

Practical Skills for Work

Unit 2: In the Office

Aims:

- To practise and develop telephone skills
- To practise talking about plans and appointments
- To read and understand memos
- To describe and understand an office layout
- To listen for specific information in the context of office vocabulary
- To practise oral fluency with an office role play

Materials:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| • PSW2.1 Teacher's Resource Kit | Paired Dictation - TACOS (to be copied) |
| • PSW2.2 Student's File | Telephone Language Practice Listening (Minimal Pairs – Numbers) |
| • PSW2.3 Student's File | Telephone Messages |
| • PSW2.4 Teacher's Resource Kit | Information gap - Making Appointments (to be copied) |
| • PSW2.5 Student's File | Reading for information - Relocation Memos |
| • PSW2.6 Teacher's Resource Kit | Describe and Arrange - The Office Layout (to be copied) |
| • PSW2.7 Student's File | Listening for Specific Information - Stock Check |
| • PSW2.8 Teacher's Resource Kit | Role play - Telephone Call (to be copied) |

Procedure

1. The first activity (**Teachers Resource Kit PSW 2.1**) is a paired dictation based on TACOS (Terms And Conditions Of Service). The students work in A/B pairs with a gapped reading text. They must dictate what they have on their worksheet to their partner who writes it down in the appropriate blanks. They take turns until the text is completed. This paired dictation is good practice for speaking, listening and the use of language such as '*How do you spell ...?*' '*Can you say that again slowly please?*'. Present these phrases if necessary and make sure that everyone uses 'How do you spell ...' and not 'How to spell ...' which is a common Hong Kong error.

2. To begin the activity, ask the students if they have school rules. (Yes)

T: Does an office have rules?

Elicit possible answers and input as follows:

T: Yes, it does and the rules work both ways - the employee has rules and the employer has rules.

These rules are called: Terms And Conditions Of Service or TACOS. Write this on the board and explain the rules of the paired dictation. Divide the class into pairs and give out the A/B worksheets.

3. Monitor for feedback when pairs have finished. They can check with another pair to see if they have the same result. Ask individuals to read aloud their text (2 sentences each) and pick up on common errors. Put these on the board and see what other pairs have written. Write these up too. This shows the class that there are different answers. Now give out the completed text for self checking.
4. Before you begin PSW 2.3 you may want the students to practise some special telephone language skills. Show them that British English and American English speakers say telephone numbers in different ways:

25420606

-two, five, four, two, oh, six, oh, six (BE)

-two, five, four, two, zero, six, zero, six (AE)

and that people say double numbers in different ways.

26881531

-two, six, eight, eight, one, five, three, one (BE)

-two, six, double eight, one, five, three, one (AE)

5. Play the tape for minimal pairs practice as an extra focus on number pronunciation. Students should jot down the numbers at the bottom of PSW 2.2. Write the numbers on the board AFTER the class has finished.

6. You can see how many students know the full titles for *the abbreviations in Ex.C* as an extension activity.

Key

- Hong Kong Exams Authority
 - Education Department
 - Hong Kong Jockey Club
 - United States of America
 - United Kingdom
 - Gross Domestic Product
 - Special Autonomous Region
 - Kowloon Motor Bus
 - His Master's Voice
 - Hong Kong Polytechnic University
 - Hong Kong Institute of Education
 - British Council
 - Great Britain
 - Mass Transit Railway
 - Kowloon Canton Railway Corporation
 - Oxford University Press
 - Her Majesty's Government
 - Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination
7. Refer students to **PSW 2.3** which is a listening activity designed around a series of telephone messages. The first message can be an example. Use this to build the necessary steps for taking telephone messages. Show students that they only need to write down essential details. Tell students to write their own name after *Taken by....* The information about sick leave/ half an hour earlier is not essential. Play through the three messages, pausing after each one. Let students check together before replaying for feedback.
8. Now ask the class why messages are important? Why are times and dates and names important? Expected answers would be: *for business, so that people can meet, at the right place at the right time so that business can be carried out.* Ask what people keep to remind them of all these dates and people? Expected answer: *appointments diary, address book.*

9. Explain that you are going to give each pair two pages of an appointment diary (**Teacher's Resource Kit PSW 2.4**). Their task is to find a time when they can both meet. They **MUST NOT** show these pages to each other as it is an information gap activity for fluency practice. Rehearse any necessary questions and language. First, check that the language is understood, e.g. *chamber of commerce, regional conference, AGM, swimming gala, financial plan, final draft*. This is a good opportunity for dictionary work. Write the vocabulary on the board for the class to check. Then give out the A/B worksheets.

Useful language

Can I arrange to see you sometime next week?

Let's look at our diaries.

What are you doing on Thursday?

I'm meeting someone at the airport at 4.30.

Are you free at 9.30?

How about ...?

See you on Tuesday at 9a.m.

Yes, that's fine

I'm sorry, I can't make that time, I'm busy.

10. When the information gap is completed and checked, a time should have been identified when the pair can meet. Now ask the pairs to make groups of four and use the language again to arrange a time and place for a meeting among them, sometime next week. It must suit everybody. This is personalization and the task is real. They are making appointments for themselves.
11. Check that every group has made an arrangement or future appointment and then write these words on the board: *relocate, move, new address, change of address* and ask the class what these phrases suggest (a new office). **PSW 2.5** is a task for reading for specific information. Students need to read through several memos and make notes about their departments' work in moving to a new office. Then, students complete a checklist.
12. Please note that the key for the checklist is a suggested key only. Students should write notes, not sentences. Key information should be on the checklist but the order within each point is not prescribed.
13. Now tell the class that the new office has to be organised so that everything is in the right place. This is called the *office plan* or *layout*. Ask students to think of the names of all large pieces of furniture they can find in an office, e.g. *computer, photocopier, desk, shelves, filing cabinet, chairs, conference table, fax machine*.

14. Refer students to **PSW 2.6**. Explain that each A/B pair will have a plan - one plan will be complete and one plan will be empty. A describes where each piece of furniture is and B draws it in/ cuts out the shapes provided and sticks them one by one onto the empty plan. This is a describe-and-arrange information gap activity and pairs **MUST NOT** look at each other's plans.
15. The follow-up activity is to **write a short description of the office layout**. The focus should be accuracy of writing.
16. The next activity is to listen for specific information as an inventory check or stock check is carried out. Brainstorm vocabulary of smaller items found in an office, e.g. *paper clips, sellotape, staplers, staples, hole punch, rubber bands, plastic files, ring files, fax paper, floppy discs*.
17. Give out **PSW 2.7 Stock Check**. Play the tape through once. Allow students to check in pairs and then play the tape again. Check that everyone has the correct answers and play disputed sections again until the whole class is clear.
18. The final activity, **Teacher's Resource Kit PSW 2.8**, is a telephone role play. This is a fluency activity which encourages students to use the language of persuasion and polite refusal appropriately.
19. There are eight role cards. They are suitable for male or female roles and the first name on each card is male while the second is female. The first four role cards, A-D are receiving phone calls; the second four, E-H are making phone calls. Any E-G can phone any A-C. H (Martin/Martine) must phone D. (Stephen/Stephanie)
20. Copy the role card page. Cut up the role cards. Divide the class into two groups - those who make calls in Group 1 and those who receive calls in Group 2. Within the two groups, put students in mini-groups so that all the students with role card A are together, those with role card B are together and so on. Give each mini-group time to talk together and plan what they are going to say. This rehearsal time is important. Students can be called out as *Charlie one, Petra Two* when you need to name or call someone.
21. When the groups are ready, tell them that you will nominate someone to make a call, for example,
Teacher: Bill One calls Charlie Two. Brring, Brring, Brring.
(The teacher acts as the telephone! Make sure they realise who has to pick up the phone.) The conversation will be close to a real life conversation as students do not know who is going to call and the student calling doesn't know what the response will be. Choose 3-4 pairs to take part in this open demonstration. You may want to use their conversations to note down any common mistakes for later work.
22. You can now set groups working together so that there are 3-4 callers and 3-4 receivers working together with one group member taking charge as the 'telephone'. Monitor the groups. Finish with another one or two open demonstration pairs.

Teacher's Resource Kit PSW 2.1**Paired Dictation TACOS**

----- ✂ -----

A

1. Payment of Salary: _____ are available on demand. _____ reviewed annually _____.
- 1.1 Salaries are paid _____.
- 1.2 The salary and hours of work _____ are set out in _____.
- 1.3 _____ payment will be made _____.
- 1.4 There is no _____ advance of salary _____.

----- ✂ -----

B

1. _____: Current salary scales _____ Salaries are normally _____ with effect from 1 September.
- 1.1 _____ monthly in arrears
- 1.2 _____ for each individual employee _____ that employee's contract.
- 1.3 Additional _____ for overtime.
- 1.4 _____ entitlement to any _____ for any purpose.

Teacher's Resource Kit PSW 2.1 (Key)***Paired Dictation TACOS***

1. Payment of Salary: Current salary scales are available on demand. Salaries are normally reviewed annually with effect from 1 September.
 - 1.1. Salaries are paid monthly in arrears.
 - 1.2. The salary and hours of work for each individual employee are set out in that employee's contract.
 - 1.3. Additional payment will be made for overtime.
 - 1.4. There is no entitlement to any advance of salary for any purpose.

Student's File PSW 2.3 (Key)

1.



Telephone Message



To Mary Ho Date _____

Taken by _____ Time _____

Message Flight time changed, leaves at 22:30

Flight number BW28 unchanged

From Ceci Chan - BX

Tel no. 2747-4001

2.



Telephone Message



To Bob Brown Date _____

Taken by _____ Time _____

Message Will see you at the meeting at 10:30 on Wed

She is not going to exhibition.

Call her on 2853 1770

From Coral Disraeli

Tel no. 2853 1770

3.



Telephone Message



To Mr. Ling Date _____

Taken by _____ Time _____

Message He will call again on Thursday.

It's about the invoice for the frozen lobsters.

From Alan Ng

Tel no. _____

Teacher's Resource Kit PSW 2.4**A.**

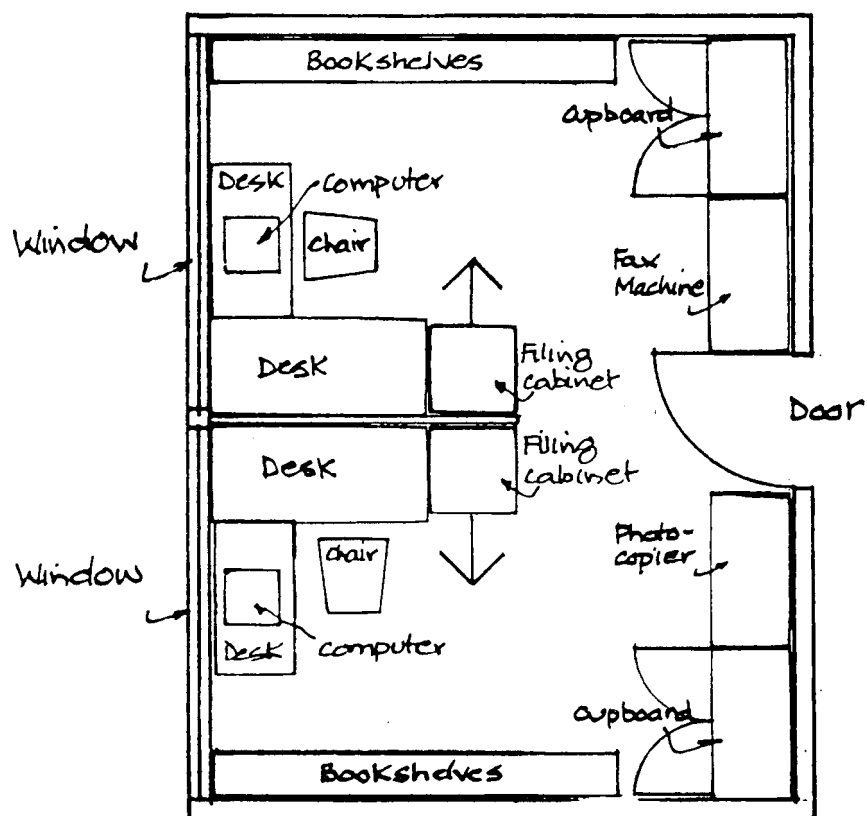
JANUARY	
2 THURSDAY <u>9am-5pm Regional conference- Convention Centre</u>	6 MONDAY <u>8.30 Train to Shenzhen Factory visit</u>
3 FRIDAY <u>9-11 Regional conference 12.30 Lunch with Chairman of YKP at the Regent</u>	7 TUESDAY <u>3pm Dentist - annual check</u>
4 SATURDAY <u>9-1 Prize giving for Chamber of Commerce.</u>	8 WEDNESDAY <u>9.30-11 Weekly department meeting</u>
5 SUNDAY <u>Swimming lesson 10-11</u>	9 THURSDAY <u>4.30 meet DC at the airport.</u>

B.

JANUARY	
2 THURSDAY <u>2pm Pollution control meeting</u>	6 MONDAY <u>9-12 Trade Fair 2-5 AGM at the Hyatt Hotel</u>
3 FRIDAY <u>9-12 Interviews for new secretary 2-3 visit K.L. in hospital</u>	7 TUESDAY <u>12-2 Financial plan-final draft with W.A.</u>
4 SATURDAY <u>9-1 Swimming Gala at J'S school</u>	8 WEDNESDAY <u>10.20 flight to Beijing for BASEAW conference</u>
5 SUNDAY <u>Sports Day with Department of Trade</u>	9 THURSDAY <u>Beijing conference</u>

Student's File PSW 2.5 (Key)Checklist - Relocation/ SPU

1. Relocation - first meeting 7/12. Take floor plan/Room 13/10.30 a.m.
2. Edit/discard old files, shred confidential material by 2/2.
3. 2nd meeting/number of computer terminals needed/Room 13/3/1 at 10.30 a.m.
4. Filing cabinets/shelving units - number required by 5 p.m. on 5/1.
5. Plan Move Team/red stickers on items needed on 12/1
6. Gloria Wu/sick leave/will there be another move plan visit?/need to know by 16/1.

Teacher's Resource Kit Worksheet PSW 2.6

Student's File PSW 2.7 (Key)

Stock check

	Quantity in Stock	Quantity Ordered
staples	10 boxes	20 boxes
staplers	16	0
sellotape	6 boxes (12 rolls per box)	0
rubber bands	0	2 large boxes of each size
plastic files	10	50
ring files	8	16
labels	144 packets (4 boxesx36)	0
A4 paper	6 boxes	100 boxes
fax paper	15	30
floppy disks		
paper clips	36 boxes	14 boxes

Note: Students should cross floppy disks off the list to show that they have understood correctly.

Teacher's Resource Kit PSW 2.8**The Telephone call - Role cards**

- ✂
- A You are Francis/Frances. You are writing an important report for your boss with a deadline set for tomorrow morning. It is now 5.15 pm. The telephone rings.
- ✂
- B You are Charlie/Charlotte. You are revising for an accountancy exam which you will take next week. The phone rings.
- ✂
- C You are Pete/Petra. You have a meeting in five minutes with the head of IT. The phone rings.
- ✂
- D You are Stephen/Stephanie. You have been working very hard for two weeks on the financial plan for your section. You want to go home early, have a long shower, watch TV and sleep. The phone rings.
- ✂
- E You are Bill/Billie. You need to find out about the sales figures for INIX fax machines. So, you phone your friend in accounts.
- ✂
- F You are Karl/Carol. You have just been given a promotion and you want to tell your friend all about it - the interview, etc. You phone your friend.
- ✂
- G You are Eric/Erica. You have just heard that your job is to be cut as part of a restructuring of the firm. You can apply for another job but you are not sure where to start. You want advice from a friend, so you phone a friend.
- ✂
- H You are Martin/Martine. You have been working a lot of overtime in the last few months and tonight you want to go out to a disco and relax. You phone your friend Stephen/Stephanie to ask him/her to come with you.
- ✂