accurately in their writing.	<u>Timesheets:</u> <b>Speaking Up at Work:</b> 33-37

#### Activity Ideas:

##### Timesheets:

Use **Speaking Up at Work**, pages 33 - 37 to see several examples of timesheets and discuss important information. Include the following activities:

1. Use an overhead to show Ss the pictures on pgs 33 and 34. Have them discuss what the people are doing and describe what they see in the pictures.
2. Choose one or more of the activities on pgs 35 - 37.

##### Writing notes to a supervisor: (continued from Mon and Tues)

1. Put up the overhead of a timesheet from Speaking Up at Work (pg. 35). Tell students that this is their timesheet and that there is a problem with it! (You decide what the problem is - wrong hours on one day, forgot to record some hours, etc.) Instruct Ss to write a note to their supervisor explaining the problem and asking for help. Ask students to suggest words or phrases they might use in the letter and encourage them to write those words and phrases on the board (creating a class generated word bank for students to refer to.)

Give them the first sentence to get started:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ ,

There is a problem with my timesheet....

2. Have students write letters to their supervisor. After students have had some time to write, have them compare with each other. Then have some students read their note aloud. Discuss together good elements and have classmates suggest 1 or 2 improvements.

Note: Ss did a similar writing activity last night. DO NOT let them copy what they did in class last night, but ask them to produce a new, original writing.

##### Past tense:

Review that - past tense is formed with regular verbs +ed. Review that some verbs are irregular in the past tense and change rather than using ed. (solicit a couple of examples from the students.)

Look back at the class writing from earlier in the week (or create a sample letter) and find all the verbs. Make a list together of regular verbs (verbs that take -ed) and irregular verbs (verbs that don't take -ed, e.g. write-wrote, take-took, etc.) Have Ss look back over their own writing and find the verbs, making sure they have used past tense correctly when

appropriate.

### On the Job: Thursday, Week 1 of 3

Reading and writing English on the job (Day 4 of 4)

Lesson Objectives:	Materials
Students will <b>discuss meanings of signs in the workplace.</b> Students will <b>write notes to a supervisor.</b> Students will identify past tense verbs and use the <b>past tense</b> accurately in their writing.	Find examples of signs here: <b>Speaking Up at Work: 73 - 74</b> <b>At Work in the U.S.: 77</b>

#### Activity Ideas:

##### Signs:

1. Show examples of signs and **facilitate students discussing** their meanings. [You may want to have students discuss the meanings of the signs with a partner, then ask partners to explain a sign they recognize to the class. If there is any sign no one is familiar with, ask for guesses then explain it.]

Remember to give Ss time and space to discuss these with each other - don't just show a sign and explain to them what it means, without giving them a chance to talk.

2. Have Ss review by having a set of pages with one sign per page. Pair Ss up, give one sign to each pair, and have them discuss the meaning and where they might see it. You may want the pair to write a one or two sentence explanation of the sign [ie Poison =This sign will be on a bottle or box. Do not eat or drink it. ] Then have pairs pass their sign to the pair on their right, and continue this way around the classroom until all pairs have seen all signs.

##### Writing notes to a supervisor: (continued from Mon, Tues and Wed)

1. Put up the overhead one of the signs. Tell students that there was some problem that happened at work involving this sign. (You decide the exact problem - someone opened a door and alarm went off, someone accidentally pulled fire alarm, there are not enough goggles etc.)

Facilitate students working together to write a note to their supervisor explaining the problem and asking for help. Ask the students what they would write and have them come up to the board and write the sentences. Assist as necessary, but remember its ok not to correct every aspect of the student's writing. (If possible do this on chart paper so that you can leave it up for the following classes this unit. Erase or take down the shared letter but post words or phrases on the board that will be useful for the students to refer to as they write their own letters.)

As a whole class, compose together a note to the supervisor.

Give them the first sentence to get started:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ ,

There was a problem at work today....

2. After students have had some time to write, have them compare with each other. Then have some students read their note aloud. Discuss together good elements and a suggestion or two for each letter.



Past tense: (continued from Wed)

Solicit from students how verbs are formed in the past tense (verb +ed, or irregular form). Have students look back at the class writing and find all the verbs in past tense. Make a list together of regular verbs (verbs that take -ed) and irregular verbs (verbs that don't take -ed, e.g. write-wrote, take-took, etc.) Have Ss look back over their own writing and find the verbs, making sure they have used past tense correctly when appropriate.