

# Helpful English

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# Helpful English for... *Interacting Socially*

## Informal Conversations

Conversations among friends and acquaintances are usually informal. Sometimes close friends hug or kiss each other when they meet. Often, people who do not know each other shake hands when they are introduced.



### Begin informal conversations with a greeting

- Hi, how are things?
- Hi, how are you doing?
- Hi Maria, what's new with you?

### Maintain a conversation by asking questions

- How are the kids?
- How's work going?
- How's the new house?

### Encourage a conversation by adding supportive comments

- Oh, that's too bad!
- I'm happy for you!
- That's great!

### Maintain a conversation by introducing new topics

- Oh, by the way...
- Before I forget, did you... ?
- So, ....

Conversations often include expressing feelings. Here are some informal ways to express feelings:

#### **Surprise**

No way!  
I don't believe it!  
You're kidding!

#### **Sympathy**

I'm so sorry.  
Oh, that's too bad.

#### **Happiness**

I'm thrilled!  
I'm so happy for you!  
That's wonderful!

## Useful Grammar

### Use the past participle to express how you feel:

I'm so annoyed**ed**!  
I'm so disappointed**ed** that things didn't work out.  
I'm feeling really frustrated**ed** at work.

### Use the present participle to express how something or someone makes you feel:

His behaviour is annoying**ing**.  
The dinner was disappoint**ing**.  
My job is so frustrat**ing**.

### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet. Use the search terms Participle Adjective or expressing feelings learning English.

## Accepting and Declining Invitations

Here are some phrases for giving, accepting and declining an invitation. There are also phrases for hedging if you are not sure you can accept an invitation. The expressions range from somewhat formal to less formal.



### Inviting

- I was wondering if you would like to come over for a drink.
- I have two tickets for the symphony tonight. Would you like to go?
- Would you like/care to have dinner with us on (day/date)?
- Do you have any plans for (day/date)?
- What are you doing on (day/date)?
- Do you want to go to the movies tonight?
- What/How about dinner tonight?

What are you doing Friday?

### Accepting

- Sure. That sounds like fun.
- That sounds great, thank you.
- I'd love to, thanks.
- Sure. Thanks for the invitation.
- Sure. What time?
- Sure. When should I be there?/Can I bring anything?

### Declining

- Thanks so much for the invitation, but I'm booked that evening.
- I'm really sorry but I have other plans that night.
- I'd love to, but I already have plans.
- Thanks for asking, but I'm afraid I'm busy.
- Oh thanks for asking, but I can't. I've got a lot of work to do.

### Hedging

- Thanks. I'll have to check my calendar. Do you mind if I let you know on Monday?
- I'm not sure if my husband has already made plans.
- Could I get back to you tomorrow?
- Sunday might not be a good day for us.
- Can I let you know for sure tomorrow?
- I'd love to, but what time does it start?

### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for useful language related to invitations. Use the search terms *accepting and declining invitations*.
- Observe how others give, accept and decline invitations.

## Giving Compliments

Most people like to receive compliments. Compliments can be good conversation starters in social situations. They can build rapport and make others feel good.

You can learn about giving compliments by observing others. Listen for how people give and respond to compliments in social and work situations. Observe their body language.



### Tips for giving compliments to friends

#### Relate the compliment to an object

- What a beautiful dress.
- That jacket looks great on you.
- Your home is beautiful.

#### Be specific

- I like your hair cut. The style really suits you.
- That sweater looks great on you. The colour matches your eyes.
- I love your home. It's so warm and inviting.

#### Ask a question

- I like your hair. The style really suits you. Where do you get it cut?
- Can I ask where you bought that suit? It looks fantastic on you!

Thank You!

### Giving compliments to work colleagues

Giving sincere compliments on someone's work can help to maintain positive working relationships. But it is a good idea to avoid remarking on a colleague's appearance.

- Your presentation was excellent. Well done!
- You did a really good job on that report!
- You write really well. You should consider a career in journalism.
- I admire your ability to make everyone feel comfortable and welcome.
- Congratulations on your promotion. You deserve it!
- You're doing such a great job. Keep it up!

#### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for information about compliments. Use the search terms *Giving compliments*.
- Observe how others give and receive compliments.

## Expressing Sympathy

We express sympathy in a variety of situations, for example if someone has experienced a loss or the death of a loved one, becomes ill or is going through a difficult time.

You can express sympathy formally or less formally depending on the situation and how well you know the other person. It's common and thoughtful to express sympathy in the form of a handwritten note or sympathy card.

Here are some expressions you can use:



### Informal ways to express sympathy

- I'm sorry to hear about ...
- That's so sad/that's too bad.
- I hope you feel better soon.
- I hope things get better for you soon.

I hope you feel better soon.

### Expressing sympathy for a loss or death

- I'm so sorry to hear about your loss.
- Sorry for your loss.
- You have my sincere sympathy.
- You have our deepest sympathy.
- My heart goes out to you.
- S/he will be missed tremendously.
- Please accept my condolences.
- Thinking of you in your time of loss.
- We are very saddened to hear of your loss.
- My heartfelt condolences on your loss.
- With deepest sympathies.
- Our thoughts are with you in this difficult time.

Dear Hillary

*I was deeply saddened to hear of Gina's death. She was a kind and generous friend to many and will be greatly missed. Please accept my deepest sympathy. My thoughts are with you and your family.*

Sincerely,  
Linda



### Learn more:

- 📖 For information and tips on how to express sympathy, visit [www.writeexpress.com](http://www.writeexpress.com) or search the Internet using the search terms *phrases for expressing sympathy*.

# Helpful English for... *Interacting in the Community*

## Talking to Strangers

It can be difficult to start a conversation with someone you don't know. One way is to start talking about something you have in common. You can also ask a question or make a statement about the situation you are both in.

Talking with strangers while shopping or waiting in line can be a pleasant way to pass the time. However, some people are more open to small talk than others. Their response to your attempts at small talk, including their body language, will tell you whether or not they want to engage in conversation.

### At a bus stop

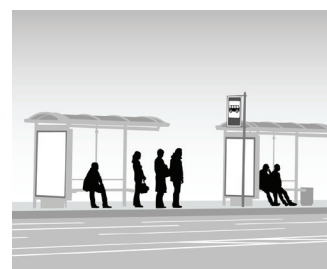
A: Have you been waiting long?

B: Yes, I've been here for 20 minutes already. This bus is always so slow.

A: Oh, I know. Last week, I waited 25 minutes and when the bus finally arrived, it was packed and I could barely squeeze on.

B: It's terrible. They've made so many cuts to the service.

A: Yes, it almost makes me want to buy a car. I just waste so much time waiting for buses.



### In the park

A: What a cute dog! I remember when my dog was that small. How old is he?

B: He's just 8 months old.

A: Just 8 months—wow! He looks so calm.

B: Yes, he's really good-natured.

### On an airplane or train

Possible conversation starters include:

- Questions about their reasons for travelling to this particular destination and whether they've travelled there before
- Questions about what they do for a living
- Comments on the food or the service
- Comments about a book or magazine the person is reading



### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for small-talk strategies. Use the search terms *strategies for small talk* or *body language small talk* or *small talk tips*.

## Making Requests

People make requests frequently. A request can sound rude or demanding if it is spoken too directly. Using indirect language can make a request sound polite and friendly.

Indirect questions usually begin with phrases, such as:

- Could/can you + verb e.g., *Could/can you tell me ...*
- Would you mind + verb + ing e.g., *Would you mind telling me ...*
- I was wondering if you could...+ verb e.g., *I was wondering if you could send me...*

Direct request	Indirect questions	In indirect questions, the verb is sometimes placed at the end of the sentence.
Where is your nearest location?	→ <i>Can you tell me where your nearest location <u>is</u>?</i>	
Send me a catalogue, please.	→ <i>Would you mind <u>sending</u> me a catalogue?</i>	
What time does the store open?	→ <i>I was wondering if you could tell me what time your store <u>opens</u>.</i>	

## Conversations include both direct and indirect questions

A: Hi, my name is Lena Marcova. *I was wondering if you could* give me some information about one of your programs.

B: Yes, of course. Which program are you interested in?

A: I'd like to take the chef training course. *Can you tell me what* the prerequisites are to get into that course?

B: Well, basically all you need is a high school diploma. There are no other requirements.

A: Okay, that's good. And when does the next class start?

B: It starts in September. I should tell you, though, that we're not accepting any more applications for that class at this time. It's completely full.


A: Oh, that's too bad.

B: What I can do is put your name on a wait list. If anyone drops out or doesn't show up during the first week of classes, you can submit an application at that time if you're still interested.

A: Okay. That sounds like a good idea.



Learn more:

 For more information and practice activities, search the Internet. Use the search terms *Indirect questions*.



## Making Complaints

As a customer, client or citizen, there are times when you may want to make a complaint. You can make a complaint in person, by phone or in writing.

### Tips for Making a Complaint

- Be informed about the policies that apply to the situation.
- Talk to the right people, in the right order. Begin with a customer service representative or a front-line staff person. If you are not successful, talk to a supervisor or manager. If that fails, you can try to speak to someone with more authority.
- Be polite and try not to get angry.
- Keep a record of important details such as dates, the names of people you spoke to and the outcome of your conversation(s).
- If you cannot resolve your problem in person or on the phone, write a letter to the business or organization.



### Components of a Letter of Complaint

Your name, address and contact details

Date

The organization name and address

Dear Sir/Madam:

**Opening paragraph:** Give details about the product or service (e.g., model number, price, location of store, type of service) you purchased or the way you interacted with the company or organization (e.g., *On June 15, I visited your amusement park; or On May 12, I purchased a television at the Bay Street store*).

**Next paragraph:** Describe the problem and your actions. Include details such as the names and titles of people you spoke to, and dates.

**Next paragraph:** State exactly what you want the organization to do to resolve the problem (e.g., refund your money, replace the item).

**Final paragraph:** Close with a statement like *I look forward to your immediate attention to this matter. I can be reached at* (give telephone number).

Sincerely,

Sign the letter

Type your name

#### Learn more:

🔗 Visit [www.ic.gc.ca](http://www.ic.gc.ca). On the homepage, click on *Resources for Consumers*; then click on *Canadian Consumer Handbook*; then select *Complaints* (includes information and sample complaint letters).

- Call the consumer affairs office in your region.

## Giving Directions

### Tips for Giving Directions

- Keep directions simple
- Give directions in the correct order
- Include any cautions (e.g., confusing intersections)
- Name landmarks, such as stop lights or railroad tracks
- Give distance, if possible (e.g., *Go about five kilometres.*)
- Ask the person to repeat the directions back to you to make sure they understand
- Use imperatives to give clear and concise directions

### Tips for Listening to Directions

- Clarify details as the directions are given
- Confirm your understanding by repeating directions back to the speaker and asking questions

For example, here are some helpful phrases for giving instructions:



Use **imperatives** to give clear and concise directions

#### Public transit directions

- Take the number \_\_\_\_ bus to \_\_\_\_.
- Get on/off at \_\_\_\_.
- Transfer at \_\_\_\_ street/station.
- Go southbound on the \_\_\_\_ subway line.

Turn right at the lights.

#### Driving directions

- Merge into traffic.
- Stay in the right hand lane.
- Take the exit towards \_\_\_\_.
- Take highway 234 until you reach the Lake Road exit.
- Go northeast.
- Make a U-turn.
- Keep right/left.
- Turn right at the lights.

Use the **conditional** when including cautions

#### Cautions

- If you get to the railroad tracks, you've gone too far.
- If you reach First Street, you've passed the turnoff.

When listening to instructions, ask **questions** and **repeat back** to make sure you understand.

#### Confirming understanding

Can you repeat that?

- Did you say turn *right* at the lights?
- So, I turn *left* at the intersection?

#### Learn more:

- 🔍 For grammar practice activities, use the search terms *conditional sentences* or *question formation*.
- 🔍 For driving directions, refer to an online service, such as [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) or Google maps.
- 🔍 For public transit directions, use the search terms *public transit + (the name of the city or town)*.

# Helpful English for... Talking on the Telephone

## Telephone Expressions

Phrasal verbs are commonly used when talking on the telephone. Some phrasal verbs can be separated (by a noun), while others cannot. For example:

### Separable

Hang (the phone) up **or** Hang up the phone  
*Please hang the phone up. I need to make a call.*

Put (a call) through **or** Put through a call  
*I'll put you through to his voice mail.*

Pick (the phone) up **or** Pick up the phone  
*Would you mind picking the phone up?*

Call (someone) back  
*He'll call you back tomorrow.*

Call (someone) up **or** Call up someone  
*We should call him up sometime.*

Cut (someone) off  
*You just cut me off!*

Turn (your cell phone) off **or** Turn off your phone  
*Please turn your cell phone off during the meeting.*

### Non-separable

Hold on/hang on  
*Hold on. I'll go get her.*

Get through  
*I can't get through. The line is busy.*

Get off (the phone)  
*Could you get off the phone, please?*

Get back to (someone)  
*He'll get back to you this afternoon.*

Speak up  
*Can you speak up? I can't hear you.*





Here are some common terms related to telephone use.

Do you know what they mean?

- Touchtone phone
- Unlisted number
- Ring tone
- Star key
- Dial tone
- Busy signal
- Landline
- Directory
- Text
- Smart phone
- Digit
- Voice mail
- Call display
- Call answer
- Pound key
- Calling card

### Learn more:

-  See page 48 for a list of phrasal verbs.
-  Search the Internet. Use the search terms *phrasal verbs*.

## Making Calls at Work

Here are some useful phrases when making calls at work.

### Opening a call and introducing yourself

- Hello. This is \_\_\_\_\_. Can I speak to \_\_\_\_\_?
- Hello. Could I speak to \_\_\_\_\_, please?

### Asking who is calling

- May I ask who's calling?
- I'm sorry. Who may I say is calling?
- Can I ask who am I speaking with?

### If the person is not available

- Would you know when she might be available?
- Could I leave a message?
- Could you connect me to his voice mail, please?

### Taking a message

- Mr. Lee is unavailable at the moment. Can I take a message?
- I'm sorry. He isn't in today. Would you like to leave a message?

### Putting the caller on hold; returning to the call

- Just a moment, please.
- Can I put you on hold for a second?
- Would you mind holding, please?
- Thanks for holding.
- Sorry to keep you waiting.

### Ending the call

- I'll be sure to give her the message.
- I'll let him know you called.



Could I leave message?

Receptionist: Hello, DBS Industries. How may I direct your call?

Caller: Can I speak to Martin Swartz, please?

Receptionist: I'm sorry. Mr Swartz is away for the day. Can I take a message?

Caller: Yes. Could you tell him Heidi Robson from ABC Company called? I'm going to have to postpone our meeting until the end of the month. I'll call him in a few days to reschedule.

Receptionist: Okay. So that's Heidi Robson from ABC. You are postponing your meeting until the end of the month and you'll call him in a few days to reschedule.

Caller: That's right.

Receptionist: I'll make sure he gets the message.

Caller: Thank you.

Receptionist: You're welcome. Bye

Caller: Bye.

## Making Social Calls

The following are some phrases you can use when making social calls to friends and neighbours.

	Common phrases		Possible responses
Opening a call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hi Kara, it's Tina.</li> </ul>	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oh hi Tina. How are you?</li> </ul>
Checking if it is a good time to call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have I caught you at a bad time?</li> <li>• Is this a good time to talk?</li> <li>• I hope I'm not interrupting anything.</li> </ul>	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No, not at all.</li> <li>• Well, actually I was just about to leave for an appointment. Can I call you later?</li> </ul>
Making small talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are you?</li> <li>• What's new?</li> </ul>	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm doing well.</li> <li>• I've been very busy ...</li> </ul>
Changing the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So...</li> <li>• By the way...</li> </ul>	→	
Ending the call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'll let you go.</li> <li>• I should let you get back to your work.</li> <li>• Well, I guess I'd better get going.</li> </ul>	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Okay. Good talking to you.</li> <li>• Okay. Thanks for calling.</li> </ul>

Tina: Hi Lin, it's Tina.  
 Lin: Oh, hi Tina. How are you?  
 Tina: I'm fine. I just wanted to catch up. We haven't talked in a long time. Is this a good time to chat?  
 Lin: Absolutely! I have a few minutes before I pick up Marco from school.  
 Tina: So how are things? How are the renovations going?  
 Lin: Great! The kitchen looks amazing. Now Diego's working on the living room, and we hope it will be finished by December. You'll have to drop by one day and see it.  
 Tina: I'd love to! By the way, did you hear Rodriguez moved? He's renting an apartment in your neighbourhood now.  
 Lin: Really? Whereabouts?  
 Tina: I'm not sure of the exact address, but I know it's on Elm Street.  
 Lin: That's close by. We should arrange to have dinner together one night.  
 Tina: Great idea! I'll call him and see if he has some free time in the next few weeks.  
 Lin: That sounds good. Tina, I need to get going. I've got to get Marco.  
 Tina: No problem. It was great chatting with you.  
 Lin: So glad you called. Let's talk again soon. Bye.



## Avoiding Miscommunication

Here are some strategies for avoiding miscommunication on the phone:

### Ask the speaker to slow down or speak up

- I'm sorry. Could you slow down a bit?
- I'm sorry. I'm having trouble hearing you. Could you speak up?

### Making sure you understand by repeating back

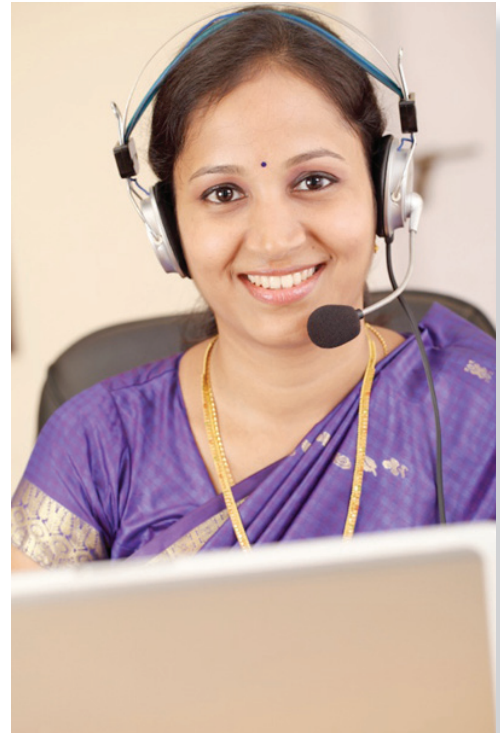
- Did you say 4396 or 4356?
- That was three o'clock, right?
- Let me repeat that back to you ...
- I just want to make sure I got everything. You said...
- If I understood you correctly, you said...

### Ask the speaker to spell something

- How do you spell that?
- Was that "S" as in Sam?

### Ask for repetition

- I'm sorry, could you repeat that for me?
- Would you mind repeating the last three numbers?
- Could you say that again?



Use modals to make polite requests

- *Can* you spell that for me?
- *Could* you speak more slowly, please?
- *Would* you mind spelling that?

### Learn more:

- 🔍 About miscommunication: search the Internet using the search terms *avoiding miscommunication*.
- 🔍 About the use of modals: Use the search term *modals*.



## Using Voice Mail

### Recording Voice Mail Greetings

A voice mail greeting should be brief and can include:

- A greeting
- Who the caller has reached
- A statement that you cannot take the call
- A request for the caller to leave a message
- A statement about when you will call back
- A closing



#### Expressions for voice mail greetings

- Hello. This is...
- I can't take your call right now.
- I am either away from my desk or on another line...
- I am currently away on business and will return on (date).

#### Voice mail greetings at work

- Hello. You have reached Lisa Ling in the human resources department. I'm sorry I'm not available at the moment. Please leave your name and number and a brief message and I will return your call as soon as I can. Thank you.

#### Voice mail greetings at home

- Hi. You've reached 555-122-3344. We're not available to take your call right now. Please leave your name and a brief message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can. Thanks.

#### Leaving a voice mail message

- Hello, Mr. Ramirez. This is Julie Barnes from Reliable on Thursday, July 4th. I'm calling to discuss the claim you filed on June 14th. Could give me a call back at 555-999-8989? I'll be here until 4:00 today. Again, that's Julie Barnes at 555-999-8989. Thanks very much.

#### Tips for leaving a voice mail message

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Include all the information the listener needs to call you back (phone number, time).
- If needed, repeat your name and phone number at the end of message (for someone who does not know you).

#### Learn more:

- 📞 Use the free online activities on Telephone Calls at [www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html](http://www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html).
- 📞 Search the Internet. Use the search terms *sample voice mail greetings*.
- Listen to how others leave voice mail greetings and messages.

# Helpful English for... Looking for a Job

## Describing Your Skills

It is important to be able to describe your employment skills, work responsibilities or past work experience in a clear and concise way. It helps others (such as potential or current employers) understand the skills you have and how you might fit into their workplace.

Consider the questions below. You may hear them in social or employment related situations. They are requests to know what your occupation is, and details about your job responsibilities.

*So, what do you do?*

*What do you do for a living?*

*What does that entail?*

*What exactly does a \_\_\_\_\_ do?*

*I work with a team to design websites for corporate clients. I'm responsible for the technical side of things, like the navigation tools on the site. I consult with clients and co-workers to prepare mock-ups and agree on a website design, then write website code. ...*

*I'm a web designer.*



### Nine Essential Skills

- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Numeracy
- Writing
- Oral Communication
- Work with Others
- Thinking Skills
- Computer Use
- Continuous Learning

## Using the Essential Skills Profiles

The Government of Canada has created Essential Skills Profiles for about 250 occupations in Canada. Each Profile describes job tasks related to nine skills that are considered essential to success in the Canadian workplace.

Each profile lists examples of tasks for the nine essential skills. You can use the profiles to learn some of the vocabulary needed to describe your skills in employment interviews and networking situations.

## The National Occupation Classification (NOC)

Every occupation has a four-digit number called the National Occupation Classification (NOC).

The NOC code is listed under the occupation name in each Essential Skills Profile. When you click on it, a one-page description for that occupation appears. It lists the main duties of the occupation, the education requirements and a list of related job titles.

### To find the Essential Skills Profiles:

- 🔍 Find the website by entering the search terms *HRSDC Essential Skills Profiles* in your web browser's search box. On the Essential Skills website, find a profile for an occupation that interests you.



## Writing Cover Letters

When you apply for a job, it is a good idea to include a cover letter and a résumé. A cover letter tells the employer that you are interested in the job and explains why you are a suitable candidate. A cover letter should be brief (not more than a page) and it should be **customized** to the position you are applying for. This means matching your background and experience to the job ad.



**Address** the letter to a specific person or department.

March 16, 2012

Ms. Cynthia Callum  
Director of Human Resources, City  
Hospital  
333 Queen St. Suite 500  
Calgary, AB T2N 2T9

**Opening paragraph:** State the reason for your letter and the position you are applying for.

Dear Ms. Callum:

Please accept my application for the position of pharmacy technician at City Hospital. I would very much like to be considered for the position. I have enclosed my résumé for your review.

**Second paragraph:** Outline why you are a good candidate for the position. Mention the skills and qualifications listed in the advertisement that match your qualifications.

I believe I have all of the qualifications you are looking for in a suitable candidate. I have extensive experience in retail pharmacy, having **worked for** a number of years at both PharmExcellence and at DrugsPlus Pharmacy. In these positions, I was **responsible for** processing prescriptions, handling cash and entering prescription information in the pharmacy computer system. My references can **attest to** my excellent customer-service skills. In addition, I **graduated from** Lakeside Community College with a Pharmacy Technician Diploma.

**Third paragraph:** Thank the employer, request an interview and end on a positive note.

I am confident that my skills, experience and educational background would be an asset to your organization. I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a personal interview to discuss my qualifications. Thank you for your time and consideration. I **look forward to** speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

### Useful collocations

Prepositional collocations consist of a verb and a preposition. The sample cover letter includes many of them. For example: *work for*, *responsible for*, *attest to*, *graduate from*, *believe in*, *participate in*, *take part in*, *apply for*, *look forward to*, *qualified for*.

### Learn more:

- Use the free online activities on Looking for a Job at [www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html](http://www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html).
- Search the Internet using the search terms *sample cover letters*.
- Visit [www.employmentresources.ca](http://www.employmentresources.ca).

## Writing Résumés

An effective résumé outlines your relevant work experience, education and training. It can also list personal attributes and skills that make you a suitable candidate for the position. There are three main résumé formats:

- A chronological résumé organizes relevant work experience by date, beginning with the most recent position
- A functional résumé organizes relevant work experience and accomplishments by skill area (such as project management, sales, etc.) rather than by where and when you acquired these skills
- A combination résumé includes elements of both chronological and functional formats



### A Chronological Résumé Example

Professional experience includes:

- Date of employment
- Name and location of the employer
- Title of the position
- A list of responsibilities relating to the position, beginning with action verbs

Work responsibilities are described with action verbs, such as: cared for, planned, maintained, implemented, assisted, ensured, organized. For a list of action verbs, see page 47.

Education includes:

- The institution where the diploma or degree was granted
- The type of degree/diploma

Lily Rousseau  
600 Ridgewood Court  
Halifax, NS B3H 1A8  
(555) 123 4567; [lilo@email.ca](mailto:lilo@email.ca)

**Objective:** To obtain a position as an Early Childhood Educator where I can utilize my skills and education to develop and support the social, emotional and physical growth of young children.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**2009–2011: Canadian Daycare Inc., Halifax, Nova Scotia**  
*Early Childhood Educator*

- Cared for a group of children ages 3 to 4 years
- Planned, organized and implemented daily, weekly and monthly program activities with other staff
- Assisted children with proper eating, dressing and toilet habits
- Ensured the safety and well-being of children in the program
- Communicated with parents about children's activities, behaviour and development

**2006–2009: The Berlingen Family, 222 Strandt Strasse, Munich, Germany**  
*Nanny*

- Cared for four children ranging in age from two to nine years
- Assisted with the children's daily activities as required
- Supervised homework activities
- Organized and implemented educational outings
- Provided French language tutoring to the two oldest children
- Prepared nutritious snacks and occasional meals
- Maintained a positive and supportive relationship with the parents and the children

**EDUCATION**

École Supérieure  
Diploma: Professeur d'école, 2006

### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet more by using the search terms *résumé formats* or *résumé writing*.

## Participating in Job Interviews

### During an interview, the interviewer may...

- Begin the conversation with small talk:
- *Did you have any trouble finding us?*
  - *It really feels like winter today!*

Begin an interview by saying:

- *Tell me a little about yourself.*

Ask you to describe your skills and work duties:

- *Tell me about the work you did before you came to Canada.*
- *Tell me about the work you do in your job now.*

Ask you to describe your employment-related personal attributes or qualities:

- *Tell me about your best qualities.*
- *How would you describe yourself?*

Ask you to describe a difficult situation and how you handled it:

- *Tell me about a time when you had a problem with a client and how you dealt with the situation.*

Ask you to describe what you would do in a hypothetical situation:

- *What would you do if someone on your team weren't pulling his or her weight?*

### Tips for responding

- Maintain a positive tone in your response (even if you just spent a few hours in traffic trying to get to the interview).

- Give a one- to two-minute summary of your experience and education as it relates to the position you are applying for.
  - I've been working in business for the last 15 years. I have a business degree and I used to have my own business selling small furniture. In the last two years I've been working in sales at a large furniture store.

- Prepare your description in advance. Use action verbs, and be sure to use the correct tense (past tense for actions that were completed in the past; present tense for current activities).
  - In my country, I worked...
  - In my current position, I work...

- Use descriptive adjectives to talk about your qualities or skills. Include examples that provide evidence for the qualities you say you have.
  - I'm a very creative and resourceful person. In my last job, whenever there was a problem, I would...

- Provide a clear and concise description of a specific situation, your response, any actions you took and what happened in the end.
  - Two years ago, I had a problem with a client. The client...

- Prepare some responses in advance. Use conditional sentences to describe a hypothetical situation.
  - If someone on my team weren't pulling his or her weight, I would...

### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet (also search YouTube videos); use the search terms *tips for job interviews*; *common questions and answers job interviews*; *behavioural job interview*.

## Networking

Networking refers to establishing and maintaining connections with people who may be helpful to you or your work.

Job seekers network in order to make contacts that can lead to a job. What you say in a networking situation depends on who you are speaking with, what your goal is and where the conversation takes place (e.g., at a job fair, employer information session, informally at work, on the phone). In networking situations, you may only have a few minutes to make a positive impression. The following tips may help.



### Begin by introducing yourself

- Hi/ hello/good morning, my name is Vero Harkov. I'm with RBG Industries.
- I'm Helen Chang. I'm a recent graduate of Branson University.
- If a conversation doesn't begin with an introduction, you could say: By the way, my name is ...

### To start a conversation

- What brings you to today's meeting?
- How did you get started in this field?
- How does your company differ from others in the industry?
- What advice would you give someone just starting in nursing in Canada?

### To continue the conversation, sometimes it's helpful to provide a 10- to 20-second description of your professional background and goals

- Hi, I am Elias Mohammed. I'm a trained accountant with 10 years of experience overseas. I'm currently taking a course to upgrade my skills in ACCPAC and I'm also taking an advanced English class to improve my English. I'm hoping to work for a large accounting firm one day.

#### Useful tip

Practice your description in advance.

### To close a conversation

- This has been helpful. Thank you very much.
- Thanks, it's been good talking with you.
- Here's my card. Do you have a business card?

### To move on to talk to another person

- Would you excuse me?

#### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for information and tips on networking. Use the search term *networking*.

# Helpful English for... *Interacting at Work*

## Formal and Informal Interactions

Each Canadian workplace has a unique approach to how employees dress, talk to each other, make decisions and manage conflict. Taken together, these “ways of doing things” are referred to as the *workplace culture*. Day-to-day interactions at some workplaces are more formal than at others. Observe how people in your workplace interact with each other (in writing and in speaking). This will help you learn about the level of formality in your workplace.

The level of formality you use in your interactions at work depends on a variety of factors. In addition to the culture of the particular workplace, those factors include:

- The purpose of the interaction. For example, giving suggestions, persuading and making requests may require more formal language than engaging in small talk with a colleague.
- The relationship between you and the other person. Interacting with an unfamiliar person or someone in a position of authority usually requires you to be more formal.

Here are some examples of formal and informal language:

### More formal

### Less formal

#### Opening or closing a conversation

- |                                |                              |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| → How are you today?           | → How are things?            |
| → I enjoyed speaking with you. | → What's up?/How's it going? |
| → It's a pleasure meeting you. | → Good talking to you.       |
|                                | → See you later.             |
|                                | → Nice to meet you.          |

#### Making or responding to a request

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| → Would you mind...?                   | → Can you...?                     |
| → Would it be possible for you to...?  | → Can I talk to you for a minute? |
| → Excuse me, could I speak with you?   | → Do you have a minute?           |
| → Could you wait for a minute, please? | → Hang on a second.               |
| → I'd be happy to do that for you.     | → Sure, no problem.               |

#### Asking questions

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| → I wonder if you would be available at 3:00 for a meeting. | → Can we meet at 3:00?          |
|   | → Is 3:00 a good time for you?  |
| → Will you be attending the meeting?                        | → Are you going to the meeting? |

#### Learn more:

🔍 Search the Internet. Use the search terms *workplace culture*.

## Making Arrangements



Open the conversation

Max: Hello, Steve. This is Max Anthony. We met at the conference last week. You suggested I call to set up an appointment to meet with you.

Continue with small talk

Steve: Oh, hi Max. Good to hear from you! How did you enjoy the rest of the conference?

Max: It was great! That was definitely one of the better conferences I've attended.

Suggest an arrangement

Steve: Yes, I thought so too. So, we should get together. Is Tuesday, September 17th good for you? Maybe around 1:00?

Suggest an alternative

Max: I'm sorry. I have another meeting on Tuesday. How about Monday the 23rd instead, at around 10:30?

Confirm the arrangement

Steve: Sure. So that's Monday, September 23rd at 10:30. Should we meet at my office?

Max: That would be great.

Close the conversation

Steve: I'm looking forward to meeting with you.

Max: Likewise. See you on Monday.

Cancel the arrangement

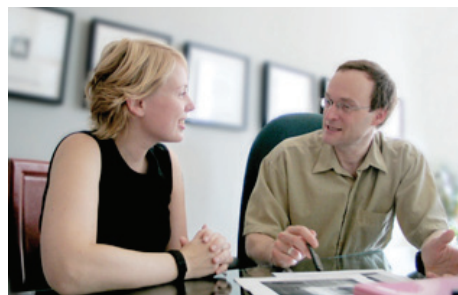
Steve: Hello Max, this is Steve Galitsis calling. I'm really sorry but I'm going to have to postpone our meeting on Monday. Unfortunately something has come up. I'll call back in a few days. Hopefully we can reschedule.



## Instructions

### Tips for giving instructions

- Give a few instructions at a time. Most people have trouble remembering a lot of information.
- If your instructions are long and complex, give the information in stages. Make sure the listener has understood each stage before you go on to the next.
- Be clear about what you want the listener to do.
- Say exactly what you mean so the listener isn't left guessing.
- If you are unsure about whether the listener has understood, have them repeat the instructions back in their own words.
- Try not to rush when giving instructions. Give the listener time to understand the information.



### Tips for following instructions

- Take notes if the instructions involve a number of steps.
- Clarify your understanding of the instructions by asking questions and repeating back.
- Don't wait until the end of a long explanation to tell the speaker that you don't understand. Ask for clarification as you go along.

#### Giving instructions

- First, turn all switches to the off position; then ...
- When the silicone has been removed,...

#### Demonstrating or illustrating what you mean

- Here, let me show you what I mean.
- Here's an example of what I'm talking about...

#### Confirming that the instructions were understood

- Is that clear?
- Do you have any questions?
- Can you tell me in your own words what needs to be done?

#### Handling a misunderstanding

- There may have been a misunderstanding about ...
- Maybe I wasn't clear enough when I gave you instructions. I should have ...

#### Clarifying information (when receiving instructions)

- So, in other words, I have to...
- If I understood you correctly, I have to first...
- Then I have to... Is that right?

Use **imperatives** to give clear and concise instructions; complex instructions are sometimes written with **adverbial clauses** and in the **passive voice**

#### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet using the search terms *tips for giving instructions* or *passive voice*.

## Being Assertive

Being assertive involves expressing your thoughts and feelings in a clear and calm way while respecting the opinions and feelings of others.

The following are some language strategies for communicating assertively:

Do this:	Don't do this:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use "I" statements to describe your feelings and the reason you feel this way. → I get frustrated when you don't finish your work on time because I can't move ahead with mine.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blame the other person. → You make me so angry! You never finish your work on time!
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Say it clearly and directly. Be specific. → I would prefer that you talk to me before seeing a client.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make generalizations. Avoid words like "never" and "always." → You always just go ahead and do whatever you like. You never talk to me before seeing a client.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus on the person's actions and not the person themselves. → I don't like the way she is talking about Chitra behind her back.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Criticize the person. → She's obnoxious! She always talks behind people's backs.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Let others know that you are listening to them, but that you are going to stand your ground. → I understand how you feel. But here is how I feel.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use demanding or blaming statements. → Stop...! → You should/shouldn't... → It's your fault... → You make me...
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use a calm, even tone of voice and a normal volume to deliver your message.	

Be mindful of the emotions the sound and pace of your voice may convey. Speaking too quickly can convey nervousness, excitement or even aggression (when combined with loudness). A slow and low-pitched voice can convey controlled anger.

### Learn more:

🔍 Search the Internet, using the search terms *assertive communication*.



## Saying “No”

One way to say “no” to an unwanted request at work is to use a technique called “the broken record.” This technique is useful when you have been clear about your refusal but the other person is trying to convince you to change your mind. It consists of calmly and firmly repeating your refusal until the other person accepts it.

### Clearly state your refusal

→ I won’t be able to work this Saturday.

### Acknowledge the other person’s situation

→ I understand that you’re under a great deal of pressure, but I can’t work this Saturday.

### Offer a compromise

→ I can work a bit later this evening but I can’t come in on Saturday.

### Keep repeating your point; use a calm, pleasant voice

→ I’m sorry, but I can’t come in on Saturday.

### Repeat the refusal and offer an explanation

→ Saturday is my day off and I already have plans.



Sam: Hey Lee, can you cover for me this Sunday? I want to take my son to a hockey game.

Lee: Sorry, Sam, but I can’t work this weekend.

Sam: But it’s the playoffs, and I promised my son I’d take him.

Lee: I wish I could help Sam, but I just can’t work this Sunday. I’ve got too many things to do. Maybe Jan can switch shifts with you.

Sam: I’ve already asked him and he has a family thing to go to on Sunday. There’s really no one else who can cover for me. Please, Lee. I can work for you next Friday if you like.

Lee: Sorry Sam, but this weekend just isn’t good. Any other weekend and I’d be happy to switch with you, but I just can’t work this Sunday.

Sam: Okay. Thanks anyway.

### Learn more:

🔍 Search the Internet for *saying no assertively*.

## Being Tactful

Being tactful is a communication skill that involves minimizing the impact of a critical statement in a way that respects the feelings of others. Tact helps maintain good relationships with others.



### Less Tactful

- ☒ You made a mistake on this order.
- ☒ This is wrong.
- ☒ That's a terrible idea.



### More Tactful

- Use indirect language to soften the impact of a critical statement.
- ☑ There seems to be a problem with this order.
- ☑ I think there might be an error.
- ☑ I'm not sure that's a good idea.

- ☒ You set this up incorrectly.
- ☒ You made several mistakes in this spreadsheet.



- Use the passive voice to avoid blaming someone directly.
- ☑ This was set up incorrectly.
- ☑ There are four mistakes in this spreadsheet.

- ☒ You don't write clearly.



- Use "I" statements to avoid placing blame, and to keep the focus on consequences.
- ☑ I had trouble following the ideas in your paper.

- ☒ He's slow at completing his work.
- ☒ She's such a negative person.



- Use qualifiers (e.g., ***kind of, a little, a bit***) to minimize the impact of a statement.
- ☑ He's kind of slow at completing his work.
- ☑ She can be somewhat negative at times.

- ☒ Her writing is really bad.
- ☒ This display is really boring.



- Use positive language; it can lead to solutions and problem-solving.
- ☑ Her writing could be improved.
- ☑ This display might be a bit more attractive if we...

- ☒ We have to do it differently.
- ☒ Stop dealing with that company.



- Use modals to make a statement less demanding, and encourage input from others.
- ☑ Maybe we could try doing it a different way.
- ☑ I wonder if we should stop dealing with that company.

### Learn more:



Search the Internet using the search terms *diplomatic communication* or *how to be diplomatic* or *tactful language*.

# Helpful English for... Workplace Meetings

## Participating in Meetings

Group meetings may be formal or informal and involve a variety of language skills including those needed to:

- Engage in small talk before or after the meeting
- Greet and introduce yourself or others if participants don't know each other
- Participate in the meeting (e.g., give updates, present information, give and respond to suggestions, warnings or opinions, take turns speaking, interrupt politely, ask for clarification, summarize information)
- End the meeting



### Making small talk prior to the meeting

- Wow, the traffic out there is terrible. It's getting worse all the time.
- What beautiful weather we're having.

### Steering the conversation towards work-related topics

- So, it looks like we have a pretty full agenda today.
- How's your project going?

### Introducing yourself or another person

- My name is Thom Nguyen. I've been working for LBJ Consulting for the past six years. Before that, I worked for PBS Engineering...
- Please join me in welcoming John Smith. John joined LBJ just three weeks ago and brings considerable sales experience to our team.

### Making suggestions and recommendations

- I think we **should** buy all of our supplies from ABC Company.
- We **could** re-use paper to save money.

### Warning or suggesting caution

- If we don't shut down the machines at night, they will overheat and stop working.
- We can save \$500 a month in electricity costs if we turn the air conditioner down.

Use **modals** (could, should, would) when making suggestions

Use **conditionals** (if...then) for warnings

### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet using the search terms *language of meetings* or *phrases for meetings* or *meeting vocabulary*.

## Giving Opinions

People are often required to give or respond to opinions and suggestions in meetings. Here are some expressions you can use:

### Expressing an opinion

- In my opinion ...
- It seems to me that...
- Speaking from my experience, ...
- The way I see it...

### Asking for an opinion

- How do you feel about ...?
- What's your opinion about...?
- What do you think?
- Do you agree?

### Agreeing

- I (totally/completely) agree.
- I can see that.
- I think so too.
- Good point!
- For sure.
- Absolutely!/Exactly!/Totally!
- Sounds good.

### Disagreeing

- I disagree because...
- I totally/completely disagree.
- I don't know about that/I'm not sure.
- I see your point, but I also think that ...
- That's a good point, but ...
- I know what you mean, however...
- I'm not sure I agree.



### Clarifying questions

Before disagreeing, it is helpful to ask a clarifying question. Your question/s should help you understand the speaker's opinion, and should give the speaker a chance to explain their point of view or change it.

For example:

- So, do you mean that ...?
- Did you consider...?
- Can you explain what you mean by ...?

The final four examples include phrases that support and acknowledge the opinions of others.

### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet using the search terms *giving opinions* or *expressing agreement or disagreement*.

## Being Persuasive

The purpose of a persuasive presentation is to convince the listener or listeners to take a particular action that will meet a need or solve a problem.

When you are planning to present a proposal or persuasive idea that you want others to adopt, it helps to have a clear goal in mind and develop a compelling argument.

To deliver an effective, persuasive presentation:

- State the facts about the need or the problem you are addressing
- Give a clear explanation of how you plan to meet the need or solve the problem
- Discuss how your proposal is better than other possible proposals or solutions
- Address how your proposal could be implemented; include steps that need to be taken and resources that are needed
- Be clear, concise and positive



### State your goal up front

- I am proposing that we use an online conferencing tool instead of meeting face-to-face.

### Use simple sentences to communicate clearly and make key points

- We're spending a lot of money on meetings.
- Our staff wastes a lot of time travelling to meetings.

### Use compound sentences to add detail and justify your proposal

- Online conferencing is more cost-effective than meeting in person because we don't have to pay for travel expenses, refreshments or a meeting room.

### Use statements that contain facts

- This tool costs \$30.00 per month. It has the following features:...

### Use transitional phrases to discuss the features and benefits of a proposal

- This is important because...
- This means that...
- With this feature, (state the advantages)...

### Use comparative and superlative adjectives to compare your proposal to others

- This tool is cheaper than that one.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is much more practical than \_\_\_\_\_ for the following reasons:...

### Use intensifiers

- It's *really* easy to use and *incredibly* cost-effective.

### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet using the search terms *persuasive language* or *persuasive presentations*.

## Taking Turns and Interrupting

It's important that everyone has a chance to express their opinions and ideas in a meeting. The following are some expressions you can use as a meeting facilitator:

### To encourage others to participate in the discussion

- Would anyone like to comment on what Marc just said?
- Abdul, what do you think?
- What does everyone think about Svetlana's suggestion?
- Does anyone have anything they'd like to add?
- What's your opinion, Uzma?
- That's a good point, Svetlana. What does everyone else think? *(This is helpful when someone is monopolizing the discussion.)*



### Interrupting

It is generally impolite to interrupt when someone is speaking. Nevertheless, there are times when you need to interrupt. A good time to interject is when speaker indicates that he/she is coming to a pause or an end in their discourse. They may signal this through body language or by pausing. Below are some expressions for interrupting politely.

- Could I just say that...
- I'd like to add that...
- Sorry to interrupt, but ...

One way to stop someone from interrupting you if you are the speaker is to avoid eye contact and continue with what you are saying. If the other person does not get the hint, here are some helpful expressions:

- Please allow me to finish.
- I'm not finished my point.
- Just a moment...
- I'd just like to add one more thing.

### Learn more:

- 🔍 About meetings: Search the Internet using the search terms *meetings* or *language for meetings*.
- About interrupting: Observe how others take turns and interrupt. Pay particular attention to their body language when they are interrupting or being interrupted.

# Helpful English for... *Business Writing*

## Writing Email Messages

Here are a few things to consider when writing email messages:

- Email messages are often used to record business interactions. Check the accuracy of your facts before sending the message.
- Use a friendly but professional tone. If you are unsure of the tone to use, start with a formal approach and see how the recipient responds. An email to a colleague should be businesslike, but can be less formal.
- Keep messages brief and organize the text into short paragraphs. Long texts without breaks can discourage readers from reading the entire message.
- Keep the content of the message related to the email subject line.
- Avoid writing in full upper case (e.g., *I WOULD* ...); it can be interpreted as shouting.
- Check for correct grammar, punctuation and spelling before you send your message. Misspelled words and improper punctuation reflects negatively on you and your employer.
- Reread your message before you send it. Edit it to remove unnecessary words.



### Anatomy of an email message

- ① **A short subject line that tells the recipient what the email is about**  
→ Ceramic tiles shipment
- ② **A formal or informal greeting**  
→ Dear Ms. Wong (formal)  
→ Hi Uzma (informal)
- ③ **The purpose of the message**  
→ I would like to inform you that your shipment of ceramic tiles has arrived.
- ④ **A closing**  
→ Sincerely, / Regards, / Thank you, (formal)  
→ Cheers, / Thanks, (informal)

### Keep in mind

When you receive emails, respond! Most people expect a quick response to an email. If you cannot address the content of the email quickly, you can still send a courteous prompt response. This lets the sender you have received their message and are considering it. For example, *Thank you for your message. I will respond with more details on Thursday.*

### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet; use the search terms *appropriate subject lines in email messages, email etiquette, formality in email.*
- 🔍 For free online activities on business email messages, visit Voice of America Learning English, at [www.voanews.com/learningenglish/theclassroom/activities](http://www.voanews.com/learningenglish/theclassroom/activities). On the homepage, click on *Business English*. Then click on *Using Email in English*.



## Accident and Incident Reports

Most companies have guidelines for reporting accidents or incidents at work. This may include a form that the employee fills out.

In general, accident and incident reports should be:

- **Factual and objective:** Include significant facts that can be proven at the time of writing the report. Avoid opinions or interpretations about what happened.
- **Accurate:** Make sure all dates, times and events are recorded as accurately as possible. (These reports are sometimes used in court.)
- **Clear and concise:** Eliminate unnecessary words or statements that may confuse the reader.
- **Complete:** Include all relevant information.
- **Well-organized:** A good way to organize the report is chronologically.
- **Correct:** Proofread your report to make sure there are no spelling, grammar or punctuation mistakes. You can also ask someone else to proofread it.



### Asking and Answering Questions

The report should answer the **who, what, where, when, why**, and **how** of the accident or incident.

#### Who

- Who was involved?
- Who reported the incident/accident?
- Who witnessed the incident/accident?
- Who responded? Who took what actions?
- Who did you speak to?

#### When

- When did the incident/accident happen?
- When was management informed?
- When did you report it?
- If emergency medical services were called, when did they arrive?

#### What

- What happened?
- What actions did you take?
- What were the results of those actions?

#### Where

- Where did the incident/accident happen?
- If someone was injured, which medical facility were they taken to?

#### Why

- Why did the incident/accident occur?
- What caused the accident/incident?

#### How

- How did the incident/accident occur?
- How was it discovered?

#### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for sample accident and incident report forms.
- 🔍 Search the Internet for grammar practice activities; use the search terms *question formation in English*.



## Tone in Business Writing

Tone in writing refers to the attitude, meaning and emotion conveyed by the words we use in our written messages. A business message should usually convey a courteous and professional tone.



When deciding on the tone to convey, consider:

- The purpose of your message (e.g., to congratulate, complain, give information)
- Your reader(s) (e.g., supervisor, client, co-worker)
- Your relationship with your reader(s)
- The attitude you want to convey (e.g., enthusiasm, regret, appreciation)

### To convey appreciation

- Thank you for all your help in organizing the trade show.
- Thanks for your understanding.
- I really appreciate the offer, however ...

### To convey enthusiasm

- I wanted to congratulate you on a job well done!
- It was wonderful to meet with you on Thursday.
- Your presentation was very interesting and informative.

### To convey confidence

- I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.
- I believe I have the qualifications you are looking for.
- We are certain you will be pleased with the results.

### To convey regret or an apology

- We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.
- We are sorry to inform you that...

### To convey authority

- We have decided to terminate our contract with your company for the following reasons:...
- Using the company car for personal business is not permitted.

## When Delivering Negative News

Negative business messages often use formal language and the passive voice. This creates a formal distance between the writer and the receiver and an attitude of seriousness.

- *This is to inform you that your account is 90 days in arrears. If the overdue amount is not paid in full within 15 days, we will cancel our contract with ABC Company.*

### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet; use the search terms *tone in business writing*.

# Helpful English for... Academic Success

## Writing Paragraphs

A paragraph is a series of sentences about a topic.

### Topic sentence

The topic sentence is usually at the beginning of the paragraph. It states the main idea and tells reader what the paragraph is about.

### Supporting sentences

Supporting sentences provide supporting details about the topic sentence. They can include facts, explanations, statistics and examples

### Concluding sentence

The concluding sentence sums up the paragraph and expresses the same general idea as the topic sentence but in different words

#### Polar Bears in Canada

Global warming is one of the most serious threats to polar bear populations in the Arctic. Temperatures are rising far faster in the Arctic region than in the rest of the world and this is causing the sea ice to melt. This loss of ice is threatening polar bears who depend on it for their survival. Ice is the natural habitat of polar bears, and they need it to get their food, to mate and to travel from one area to another. Scientists predict that that if current global warming trends continue in the Arctic region, two-thirds of the polar bear population could disappear by 2050.

Academic paragraphs are somewhat formal; avoid using contractions.

Use:

☒ is not

☒ were not

☒ cannot

☒ you would

☒ should not

Do not use:

☒ isn't

☒ weren't

☒ can't

☒ you'd

☒ shouldn't

### Learn more:

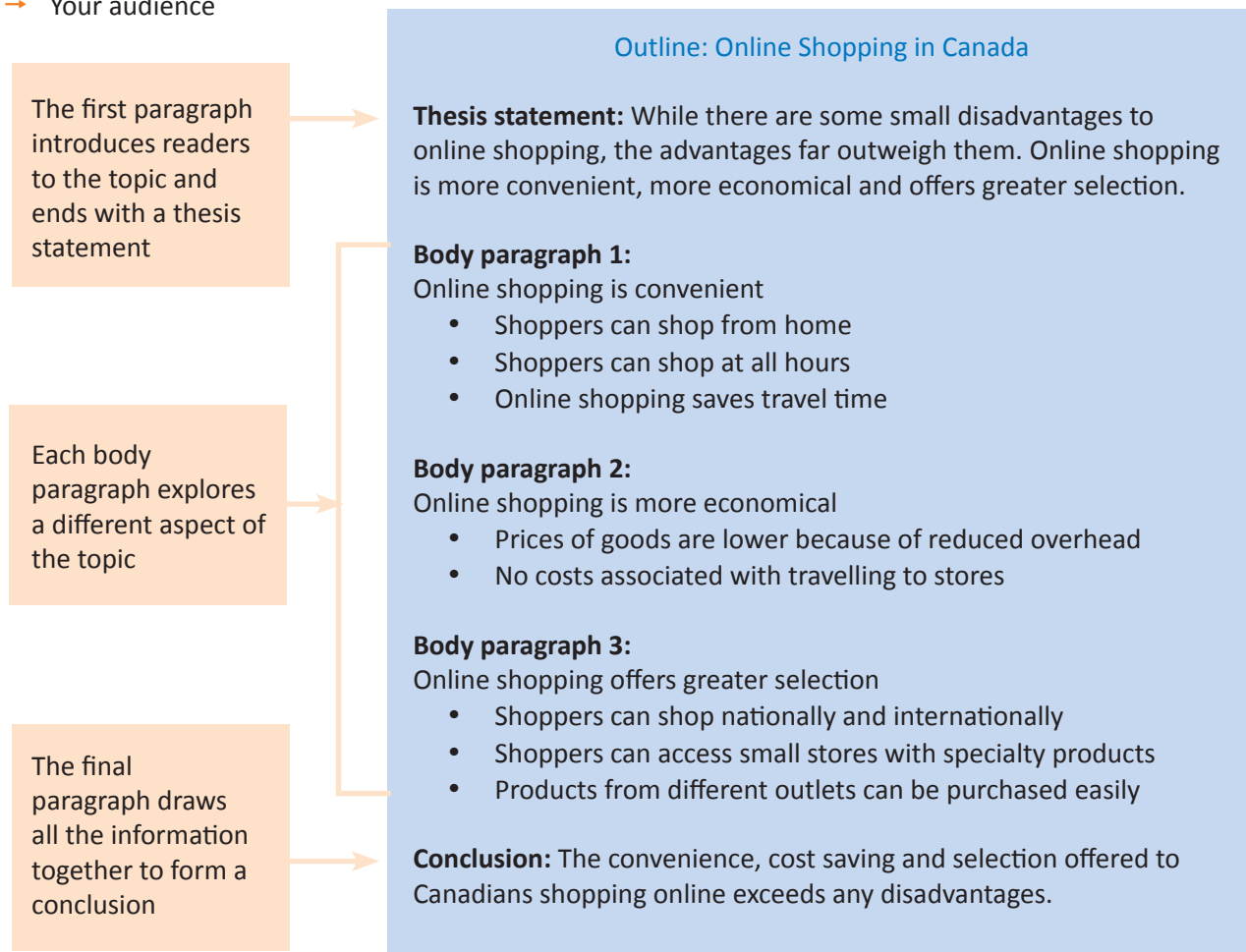
- 🔗 Use the free online activities on academic writing at [www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html](http://www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html).
- 🔗 Search the Internet using the search term *paragraph writing*.
- 🔗 Visit websites with activities on paragraph writing, such as:  
Guide to Grammar and Writing:  
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>  
Purdue Online Writing Lab:  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl>  
Sentence Sense: [www.ccc.commnet.edu/sensen/](http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/sensen/)  
Writing Den:  
[http://www2.actden.com/writ\\_den/tips/contents.htm](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/contents.htm)

## Creating an Outline

Creating an outline is an important step in the writing process. An outline is a skeletal organization of your ideas. It is created to guide you during the writing stage so your writing reflects a logical flow of ideas. An outline is particularly helpful when you are writing long texts. Having a well-developed outline makes the writing process easier.

Before you begin, be clear about:

- The type of text you are writing (e.g., story, research paper, essay)
- The purpose of your text (e.g., to describe, to present facts or opinions, to compare and contrast)
- The main ideas you want to express
- Your audience



### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet using the search terms *writing process* or *creating an outline*.
- 🔍 Visit Purdue Online Writing Lab at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl> or the University of Victoria's writing guide at <http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/>.

## Tips for Effective Writing

Here are five tips for effective writing:

- 1 Use short, simple sentences to emphasize an important idea; use longer sentences for explanations and examples to support it.

*Smoking is harmful to your health.*

*Smoking is the leading cause of heart disease, different types of cancers, emphysema and chronic bronchitis.*



- 2 Use parallel structure within sentences. This refers to using the same sentence structure and forms of words when joining two or more ideas in a sentence.

☒ I enjoy skiing, swimming and cooking.

☒ I enjoy skiing, swimming and I like to cook.

- 3 Be concise by getting rid of unnecessary words.

*She is a hard-working person who ~~works very hard~~.*

- 4 Use complete sentences. A complete sentence contains a subject, a verb and an object.

*People have different writing styles.*

S                      V                      O

- 5 Proofread and edit your work. Correct spelling and punctuation errors. Don't rely solely on a computer spell check feature; it is not always accurate. Edit for consistency in tense and proper sentence structure. If possible, ask someone else to read it.

### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet; use the search terms *effective writing*, *writing effective paragraphs*, *writing topic sentences*, *parallel structure*, *proofreading*, *editing strategies* or *editing a paragraph*.
- 🔍 Visit the University of Ottawa's free electronic grammar course at [www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca/hypergrammar/grammar.html](http://www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca/hypergrammar/grammar.html)

## Making Presentations

Many academic programs require students to give presentations. Before you begin to organize a presentation, determine its purpose. Is it to convey information, to convince the audience of a particular point of view, to motivate them to action or to achieve some other purpose? Then consider the audience's expectations and prior knowledge. This will help you determine the best approach.

### Signposts in presentations

In presentations, it's common to use language signals, also called signposts, to tell the audience how the presentation is organized and to indicate different parts of a presentation.

#### To introduce the topic and tell the audience what to expect

- The topic of my presentation is...
- Today I'd like to talk about...
- My presentation is about...

#### To tell the audience how the presentation is organized

- I've organized my presentation in three parts. In the first part, I'd like to talk about...
- Then I plan to show...
- And finally, I will...

#### To move from one point to another

- Next I'd like to talk about...
- And now for my next point...

#### To emphasize a point

- I want to stress that...
- It's important that...

#### To signal that you are nearing the end of your presentation

- And for my last point...
- And finally...

#### Summarize the key points of your presentation

- To sum up...
- To summarize what I've said...



### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet using the following search terms: *giving presentations* or *presentation skills*.
- 🔍 Search for presentation-related skills, such as: *body language during presentation*, *preparing an outline*, *summarizing information* or *being clear and concise*.

## Reading Strategies

Here are some common strategies to help you read more effectively.

### Pre-reading strategies

- Preview the text by looking at the title, headings, pictures, captions, words and sentences in bold or italics. Look at the layout and organization of the text to get a general sense of what information is included.
- Think about any questions you would like to have answered by the text.
- Identify the writer's purpose. For example, is it to inform, persuade, argue a point, present facts or give instructions?
- Skim the text to get a general idea what it's going to be about. Skimming means looking over a whole text quickly before reading it.



### Strategies to use while reading

- Read the first sentence (topic sentence) of each paragraph. If written well, the topic sentence will tell you the main idea of the paragraph. Identify the supporting details in each paragraph.
- Scan the text. Scanning means reading the text to find specific information or words without reading each sentence carefully.
- Take notes about important details in the text. Use a highlighter to point out the main ideas and a pencil to add your own annotations (comments), ideas and thoughts.
- Try to guess the meanings of unfamiliar words from the context instead of using a dictionary for each unfamiliar word.
- Distinguish facts from the writer's opinions.

### Strategies to use after reading

- Talk about the text with someone else.
- Write a summary of the text.
- Give your own ideas and opinions about what the author has written.

#### Learn more:

- 🔗 Use the free online activities on Managing Information at [www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html](http://www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html).
- 🔗 Search the Internet for *reading strategies, skimming and scanning*.

## Taking Notes

Taking notes requires you to listen carefully to a lecture. If you do it effectively, your notes can provide you with a record of the key points to study later on. Since you can't write everything the lecturer says word for word, you'll need to be able to distinguish important information from less relevant details quickly.



### Tips for determining key information for your notes

- Lecturers often display an outline or key points on the board, a handout or a slide.
- Listen carefully to the introduction. This will often provide you with an overview of the main points and key details of the presentation. You can use this overview to organize your notes.
- Listen for repetition. Lecturers often repeat important points for emphasis.
- Observe the speaker's gestures, tone of voice and the length of time he or she spends on a particular point; these are often clues as to what is important in the presentation.
- Listen for phrases that signal key information. For example: *Another important point is...; The main point is ...; "I want to stress that..."*
- Listen carefully to the end of the lecture. The speaker often provides a summary of the main points.

### Tips for taking notes quickly

- Use short forms and abbreviations that you'll be able to identify later.
- Eliminate articles, prepositions, pronouns and the verb "be."
- Use symbols to replace words, such as: = (equals), → (leads to), > (greater than), < (less than), # (number), & (and).
- Indent to distinguish main ideas from supporting points.
- Write key words and phrases rather than complete sentences

March 6: Environment studies (notes)

#### Alternative Energy Sources: Pros and Cons

##### Problems with fossil fuels:

- non-renew;
- pollution → envir. probs (e.g., CO<sub>2</sub> → global warming)
- Alternatives = wind, water, solar

##### Wind:

- Pros:
  - few safety risks
  - wind is free
  - no harm to environmt
- Cons:
  - public complaints - noise pollution
  - need big turbines

### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for *note-taking strategies*.
- 🔍 Search university websites; many have note-taking strategies, such as Athabasca University, at: [http://lss.athabascau.ca/counselling/study\\_skills.php](http://lss.athabascau.ca/counselling/study_skills.php).

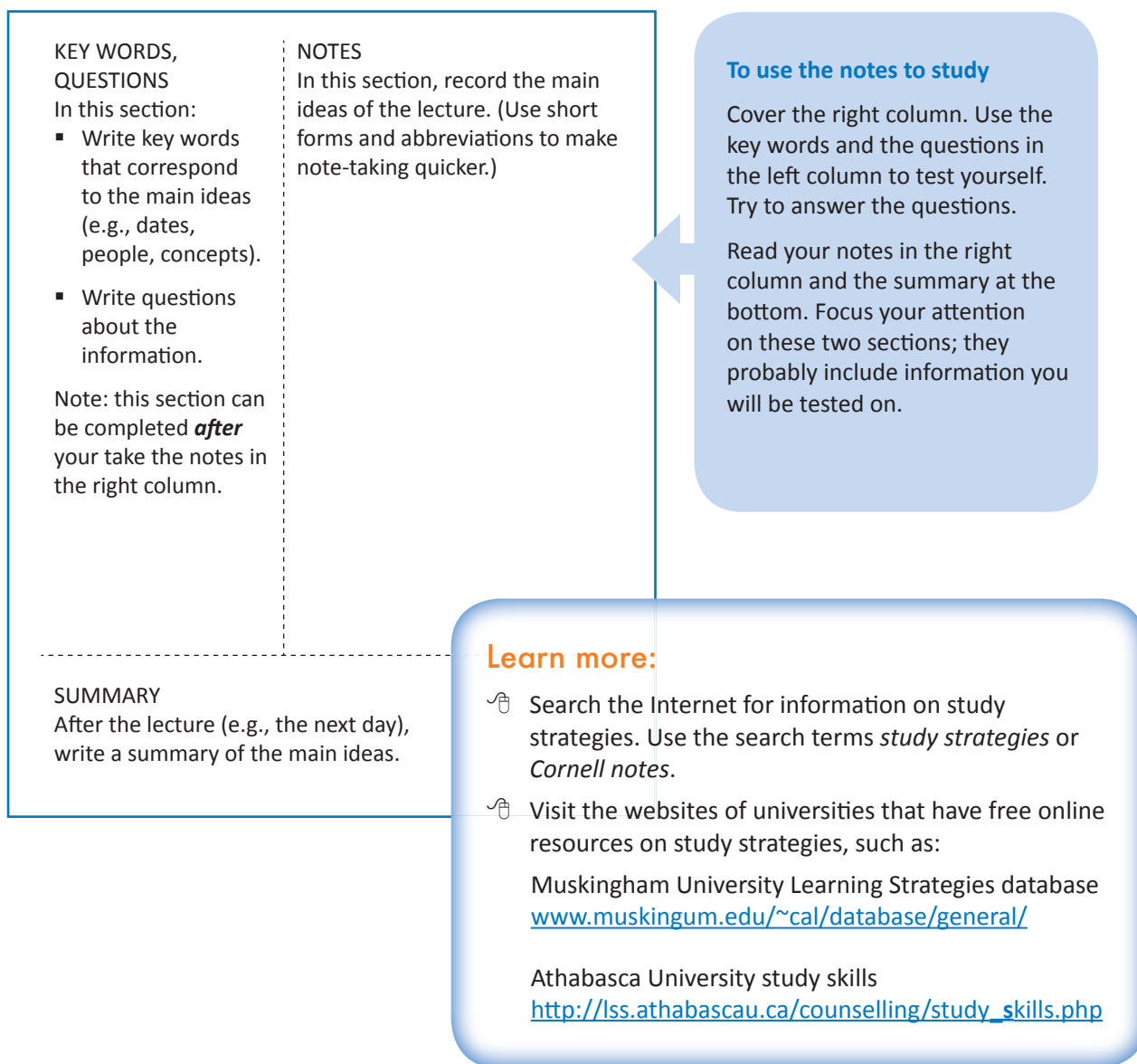


## Study Skills

There are **many** study strategies. They include topics such as learning styles, study skills, time management, avoiding procrastination, writing an essay, reading comprehension strategies, preparing for exams, memory strategies and note-taking.

### Cornell Notes

The Cornell Notes system is just one study strategy. It is described below. It involves using your notes (taken during a lecture or while you are reading) to study. To use it, divide your page into three sections, as below:





## Tips for Learning English

There are a number of things you can do to improve your English. Several tips are listed below.

Two key tips are:

- Try to study English each day
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes

Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Find radio programs that interest you. Listen actively to identify the main points and a few important details.</li><li>✓ Listen to news broadcasts. Keep up to date on the news (even if in your first language) so that it will be easier to understand the news in English.</li><li>✓ Listen to people speaking English around you (e.g., on the bus, while shopping).</li><li>✓ Watch English movies and programs on television.</li><li>✓ Listen to podcasts or watch YouTube videos on the Internet.</li></ul>
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Volunteer to answer questions in class.</li><li>✓ Join an English conversation club.</li><li>✓ Use every opportunity to have conversations with others (e.g., neighbours, strangers, store clerks).</li><li>✓ Search for websites that provide pronunciation practice.</li><li>✓ Ask others to help you with pronunciation.</li></ul>
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Read books, comics, newspapers and magazines in English. Identify the main points of each article after you read it. If possible, re-tell what you've read to someone else.</li><li>✓ Try to guess the meanings of new words from the context (from the words around it). Then look up the word to see if your guess was correct.</li><li>✓ Use a monolingual dictionary to look up the meanings of unfamiliar words.</li><li>✓ Read to understand the main ideas, without worrying about understanding every word.</li><li>✓ Use flashcards or a small notebook to remember new vocabulary, expressions and phrases. Try to learn two or three new words each day.</li></ul>
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Write email messages, texts and letters to friends in English.</li><li>✓ Join an online discussion or chat group.</li><li>✓ Write a summary of a movie or news item.</li><li>✓ Write regular entries (in English) in a journal.</li><li>✓ Make comments on blogs; write postings on your own blog or social networking website.</li></ul>

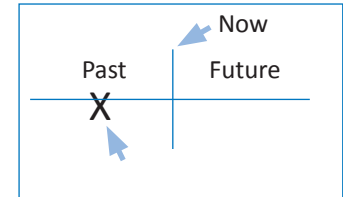
## Verb Tenses: Simple Tenses

**Simple Present** = verb + -es or -s

Events or actions that exist always, usually or repeatedly. They exist now, have existed in the past, and probably will exist in the future.

— X — X — X — X — X — X —

Affirmative	Negative
Kati works every day.	Marc doesn't work every day.
Interrogative	
Does Kati work every day?	



**Simple Past:** regular verbs = verb + -ed or -d

An action that began and ended in the past

— X —

Affirmative	Negative
Sue worked in Peru in 1997.	Sue didn't work yesterday.
Interrogative	
Did Robyn work yesterday?	

**Simple Future** = *will* + *verb*

An action or event that will happen in the future.

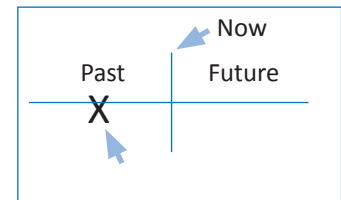
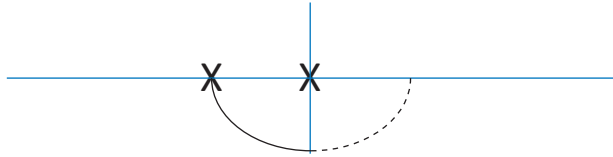
— X —

Affirmative	Negative
Kunal will work tomorrow.	Tom will not work tomorrow.
Interrogative	
Will Kunal work tomorrow?	

## Verb Tenses: Progressive Tenses

**Present Progressive** = *am/is/are* + verb + *-ing*

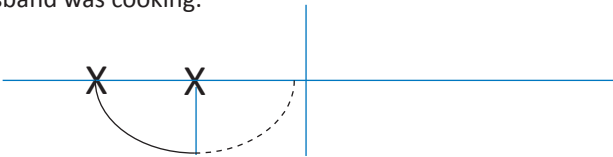
An action that is in progress at or around the time of speaking.



Affirmative	Negative
Roberto is working today.	Michelle is not working today.
Interrogative	
Is Roberto working today?	

**Past Progressive** = *was/were* + *-ing*

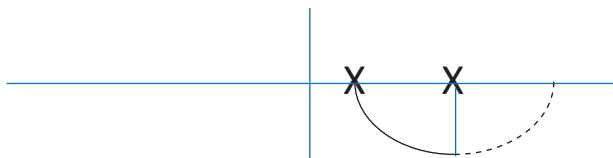
- a) An action or event that was in progress at a certain time in the past.
- b) An action that was in progress and was interrupted by another action. I was watching TV when the phone rang.
- c) Two actions happening at the same time in the past. While I was studying, my husband was cooking.



Affirmative	Negative
Anne was working when he arrived.	Barb wasn't working when I arrived.
Interrogative	
Was Anne working when he arrived?	

**Future Progressive** = *will be* + verb + *-ing*

An action that will be in progress at a certain time in the future.

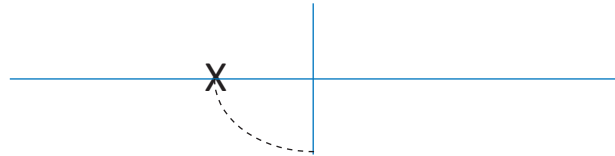


Affirmative	Negative
Frances <b>will be working</b> tomorrow.	Ming <b>will not be working</b> tomorrow.
Interrogative	
Will Frances be working tomorrow?	

## Verb Tenses: Perfect Tenses

**Present Perfect** = *have/has* + past participle (I have written)

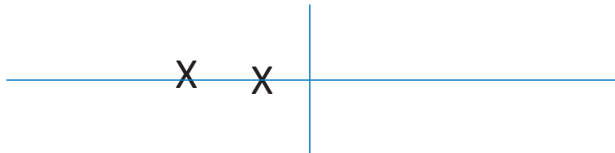
- a) An action that is finished before now.
- b) An action that happened in the past and has results in the present, e.g., Jen has lost her wallet.
- c) An action that started in the past and continues in the present, e.g., We have lived in Canada for six months.



Affirmative	Negative
I have seen this movie many times.	I haven't seen this movie.
Interrogative	
Have you seen that movie before?	

**Past Perfect** = *had* + past participle (e.g., I had written)

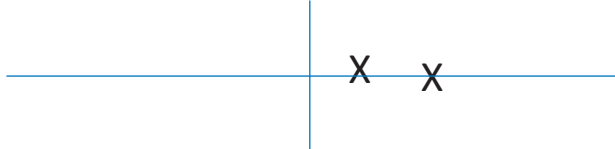
An event or action that was finished before another action or specific time in the past.



Affirmative	Negative
He had already finished working before I arrived.	He hadn't finished working by the time I arrived.
Interrogative	
Had he already finished working by the time you arrived?	

**Future Perfect** = *will have* + past participle (I will have finished)

An event or action that will be finished before another action or specific time in the future.

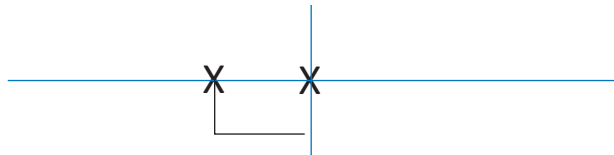


Affirmative	Negative
He will have finished working by 3:00.	He won't have finished working by 3:00.
Interrogative	
Will he have finished working by 3:00?	

## Perfect Progressive Tenses

**Present Perfect Progressive** = *have/has been* + verb + *-ing*

An event or action that started in the past and is in progress until now. This tense expresses the duration of an action or event.



Affirmative	Negative
He has been working for an hour.	He hasn't been working for an hour.
Interrogative	
Has he been working for an hour?	

**Past Perfect Progressive** = *had been* + verb + *-ing*

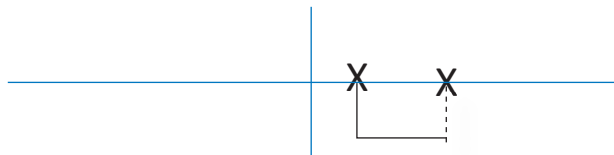
An event or action that was in progress for a period of time before another event happened. This tense expresses the duration of an action or event.



Affirmative	Negative
He had been working for three hours before I arrived.	He hadn't been working for three hours before I arrived.
Interrogative	
Had he been working that long before I arrived?	

**Future Perfect Progressive** = *will have been* + verb + *-ing*

An event or action that will be in progress immediately before, or until, another event or action in the future. This tense expresses the duration of an action or event.



Affirmative	Negative
You will have been working here for five years as of next month.	You will not have been working here for five years as of next month.
Interrogative	
Will you have been working here for five years as of next month?	


To learn more about English verb tenses, view this online presentation at [www.elihinkel.org/tips/tenses.htm](http://www.elihinkel.org/tips/tenses.htm).

## Irregular Verbs (sample list)

Infinitive	Past tense	Past participle
be	was, were	been
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
deal	dealt	dealt
dream	dreamed/dreamt	dreamed/dreamt
drive	drove	driven
feel	felt	felt
fly	flew	flown
forget	forgot	forgotten
forgive	forgave	forgiven
give	gave	given
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
keep	kept	kept
know	knew	known
learn	learned/learnt	learned/learnt
leave	left	left
lie	lay	lain
lose	lost	lost
mean	meant	meant

Infinitive	Past tense	Past participle
meet	met	met
mistake	mistook	mistaken
pay	paid	paid
prove	proved	proven
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
show	showed	shown
speak	spoke	spoken
spend	spent	spent
spread	spread	spread
stand	stood	stood
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
throw	threw	thrown
understand	understood	understood
wear	wore	worn
win	won	won
write	wrote	written

### Learn more:

 Search the Internet for a detailed list of irregular verbs and practice activities. Use the search terms *irregular verbs*.

## Action Verbs (sample list)

When you are writing a résumé or describing your job skills, it is helpful to have a list of action verbs to draw on. The sample list below is organized by skill area.

### Clerical skills

arrange  
compile  
file  
organize  
process  
purchase  
send  
type

### Financial skills

analyze  
balance  
budget  
calculate  
develop  
estimate  
evaluate  
plan

### Physical skills

check  
drive  
fill  
install  
lift  
measure  
operate  
repair

### Teaching skills

clarify  
coordinate  
evaluate  
explain  
facilitate  
instruct  
plan  
train

### Creative skills

cook  
create  
decorate  
design  
draw  
illustrate  
perform  
sew

### Service skills

advise  
answer  
arrange  
assist  
deliver  
receive  
sell  
serve

### Helping skills

assess  
assist  
facilitate  
guide  
listen  
mediate  
refer  
rehabilitate

### Research skills

evaluate  
examine  
identify  
inspect  
interpret  
investigate  
review  
summarize

### Communication skills

arrange  
edit  
motivate  
negotiate  
persuade  
recruit  
speak  
translate  
write

### Management skills

coordinate  
evaluate  
improve  
manage  
organize  
recommend  
review  
schedule  
supervise

### Technical skills

build  
calculate  
construct  
design  
examine  
make  
operate  
repair  
solve

#### Learn more:

🔍 Search the Internet for information on using action verbs in résumés.



## Phrasal Verbs (sample list)

Phrasal verbs are expressions that consist of a verb and preposition. Together, they create a specific meaning. There are many phrasal verbs that are commonly used in conversational English. Some phrasal verbs can be separated; others cannot.

Separable phrasal verb (S):	hand in	I <b>handed</b> my paper <b>in</b> yesterday.
Non-separable phrasal verb (NS):	ran into	I <b>ran into</b> an old friend yesterday.

Phrasal verb	Meaning	Sample sentences
blow out (S)	extinguish	<i>The child blew out the candles on his birthday cake.</i>
break down (NS)	stop working have a collapse	<i>My car broke down, so I had to take the bus.</i> <i>She broke down in tears when she heard the bad news.</i>
bring up (S)	raise children mention/introduce a topic vomit	<i>They brought up their children to be good citizens.</i> <i>We should bring this matter up at tomorrow's meeting.</i> <i>The baby brought up all her food.</i>
call for (NS)	require	<i>This situation calls for immediate action.</i>
call off (S)	cancel	<i>They called off the concert because the singer was ill.</i>
clean up (S)	make clean and orderly	<i>The guests helped to clean up the house after the party.</i>
come back (NS)	return	<i>He always comes back from Vancouver on the same flight.</i>
come up (NS)	be mentioned	<i>The topic of wage increases came up at the meeting.</i>
do over (S)	do again	<i>My teacher wants me to do my test over.</i>
fall behind (NS)	fail to keep pace with	<i>He missed so many lessons and fell behind the rest of the class.</i>
figure out (S)	find the answer by reasoning	<i>I can't figure out this algebra problem.</i>
get ahead (NS)	succeed in career	<i>He was a hard worker and got ahead in the company quickly.</i>
get along with (NS)	have a good relationship with	<i>Julie is really nice. She gets along with everyone.</i>
go over (NS)	review	<i>Let's just go over this math lesson again.</i>
take on (S)	hire	<i>The company has taken on 20 new employees.</i>
turn down (S)	decrease volume reject	<i>Turn down the radio! It's too loud.</i> <i>Bob asked Linda to marry him, but she turned him down.</i>

### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet for a detailed list of phrasal verbs and practice activities. Use the search terms *phrasal verbs in English*.

## Punctuation

Here are some common uses of punctuation. This is not a complete list.

Punctuation	Symbol	Common uses
Period	.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the end of a sentence, e.g., <i>The weather is beautiful today.</i></li> <li>At the end of an abbreviation, e.g., <i>Jan. / Dr. / Main St.</i></li> </ul>
Question mark	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the end of a question, e.g., <i>How are you?</i></li> </ul>
Exclamation mark	!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To show excitement/enthusiasm, e.g., <i>Yes! Okay! Great!</i></li> <li>If using a loud voice or giving a command, e.g., <i>Stop! Don't do that!</i></li> <li>To describe a loud sound, e.g., <i>Bang! Crash! Boom!</i></li> </ul>
Comma	,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To separate items in a list, e.g., <i>He bought milk, bread, eggs and meat.</i></li> <li>Before and after clauses, e.g., <i>The table, which had been set beautifully, would only fit eight guests.</i></li> <li>Before a quote, e.g., <i>She said, "Thank you for the flowers."</i></li> </ul>
Colon	:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To introduce a list, e.g., <i>Today's menu: ribs, chicken, or grilled fish.</i></li> <li>To give examples, e.g., <i>There are many ways to lose weight. For example:...</i></li> </ul>
Semicolon	;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To link two closely related independent clauses, e.g., <i>John wanted to go; I did not.</i></li> <li>To separate groups of words that are separated by commas, e.g., <i>You need to buy mushrooms, cream and parsley for the appetizer; chicken and peppers for the main course; and strawberries and butter for the dessert.</i></li> </ul>
Apostrophe	'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To form contractions, e.g., <i>I'm, they're, hasn't, don't</i></li> <li>To indicate possession, e.g., <i>Lee's car, Melissa's father</i></li> </ul>
Quotations marks	" "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To indicate when somebody is speaking, e.g., <i>"It's raining," said Mirko.</i></li> <li>When writing the title of a movie or book, e.g., <i>Have you seen "The Godfather?"</i></li> </ul>
Hyphen	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To form compound adjectives, e.g., <i>a one-way street, chocolate-covered almonds</i></li> <li>To add a prefix or for compound numbers, e.g., <i>co-worker, twenty-two</i></li> </ul>
Dash	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To separate a phrase from the rest of the sentence, e.g., <i>He was late because of heavy traffic—at least, that was what he said.</i></li> <li>To separate a phrase which has extra information, e.g., <i>A few people—not more than 10—had already arrived.</i></li> </ul>

### Learn more:

- 🔍 Search the Internet using the search term punctuation or punctuation activities.
- 🔍 Visit webpages with more complete information, such as the University of Ottawa Writing Centre ([www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca](http://www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca)) or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>).

## Helpful Websites for Learning English

There are many websites that can help you learn English. Here are just a few examples.



### Listening

**CBC Podcasts:** [www.cbc.ca/podcasting](http://www.cbc.ca/podcasting)

Includes numerous podcasts of radio shows for listening practice

**English as a Second Language Podcast:** [www.eslpod.com](http://www.eslpod.com)

Offers a large collection of free podcasts for English language learners

**Focus English:** [www.focusenglish.com](http://www.focusenglish.com)

Include listening practice and activities for using every day English



### Speaking

**Business Presentations and Public Speaking in English:**

[www.englishclub.com/speaking/presentations.htm](http://www.englishclub.com/speaking/presentations.htm) (tutorial)

**Dave's ESL Café:** [www.eslcafe.com](http://www.eslcafe.com)

Resources for pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary development

**Speech Accent Archive:** <http://accent.gmu.edu/howto.php>

English speech samples and pronunciation analyses

**University of Toronto Pronunciation Strategies:** <http://individual.utoronto.ca/English/SGSPronunciation.htm>

Pronunciation information with recordings of academic words and phrases

**ESL Pronunciation Work Page:** [www.e-pron.com](http://www.e-pron.com)

Includes pronunciation activities with audio and comprehension activities



### Reading

**Breaking News English:** [www.breakingnewsenglish.com](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com)

Includes readings with comprehension activities based on current news

**English Daily:** [www.englishdaily626.com](http://www.englishdaily626.com)

Includes reading comprehension activities, conversation practice, grammar and vocabulary activities



### Writing

**Ohio ESL @ Ohio University:** [www.ohiou.edu/esl/english/reading/index.html](http://www.ohiou.edu/esl/english/reading/index.html)

Resources for English language learners on paragraph writing, reading strategies, grammar and vocabulary

**The Purdue University Online Writing Lab:** <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

Provides guidance on writing letters, memos, email messages, paragraphs and essays

**The University of Victoria Writing Guide:** <http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/>

**The Writing Den:** [http://www2.actden.com/writ\\_den/tips/contents.htm](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/contents.htm)

Includes tips and guidance on paragraphs and essay writing (in the tips-o-matic section)

**Wilfred Laurier University writing resources:** [www.wlu.ca](http://www.wlu.ca) (in the site search box, type *online writing resources*)

**Voice of America Learning English:** [www.voanews.com/learningenglish/theclassroom/activities](http://www.voanews.com/learningenglish/theclassroom/activities)

On the homepage, click on *Business English*.



## Grammar

**Capital Community College Guide to Grammar and Writing:** <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar>

Includes grammar at the sentence, paragraph and essay level, grammar Q & A, 170 interactive quizzes

**English, baby!:** [www.englishbaby.com](http://www.englishbaby.com)

Includes free grammar and vocabulary development lessons; you can also chat with others in English

**Online English Grammar:** [www.edufind.com/english/grammar/toc.cfm](http://www.edufind.com/english/grammar/toc.cfm)

Can be used as a grammar reference

**The University of Ottawa Writing Centre:** [www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca](http://www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca)

Includes *HyperGrammar*, a free grammar e-book

## Vocabulary Development

**About.com: English as a Second Language:** [www.about.com](http://www.about.com)

Includes information and activities on grammar, vocabulary building, listening and writing skills

**EnglishClub.com:** [www.englishclub.com/speaking/practice.htm](http://www.englishclub.com/speaking/practice.htm)

Includes practice activities for grammar and pronunciation

**General Service List (GSL):** <http://jbauman.com/gsl.html>

A list of about 2,000 of the words most frequently used in English

**Marsha Chan's Vocabulary Quizzes:** [www.missioncollege.org/depts/esl/faculty/chan/voc/](http://www.missioncollege.org/depts/esl/faculty/chan/voc/)

Practice using the 2,000 most frequently used words in English

## Self-Assessment

**CLB Online Self-Assessment (OSA) Tool:** [www.clb-osa.ca](http://www.clb-osa.ca)

Offers an online assessment of your English language proficiency in reading and listening through tests based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)

## CLB-referenced Online Activities for Newcomers to Canada

[www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html](http://www.settlementatwork.org/lincdocs/linc5-7/index.html)

Offers free interactive online activities for students at CLB 5 to 8

