

# COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH

## Unit 2

### All about work



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## Different work experiences

In the first activity you'll read about different people's experiences of work, and what they expect from their work.

### ACTIVITY 1

The words of the speakers have been taken from interviews with workers in a book called *Working People: Workers Tell Their Stories*, published in 1994 by The Education Information Centre.

1. Read the speech-bubbles below to find out what each worker says about their experiences and expectations.
  - a. Miriam is a caterer. She provides food and drink for large numbers of people at parties, weddings, etc.



You have to push yourself to achieve what you want in this type of business. I love my job; I am not wasting my time.

- b. Soentjie is a dancer.



It was in Zimbabwe that I had my first encounter with African dances. It was an experience that I had never had before. I would advise young people who want to dance to think about alternative jobs. Very few dancers work after they've reached the age of 35. People should have something to fall back on.

c. Eugene is an ambulance service worker:



I wasn't proud, just desperate for work. I knew that once you got into the council you could apply for transfers and move around the different departments. I kept my eyes open for opportunities all the time.

d. Anthony is an unemployed person:



I feel ashamed of not being able to provide for my family. I find myself getting very frustrated, being at home all day.

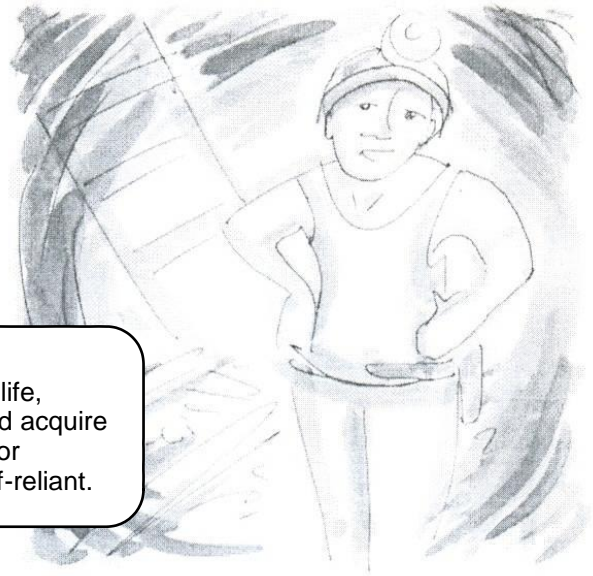
e. Kevin is a farmer:



Although it's nice to work from home, I can never get away from work because there are telephone calls at all hours and things to check on all the time. But, I'm my own boss and I like living and working in the country.



f. Otsile is a mineworker:



If I could turn back the clock of my life, I would try to become educated and acquire some sort of skill; either carpentry or building. In that way I would be self-reliant.

g. Karen is an electrician. She installs and repairs the electrical equipment in a large company:



More is expected of you in all things... You have to prove to the company that they did not make a mistake by employing a woman.

2. Each person has expressed different feelings and needs. Summarise their feelings and needs by completing the following sentences in your notebook.

a. Miriam, a caterer, likes \_\_\_\_\_

b. Soentjie, a dancer, would like \_\_\_\_\_

c. Eugene, an ambulance service worker, likes \_\_\_\_\_

d. Anthony, an unemployed person, would like \_\_\_\_\_

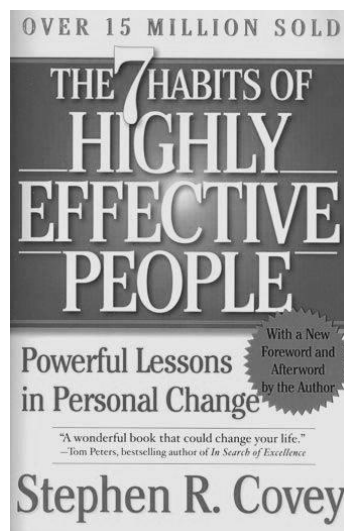
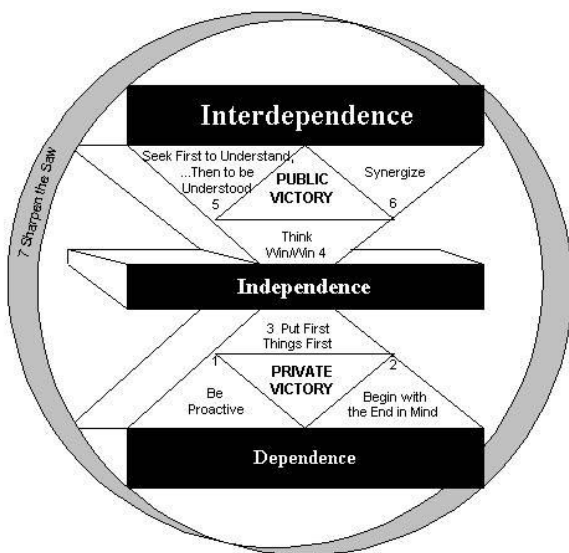
e. Kevin, a farmer, likes \_\_\_\_\_

f. Otsile, a mineworker, would like \_\_\_\_\_

g. Karen, an electrician, would like \_\_\_\_\_

# Stress in the workplace

Although you might enjoy the work you do, everyone has to cope with stress in the workplace. Stress occurs when demands are made on you and you are not able to meet the demands adequately. This is mostly because of difficulties experienced in managing your time. Many books have been written on the subject of time management, and these are often available at public libraries. A useful book to read about managing time is *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* by Stephen R. Covey. Unemployed workers also experience the stress of not having work and the struggle to find it .



## ACTIVITY 2

In Activity 1 we saw that people worry about their work in different ways.

Try to identify the different kinds of problems that each person faces, and write down your observations in your notebook.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 151

## COMMENT

In Activity 1 you looked at the feelings different people have about work = what they enjoy, what they need or want from their work and the different problems each faces.

Work is often hard to find, and sometimes we take on certain jobs just because we need the money. Most of us can't afford to be choosy, but this needn't stop us from thinking carefully about whether we are happy with the kind of work we do, or what kind of work we would prefer to do.

## Attitudes towards work

We all have different attitudes towards work, and we have different reasons for doing work.

In the next activity you'll look at different attitudes towards work, and how our attitudes can affect the choices we make.

### ACTIVITY 3

1. Read this cartoon and write down what you think the woman's attitude is towards work.



2. Now look at this cartoon. Write down what you think the man's attitude is towards his new boss.



3. a. Read this conversation: You'll recognise the people from Activity 1:

Otsile: You can't get anywhere without education.

Miriam: You've just got to want something badly, and then you'll be motivated to get it = whatever job it is!

Karen: Yes, but you've got to work hard to show you're serious.

Kevin: I can't work unless I'm in charge. I hate other people telling me what to do.

Eugene: That's a stupid attitude. Not everyone can afford to say such things! I'll take whatever comes my way because I need to survive. In any case, today you can't have only one job. There are so many retrenchments all the time.

Anthony: Yes, he doesn't know what it's like to have no work.

Soentjie: I wish I could have one job for my whole life. I love dancing, but it seems impossible to do work that is also fun, your whole lifetime. That would be too good to be true!

- b. Decide what each person's attitude is towards work, and write it down in your own words. For example:

Miriam's attitude is that a person can do any kind of work they want to, they just have to know what they want to do and they'll find the work they want.

- c. Do you agree with what these people are saying? Write down in your notebook what your own attitude is towards work.

4. Copy the table on page 8 into your notebook and complete it. The left-hand column shows different kinds of work. In the column next to it, you need to write whether you think a man or a woman or either should do this job, and in the last column, give a reason or your answer.

From the list of jobs above, write down the one which appeals to you the most. Then write a short paragraph to explain why you think so. Now decide which appeals to you the least, and explain why in a short paragraph.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 151

Job	Man or Woman or either?	Why?
<b>Bricklayer</b> Person who builds walls or buildings using layers of bricks.		
<b>Doctor</b> Someone who is qualified in medicine and treats people who are ill.		
<b>Housekeeper</b> Person whose job is to cook and clean and look after a house for the owner.		
<b>Auto-electrician</b> Person whose job is to install and repair electrical equipment in motor vehicles.		
<b>Teacher</b> Person who teaches at a school or other educational institution.		
<b>Secretary</b> Person who is employed to do office work, such as typing letters, answering phone calls, and arranging meetings.		

### COMMENT

People have many different attitudes towards work. Sometimes we believe that certain jobs are more important than others, or that only men should do certain jobs, and only women should do certain jobs. When you really think about it, there is often no sensible reason. But often without even being aware of it, our attitudes affect the choices we make.



# Value of work

Why is it important to work? Perhaps this seems like a silly question because one clear answer is, we work to earn money!

The aim of the next activity is to look critically at the value of work. In other words, you'll explore other reasons why we work.

## ACTIVITY 4

The extract below comes from a short story called *The Toilet*, written by Gcina Mhlope, who was born in Hammarsdale, near Durban. Do you remember reading two poems by her in Unit 1? This is her autobiography, published in 1987.

1. Read the extract.

To 'narrate' means to tell. When someone tells a story we call them the narrator. In this story Gcina is the narrator.



2. Now answer these questions in your notebook:
- What did the narrator think about doing after matric?
  - What do the words, 'good girl', 'respectable', 'a waste of good money' tell you about the elders' attitude towards the narrator?
  - What does the older sister think a 'wife' should be able to do? Do you agree with this idea? Give a reason for your answer.
  - How did the narrator feel before she found work?
  - What was she eager, or keen to experience at work?
  - What kind of work did she get?
  - The work she got was different from what she had thought about doing. Do you think she'd changed her mind?



3. In this part of the activity, you'll listen to a conversation on your cassette about the extract you've just read. The section of the cassette is called Unit 2: Lesson 1: Opinions about work: Communication in English: Grade 12: Side A.

Sarah and Moagi are old friends. They travel together on the same train everyday. They decided to start reading the story, *The Toilet* by Gcina Mhlope. They have time to read only a short extract every day, because they usually talk about what they've read.

Sarah and Moagi have just read the same extract from *The Toilet* that you did.

- Listen to their conversation on your cassette and write down in your own words what each of their opinions is.
- Now think about the following questions and write down your own opinion. Remember, when you give your opinion, or ideas, about something, it's important to say *why* you have that opinion.
  - I Do you agree with everything Sarah says? For example, do you think that women should achieve more than cooking and knitting? What is your opinion of the woman at the pool in this story?
  - I Do you agree with everything Moagi says? For example, do you think that it is a 'luxury' to want to do work you would really enjoy, the way the narrator in the story wants to?
  - I Perhaps they've left out something important. Write down any other attitudes towards work which you can see in *The Toilet*.

## COMMENT

It's important to remember that when you express an opinion, you need to give a reason for what you say. This will do two things. It will make it easier for others to understand why you've said what you have, and it will make your opinion stronger. In other words, the reasons you give will support your opinion.

## What counts - education or experience?

In this section you can decide whether education or experience is important in finding work.

### ACTIVITY 5

1. Below are two statements. The first statement was made by Maggie who is studying through correspondence college. The second statement was made by Godfrey who has had many different jobs. Decide, using the list below, which person would use which reasons to support their statement.

Maggie: Education is the best way to get work because ...

Godfrey: Experience is the best way to get work because ...

### Who uses which reason?

- | employers always ask for experienced people
- | everyone needs papers to prove they can do the job
- | it gives people what they need to understand the world around them
- | what you learn from experience can help you solve your own problems
- | you can do many kinds of work once you've learnt basic skills
- | it is all you need to be able to become rich
- | how else will you learn the job?
- | it teaches you to be independent
- | it helps you to get better jobs
- | there are lots of things you can learn quickly through experience that you would otherwise take a long time to learn.

2. Now decide which reasons you agree with and which you don't. What is your opinion: do you think education or experience is the best way to get work? Write a short paragraph, giving reasons to support your answer.

### COMMENT

Perhaps you found that the reasons Maggie and Godfrey gave were incomplete because they didn't give the whole story. Or perhaps you found that they were too general or subjective, and not supported with facts. You probably noticed that some of the reasons could have been given by either Maggie or Godfrey. Where you placed them depends on your own point of view.

What about the reasons you gave to support your opinion in your paragraph? If you go back and read them again, do you think they are incomplete, too general, or too subjective?

## Education and work

The activity you've just done may help you think about why you are studying, and how your studies can help you with the work you are doing or want to do. You'll think about this link between work and education some more in the next activity.

### ACTIVITY 6

curriculum:  
a general  
course of  
study



In this activity you'll find out why these courses were set up. You'll have the opportunity to think about whether your studies will be useful to you in your work.

1. Read the extract on the next page. It's taken from a document which explains the aims of the curriculum. You'll notice that some of the words are quite difficult. Don't worry about this because part of the activity will be to work out the meanings of certain words.
2. Make a list of the skills you've learnt in your courses.
3. Now you are going to listen to an interview with a tutor who was asked to explain what the extract means. Turn on the tape and listen to the interview.

A general education is one which is neither vocationally specific, nor exclusively academic. Such a curriculum can best be defined in terms of its purpose, which will be to:

- m provide a learning experience that will encourage the learner to fulfil his/her potential
- m provide a learning experience that is appropriate and relevant to the individual's concerns and interests

m provide a sound educational base for access into further academic or vocational education and training at appropriate levels, or for movement into the formal or informal sector of employment

- m provide a sound educational base which will create in the individual a justified confidence in his/her capability to analyse, engage and impact on the world around him/her.

The section of the cassette is called: Unit 2: Lesson 1: An interview with a tutor: Communication in English: Grade 12: Side A.

3. In your notebook, write down the job you do or the job you would most like to do. Now complete one of the following sentences:

An exclusively academic education would not help me in my job because ...

An exclusively academic education would help me in my job because ...

4. List the skills you need in your workplace or for the job in which you are most interested. Compare this list with the list of skills you've learnt in your courses. Are there any skills missing in the courses? Have you learnt skills that you will never need? Write a short paragraph describing how the courses have helped you or not helped you in your work.
5. If you had to make up a course that was 'vocationally specific' for your particular job, or for a job that you are interested in, what skills would such a course have to teach? (For example, a vocationally specific education for hairdressers would teach learners about different cutting methods.)
6. Compare the skills you listed in question 5 above with the skills you listed in question 2 above. Which do you prefer: the education you are getting from these courses or a vocationally specific education? Why? Answer in a sentence.
7. Discuss the following question with your fellow learners: Do we need only specific job-related skills in the workplace, or do we need skills that we can use in different contexts in our lives?

## COMMENT

Assessing your own learning is an important part of this curriculum. This skill is also fundamental to outcomes-based education. In the next activity, you will find out more about outcomes-based education.

## ACTIVITY 7

Read the text below. The text is very difficult, but try to work out as much as you can. In the next section you will learn five different ways of making a tricky text easier to understand.

# Basic tenets for curriculum design for lifelong learning

## Outcomes-based learning

A commitment to outcomes-based learning is central to the Lifelong Learning Development Framework. An understanding of what is meant by outcomes-based education is, therefore, crucial to the successful development and implementation of learning programmes within an outcomes-based paradigm.

The development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) hinges on an outcomes-based approach to education and training which has as its starting point the intended outputs as opposed to the inputs of traditional curriculum-driven education and training.

The move towards an outcomes-based approach is due to the growing concern around the effectiveness of traditional methods of teaching and training which were content-based. An outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning, however, differs quite drastically and presents a paradigm shift. According to Spady (1994) outcomes are high-quality, culminating in demonstrations of significant learning in context.

An outcomes-based education and training system requires a shift from focussing on teacher input (instructional offerings or syllabuses expressed in terms of content) to focussing on the outcomes of the learning process.

Outcomes-based learning focuses the achievement in terms of clearly defined outcomes, rather than teacher input in terms of syllabus content. In NQF proposals, these outcomes are expressed in balanced and integrated national standards which demand the holistic development of competence, and encompass knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

In outcomes-based learning, a learner's progress is measured against agreed criteria. All learners who meet the agreed criteria for specified learning outcomes receive the appropriate credit/s. Those who do not meet the criteria could receive clear feedback, indicating areas which need further work in order for them to reach the required standard. They are thus given support to try again. The concept of pass/fail is radically altered to credit/try again.

## Reading a tricky text

What should you do when faced with a tricky text? The text you have just read is difficult as a whole, but it is possible to break it up into smaller, more manageable sections. Here are five steps you can follow if you need to understand a tricky text:

1. Read the heading and sub-heading. They are the most important clues to understanding a tricky text.
2. Use your pencil to break the text into different sections. Label the sections (e.g. Introduction, Definition) and write a brief summary of the section in the margin.
3. Look for the main points and underline them.
4. If there are lots of difficult words, and you are unable to work out what they mean from the context, only look up those that are important (e.g. words that are part of a definition or which occur in a heading).
5. Write a sentence summarising what you've learnt from the text.

## Outcomes-based education

Lifelong learning acknowledges that learning does not stop when you leave a formal place of education such as school or college. Consequently, according to the National Qualifications Framework, you should get credit for skills you have acquired informally, through years at work.

The text you read in Activity 6 showed that outcomes-based education places a higher value on real-life skills than on learning things off-by-heart from books. For example, in this English course, it's more important for you to be able to hold a successful conversation in English or to speak in English at an interview than to be able to recite a list of polite English expressions.

Outcomes-based education recognises that learning takes place in a context and also needs to be useful in a specific context. You may need to answer the phone at your work, write a report, take notes, or attend meetings and offer your opinion or take minutes. The skills you learn in these units are useless unless you can apply them in your life.

Ideally, the outcomes of this course should be assessed at your place of work. Because this is difficult to do, you are assessed through activities, assignments and tests that are as similar as possible to real-life tasks and situations.

You = the learner = are the centre of outcomes-based education and lifelong learning. That is why self-assessment is so important. For many of the activities in these units, you are provided with a grid in the Answer section which asks you to look closely and honestly at your own work. Try to use these grids to assess your own understanding of the work, and to decide when you need to retry an activity.

## ACTIVITY 8

Work through the text Basic tenets for curriculum design for lifelong learning using the five steps to reading a tricky text. Work directly on the printed page.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 153



## COMMENT

Working through a text in this way has many advantages:

- | you have a summary ready-prepared in case you need to revise
- | you see the way a text has been structured (e.g., how it moves from an introduction to a definition)
- | you make the text your own by marking it and making notes on it.



## Linking what you read to your own experience

Another way of making sense of tricky texts is by looking for connections between what you are reading about and what is familiar to you in your own life. You need to:

- | put the text into your own words
- | compare what is said in the text with your own experience
- | think of examples from your own life that illustrate what is said in the text.

### ACTIVITY 9

1. Re-read the last paragraph of the text about outcomes-based education. Think about the following questions:
  - a. Do you receive 'clear feedback' from your tutor?
  - b. Is the feedback given in the Answer section and the Comment sections of these study units always clear?
  - c. Do you like the 'credit/try again' system or do you prefer the 'pass/fail' system? Why?
2. Now write two paragraphs giving your opinion about the way of measuring or assessing a learner's progress. Give reasons to support your opinion. Give your paragraphs to your tutor to assess.



### COMMENT

Your curriculum includes the following outcomes:

The learner should be able to:

- | relate issues, arguments or situations to real life situations and own experience
- | identify advantages and disadvantages
- | express an opinion on an issue
- | evaluate the course materials and other aspects of the course.

In the last activity, you were in fact being asked to demonstrate all these skills. A tutor or assessor assessing your paragraphs is not looking for a 'right' or 'wrong' answer. Instead, he or she measures your success against the criteria listed above. In other words, the tutor assesses whether you can:

- | make connections between the text and your own experience
- | identify the advantages and/or disadvantages of outcomes-based assessment
- | say what you think about OBE
- | evaluate your English course.

## CHECKLIST

Are you able to:

- r describe what work means for different people
- r describe your own attitude to work
- r evaluate differing opinions
- r give your own opinion
- r assess how useful this course is to you
- r read a tricky text and relate it to your own experience.

Don't forget to give your paragraphs to your tutor to assess.

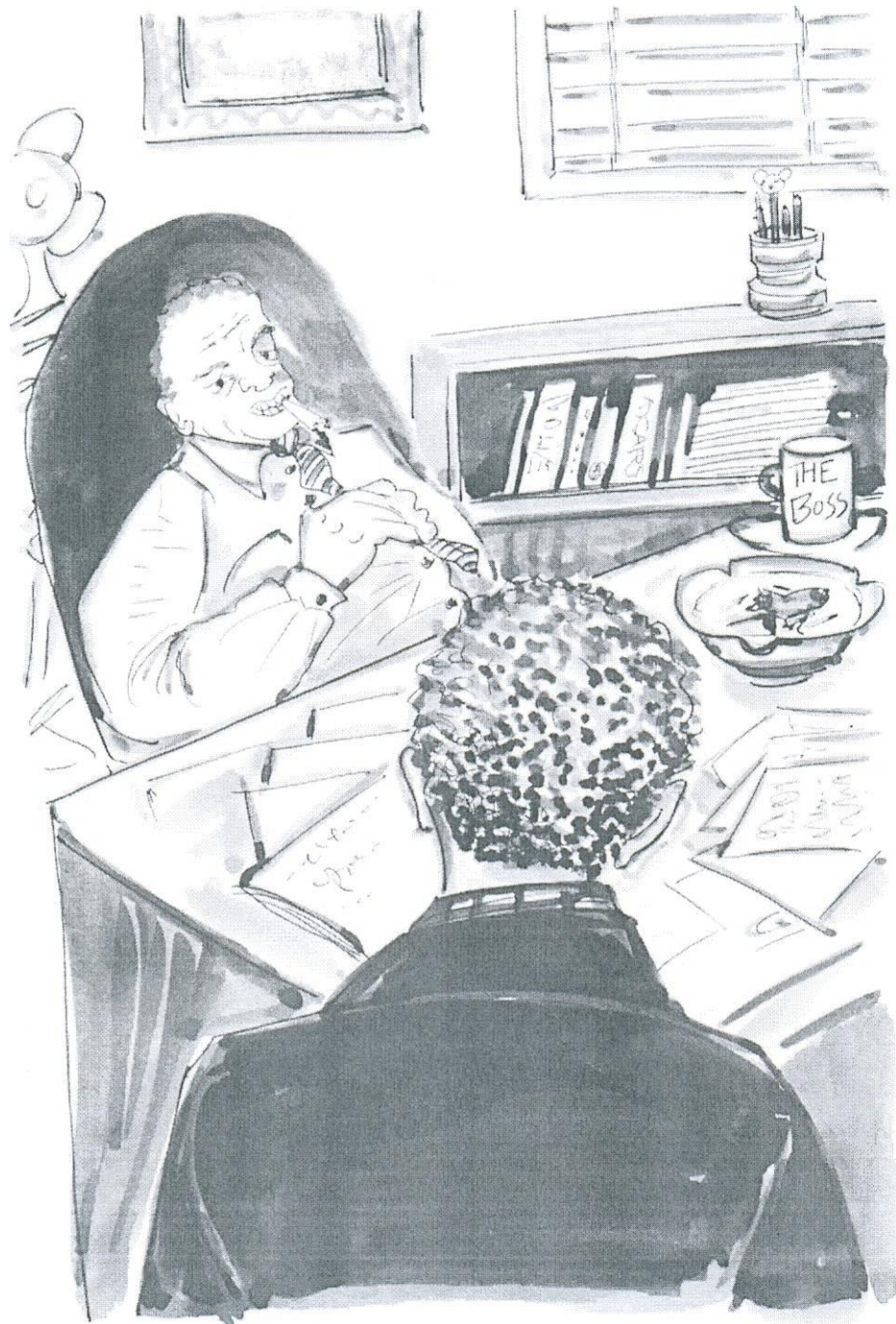


# Unemployment

Think about some of your past experiences of job hunting. What were they like - were you successful or unsuccessful? How did your experiences leave you feeling.

The extract on page 21 is taken from a novel called *Kill Me Quick* by a Kenyan writer, Meja Mwangi. His novels are often about social poverty and slum life in urban Kenya. In this extract, a boy called Meja searches for work in Nairobi. His friend, Maina, has long given up hope of finding a job.

While you read the extract, try to picture Meja and to understand him and his feelings at different points in the story.





He walked for the whole day from office to office with his feet were tired and sore. He talked to anybody he thought might be able to help, from office boys to managers. Few wanted even to hear him sing out his qualifications or to know what he had to say. Undaunted he carried on. He repeated his piece in so many offices that he became addicted to it. He said it without thinking and this did not make matters any better. Late in the afternoon he went into a big office and found the manager and the secretary.

The manager, obviously sleepy from the effects of a heavy lunch, looked up lazily from his work. Meja looking most humble, stood at the door and the two stared at one another for a moment. The manager was trying to catch his thoughts on the newcomer and the other waited for permission to speak.

'Well, what do you want?' he asked.

Meja breathed hard and put on his most intelligent look in an effort to cover his misery.

'First division. See Ceri that, one ounce.' said

The manager took his cigar from the corner of his lips, placed it on the ash tray, took off his spectacles next and then scrutinised Meja. He took the youth in slowly and deliberately the way a scientist studies a specimen.

Then 'Well, what about?' the manager spoke to the young man.

Meja's heart failed then recovered and hammered in his chest. He licked his lips.

'... I want a job... vacant,' he said.

The manager put his glasses on, apparently satisfied that his adversary was harmless and stuck his cigar back at the corner of his lips. He chewed at it, sucked strongly and emitted a thick black cloud.

'How did you come in here?' he asked.

'... I came,' Meja could not possibly guess what was expected of him.

'Through the main door, please,' the big man said.

Meja nodded and said a dry 'yes'.

'Can you read?' the man asked.

Hope soared through Meja. His voice trembled with ecstasy.

'Yes... yes,' he said, 'I can also write.'

'Then you ought to have written down your request,' the other said. 'An yhow...'

He pressed a blue button on his desk... A messenger walked into the office and stood at attention.

'Go with him,' the manager said to Meja and went back to scanning some forms that needed signing. Meja's thoughts were unfathomable as he followed the messenger down the many winding stairs. His mind ached ahead of him. A job at last. That was each of the ground floor and the huge glass doors. The messenger led him to the big doors and showed him the tiny white letters painted on one of the doors.

It took Meja one long minute to grasp the meaning of it. And then he understood and could not believe. He could not believe that the message he had to go to all the trouble to show him his. Yet the letters were there staring boldly back at him. The y screamed in two tongues: NO VACANCY. HAKUNA KAZI...

Meja never went into files again to look for work. He followed Maina's example and tried to forget that he ever went to school and wanted a job. The thought of his family back home had to be his for a few weeks had given of his parents expecting to hear the good news that he had a job, not knowing that was exactly the bit of news that he was least likely ever to hear. Yet even had he the courage to go back and tell them the truth, the expense was the problem of bus fare. So he tucked the memories of his family in the darkest corner of his mind, put on a resigned smile and followed his friend faithfully wherever he went.

Maina taught him a lot of things. He taught him how to look after himself and how to avoid getting involved in other people's business, least of all policemen's. When a policeman was on the beat he did not like to be interfered with, not even if that beat happened to trespass on your sleeping bin. The boys fetched food from bins slept in bins and lived in the backyard, in bins.

## ACTIVITY 1

1. Read the extract called 'Unemployment' carefully.
2. What were your feelings about Meja's situation? Have you ever had a similar experience? Jot down a few words that summarise some of your feelings.
3. How did the manager's behaviour make you feel?
4. If you were the manager, how would you have acted? What would you have said?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 154

## Writer's strategies

Writers try to get us to sympathise with some of the characters in their stories.

Now that you have thought a little about some of your responses to the story, you can examine the strategies the writer used to create these feelings. First look at how he builds up the characters in the story.

## ACTIVITY 2

First, you'll analyse how the writer builds up the manager's character .

1. Why do you think the writer tells us that the manager has just eaten a heavy lunch?

Before you answer the question think about the following:

- | how do you feel after a big meal?
- | compare the lifestyles of the manager and Meja: do you think Meja had eaten lunch?
- | what picture do you have of the manager?
- | how do you think Meja feels?
- | why do you feel sympathetic towards Meja?

Now look at Question 1 again and try to answer it.

2. What do you think the following words tell us about the manager:  
'... apparently satisfied that his adversary was harmless...'

Work through the following ideas first, before you answer the question:

- | To understand what the words tell us about the manager, you need to find the quote in the passage and read the sentences around it, because it is part of the story. This is called understanding the words in context.
- | The passage begins with the manager examining Meja like a 'specimen' (an object to be studied). Is this a positive way to look at a young boy?
- | The manager classifies Meja as harmless and also as an adversary. Why do you think the manager does this? Other words for adversary are enemy or opponent? Do you think Meja is his enemy, or opponent?
- | Think about what type of man the manager must be to treat a harmless young boy as he does. What type of man is the manager if he sees Meja as an 'adversary'?

Can you see that we often have to break up a comprehension question into different smaller questions to help us to understand special meanings of the words and the images the writer has created?

Write your answer to Question 2 in two or three short sentences.

3. Now answer these questions:
- a. How does the manager treat Meja's request for a job?
  - b. Do you think that the way he did it was cruel? Give reasons for your answer.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 154

### ACTIVITY 3

Now you can examine some of the ways in which the writer builds up Meja's character .

1. Meja is nervous and frightened when he talks to the manager. How does the writer show us this? Write down Meja's reactions and what he does. Note the punctuation and what it tells us about his feelings.
2. Examine the words and phrases that show Meja's feelings after the manager's question, 'Can you read?'
  - a. Write down all the words and phrases that tell us about Meja's feelings.
  - b. What emotions do the words show?
3. Write down two reasons why Meja didn't contact his family.
4. In your own words, describe what Maina taught Meja and how the boys lived.

5. Find one word in the passage for each of the following phrases:
  - | refusing to be discouraged, or put off
  - | examine very closely
  - | great happiness and joy
  - | unable to be understood or described.
6. Now use each of these words to make a sentence of your own. Write the sentences in your notebook.

### COMMENT

The writer uses verbs to describe how Meja feels during his encounter with the manager, and to enable the reader to experience similar feelings and to sympathise. In this activity you identified the verbs which show how happy Meja was when he thought he might have a job. Other verbs describe his fear of the manager ('breathed hard', 'heart faltered... and hammered'), and the horror of the humiliation and disappointment he suffered later ('screamed', 'haunted').

## Metaphors

You are now going to look at how the writer uses metaphors, or images to build up Meja's character and to create sympathy in the reader. A metaphor compares two things that are not usually compared but which share similar qualities.

### ACTIVITY 4

Questions on metaphors often look like this one:

Describe what is being compared in the following metaphors, or images. Do you find them effective?

1. 'His mind raced ahead of him...'
2. 'So he tucked the memories of his family into the darkest corner of his mind...'



To answer a question like this, first read each metaphor in context, then work out the different parts of it. Your answer should have two parts to it. The first should explain the image, and the second part should say why the image is effective.

1. In the first metaphor, Meja's mind is compared to something running a race with the rest of himself. What does this tell us about the kind of thoughts he is having?
2. Now look at the second metaphor: 'So he tucked the memories of his family into the darkest corner of his mind...'  
Use these questions to guide you in your answer:
  - | Meja's mind is being compared to something with corners. What has corners?
  - | What happens to something tucked away in a dark corner?
  - | Why does he do this to the memories of his family? What does it tell us about those memories?
  - | How has this image helped you understand Meja better? Is it effective?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 155

## Writer's purpose

You have looked at strategies the writer has used to tell us something about each of the main characters. You are now going to look at why the writer wrote this narrative. Questioning and understanding the writer's purpose in writing a text will help you to become a critical reader.

### ACTIVITY 5

1. Jot down any social problems that the story has made you aware of.
2. What do the social relationships between the following people tell us about being employed or unemployed?
  - a. the manager and Meja
  - b. the messenger and Meja
  - c. Meja and Maina
  - d. Meja and his family.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 155

## COMMENT

The writer has done much more than just tell us a story. He makes us aware of a number of social problems. He shows us how the unemployed youths end up living in bins and backyards, and how they lose contact with their families and avoid the rest of society. This is one way of highlighting social problems for an audience who may not read newspaper articles on unemployed youth.

Meja's story also makes us think about the bad side of job-hunting. Perhaps Meja didn't really know how to find a job and this was part of his problem.

## Reading job advertisements

Meja was job-hunting in the hardest possible way – door-to-door. Other ways to find jobs include:

- | asking people you know
- | reading advertisements in the newspaper
- | going to places that advertise jobs.

When you are job-hunting, use these questions to help you to find important information:

- | what jobs are available?
- | what qualifications and experience do the jobs require?
- | what type of work do the jobs involve?

Most newspapers advertise jobs in the classified section, and many newspapers have a special job finding supplement which they publish weekly.

## ACTIVITY 6

1. Use the large bold headings to scan the advertisement on the next page for answers to the following questions:
  - a. What is the job?
  - b. Who would you be working for?
2. Now study the advertisement closely to see what kind of information it gives. Look at how the advertisement is organised. It is divided into a number of sections by headings, space and the way it's typed. This makes it easier to read and to find information in it.

## INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Applications are invited from persons with a good understanding and working knowledge of the Church in Southern Africa for the following position:

### FIELD WORKER

As a field worker of the Projects office at the SAICAC the successful applicant's task will be to:

- q conduct field visits to projects funded through the SAICAC
- q liaise with the dioceses and parishes
- q network with development organisations/agencies
- q report to the Projects Officer
- q represent the SAICAC at meetings and conferences locally

Requirements:

- q Grade 12 (minimum standard of education)
- q good communication skills
- q administrative and office skills
- q an understanding of development work
- q appropriate work experience
- q valid driver's licence

Conditions of service:

- q medical aid and pension
- q 13th cheque
- q salary negotiable depending on experience and qualifications

The closing date for applications is December 15 2011.

Written application, accompanied by a full curriculum vitae and the names and telephone numbers of two referees, should be sent to:

SECRETARY GENERAL  
SAICAC  
PO BOX 143  
PRETORIA 0001

Closing dates are important!  
This is the day by which your application must be in that office. It can be earlier, but applications that arrive later will not be looked at.

Answer the following questions:

- a. What is the minimum education required?
- b. Under what heading do you find the qualifications of the job?
- c. Write down the main verbs which summarise the work.
- d. What does 'Conditions of Service' tell you?
- e. What is another word which is similar in meaning to '13th cheque'?
- f. What type of person is the advertiser hoping to attract to this job? (See the first few sentences of the advert.)
- g. If you want to apply for the job, where do you find the details of how to apply and who to apply to? What is the closing date for applications?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 156

### COMMENT

By previewing adverts (scanning them for the main points) you can decide whether it is worth your while to read them more closely for the details. This way you can save time.

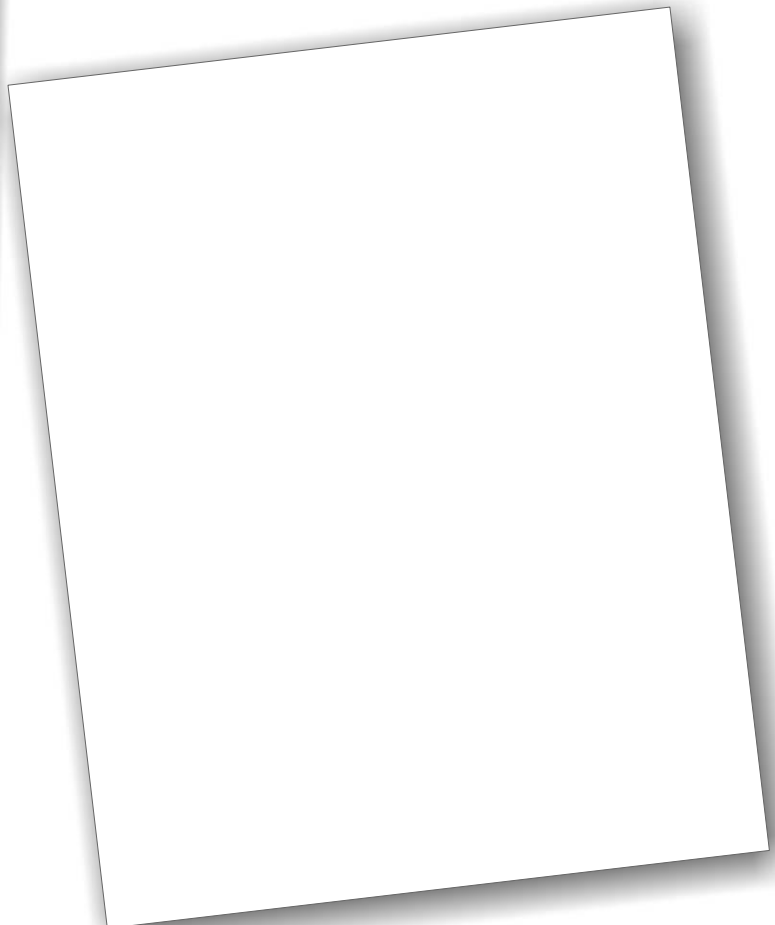
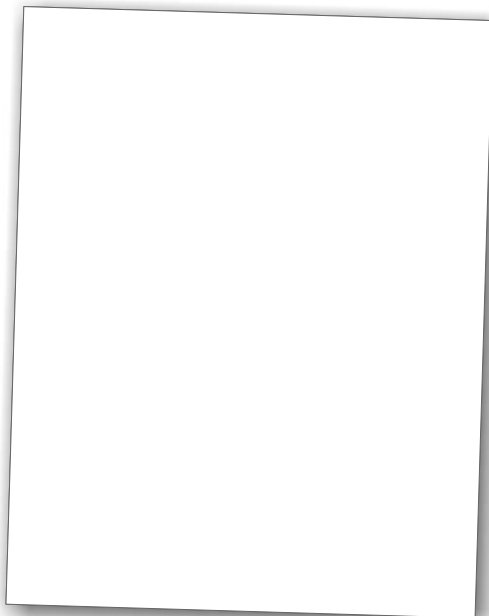
## Formal and informal skills

You are now going to look at the different types of requirements which jobs ask for. Most jobs ask for formal skills - qualifications like matric, a driver's licence, and word-processing or typing skills as well as informal skills. These are personal skills like organising and problem-solving abilities, communication skills, maturity, initiative, energy, etc. Although informal skills are hard to assess, they are very important because they show what you can really do well and what type of person you are. We will identify more of these skills in Lesson 6.

### ~~ACTIVITY 7~~

1. Underline the formal and informal skills required in the jobs advertised.
2. Make a list of the informal skills.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 156



NEEDED URGENTLY

Hardworking people with  
Grade 12 to be trained  
into Marketing

Management positions.

Phone Wilson

(012) 362-8116/7

## Uxolo Hospital - Eastern Cape

Uxolo Hospital, a 170 bed medical surgical unit near East London in the Eastern Cape has a vacancy for a Senior Administration Officer

### Requirements:

- n Grade 12
- n Age 35 - 40 years
- n Computer literate
- n Self-motivated
- n Good interpersonal skills
- n Minimum of 5 years experience in administration, costing, invoicing
- n a post Grade 12 qualification would be a strong recommendation.

Please telephone the manager on (0431) 86024 or send a detailed curriculum vitae to:  
Private Bag 3017,  
East London, 5200

## Affirmative action policy

Examine these policy statements below. These kinds of statements are often found at the bottom of advertisements. What do they tell us about the organisation which is advertising?

'Applicants will be considered regardless of sex, race or religion'

This means that the organisation which is advertising does not consider race (African, white, coloured, etc.), gender (male or female), or religion (Catholic, Muslim, Methodist) when choosing people for the job.

'We are an equal opportunity, affirmative action organisation'

Employers know that there have been great inequalities and injustices in the past, and that black people and women have been unfairly treated. They don't have the training or experience to get the best jobs. These organisations will take people with lower qualifications and train them. Preference will be given to black people and particularly black women. This is called affirmative action.

### ACTIVITY 8

Do you think that policy statements on affirmative action and equal opportunity in the workplace will help to redress the inequalities and injustices of the past, or is something more needed? Discuss your ideas with fellow learners.

### CHECKLIST

Are you able to:

- r identify and describe your own response to a narrative
- r explain how writers use strategies to encourage feelings of sympathy in the readers towards certain characters
- r answer comprehension questions on the use of metaphors
- r identify the writer's purpose in writing a narrative
- r analyse job advertisements
- r identify formal and informal skills in job advertisements
- r respond to affirmative action and equal opportunity policy statements.

## LESSON 3

# We all need business skills

## About this lesson

Everyone needs business skills to be successful in business, whether we sell clothes that we make ourselves, or work as a garage attendant or a receptionist.

In this lesson you'll learn some of the business skills needed by a street hawker as well as some of those needed by a worker in a modern office.

## In this lesson you will

- | draw a mindmap to show the business skills a street hawker needs
- | work out how a street hawker should set a price for a product
- | learn how to take a telephone message
- | fill in a fax cover sheet
- | write a memo
- | learn about e-mail.





## Informal business skills

Government bodies and small business development organisations are prepared to lend millions of rands to people in small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs). This means that they have tremendous confidence in the abilities of people like hawkers, barbers, child-minders, food stall operators and craftspeople to contribute to the economy. In the first activity of this lesson, you will think about the business skills needed by someone in the informal sector.

### ACTIVITY 1

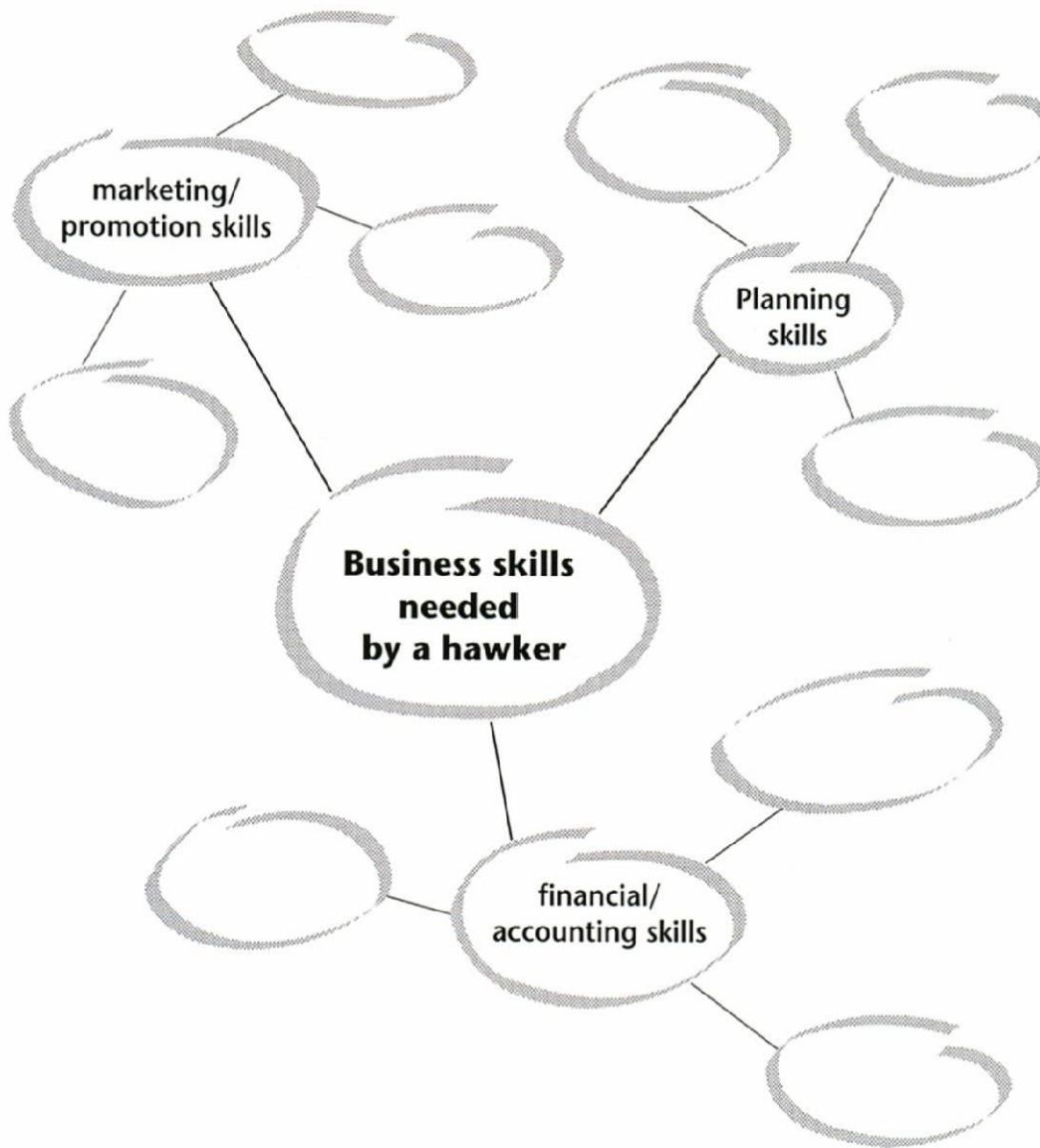
We say that people who earn a living through businesses which are not formally registered with the Receiver of Revenue (for example, spaza shops, hawkers, etc.) work in the informal sector. The Receiver of Revenue collects taxes for the government.

Study the photograph of a street hawker and then copy and complete the following mindmap in your notebook.



A street hawker does business.





### COMMENT

A street hawker has several important business skills. These are:

- | planning (deciding what to sell, where to purchase the product, where to sell it, how to get a licence)
- | financial/accounting (where to get start-up capital, how to price goods, recording and banking the day's takings)
- | marketing/promotion (understanding who the competitors are, making attractive displays, attracting customers, communicating with customers).

## Pricing products

To make a profit out of a sale, you need to charge more for a product than you paid originally. You also need to include in the price a percentage of the cost of your labour, transport, shop or site rental and packaging. You also have to think about what your customers will be prepared to pay and how much your competitors are charging. In the next activity, you'll work out the price of a product sold by a hawker.

### ACTIVITY 2

Read the following description and answer the questions:

Jonas is a hawker who sells bananas in small plastic bags. His stall is outside Shoprite. He buys bananas for 50c per kilogram at the market. Each time he goes to market, he buys 40 kilograms of bananas. His transport costs to and from the market are R2,00 per day, but he only goes twice a week. His hawker's licence is R60,00 per year. His weekly living expenses are R120. The plastic bags he packs the bananas in cost 1c each. He puts six bananas (weighing about 500 grams) in each bag. Shoprite is selling bananas for R3,99 per kilogram.

- Approximately how much money does Jonas need to make each week in order to cover his transport, operating and living expenses?
- What is the cost (excluding transport and labour) to Jonas of each bag of bananas?
- What is the highest price Jonas can charge for a bag of bananas if he still wants to be competitive with Shoprite ?
- If he sells all his bags of bananas at this price, will he cover his weekly living and operating expenses?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 158

### COMMENT

This activity showed how a street hawker (or any informal trader) must have good business skills in order to survive. Once Jonas has a thriving trade he could telephone an agency that offers loans to small businesses. If Jonas starts a small business, he will need more formal office skills. In the rest of this lesson, you will learn about some of these office skills.

# Telephone messages

The most important form of communication in an office is the telephone. If the person you are calling is not in, there may be a receptionist who can take a message. There are many pieces of information that need to be recorded when taking a telephone message. For this reason, companies often make use of telephone message pads. The message pad makes it easier to take a message quickly and accurately.

## ACTIVITY 3

1. Read the message and answer the questions that follow.

WHILE YOU WERE AWAY	
To:	David Johnson
Date:	2 June
Time:	9h15
From:	Jonas Mahlupheka
Of:	Jo's Fruit and Veg
Phone:	(011) 788556
Fax:	(011) 788557

Message:  
Wants a small business loan of R2500.  
Fax him seed loan application form.  
Message taken by: Crystal

seed loan: the money lent to someone to set up a project or enterprise

2.
  - a. When did Jonas phone?
  - b. Who did he phone?
  - c. What did he phone about?
  - d. What action must be taken?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 158

## Sending a fax


Another quick form of communication is the fax. The word 'fax' is an abbreviation of 'facsimile'. A facsimile is an exact copy. A fax machine scans documents electrically and sends an exact copy to a receiving machine by telephone line. Faxes are used to send printed or handwritten information from one place to another in a very short time, for example, you can fax a document to another country in minutes. To work a manual fax machine, you insert the page you want to fax, dial the fax number, wait for the fax signal and press the 'start' button.



Many companies and organisations have standard fax forms. These can be used for short messages or as a covering letter for long documents. The fax form gives useful information about where the fax comes from, how many pages should have been received and what the recipient (person who receives) needs to do with the faxed document.

### ACTIVITY 4

Imagine that you are a clerk who works for Rapid Results Financial Services. You are going to fax Jonas a small business loan application form of two pages in length. Fill in the covering fax form on the next page.



Rapid Results Financial Services is a micro enterprise organisation committed to the economic empowerment of South Africa's poor communities.

---

303 De Waal Street, Redly Building, P.O.Box 6560, Bloemfontein, 9300 Tel: (051) 323 1450 Fax: (051) 323 1515

---

## Fax

To: .....

Fax: .....

Phone: .....

Pages: .....

Date: .....

Message: .....

.....

.....

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.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

ANSWERS ON PAGE 159

## Sending a memo

For communicating short messages within a company or organisation, a form called a memo is often used. Memo is short for 'memorandum', meaning 'something to be remembered'. A memo is better than oral communication because it allows you to keep a record of notices, instructions, warnings and requests. A memo is usually sent through the internal mail, which is the mail system that operates within a company or organisation.

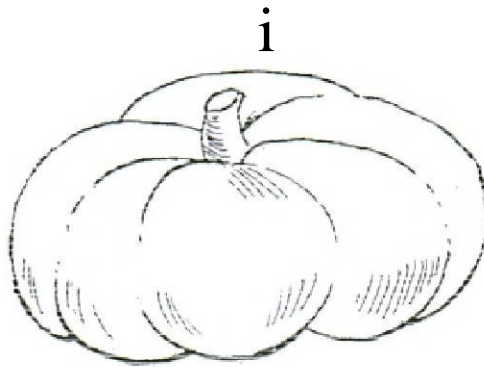
When writing a memo, you need to fill in the following information:

- | the name of the person you are sending the memo to (e.g., 'Mr Mahlupheka') or a description of the group receiving the memo (e.g., 'All staff')
- | your name
- | the subject of your message
- | the date
- | the message itself.

**ACTIVITY 5**

Imagine that Jonas Mahlupheka's business is very successful and he opens a large fruit and vegetable warehouse. He is worried, however, because his packers and cashiers are smoking at work. He wants to send a memo to all staff banning smoking on the premises and explaining why this is necessary. Complete the memo for Jonas.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 160



**MEMO**

To: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

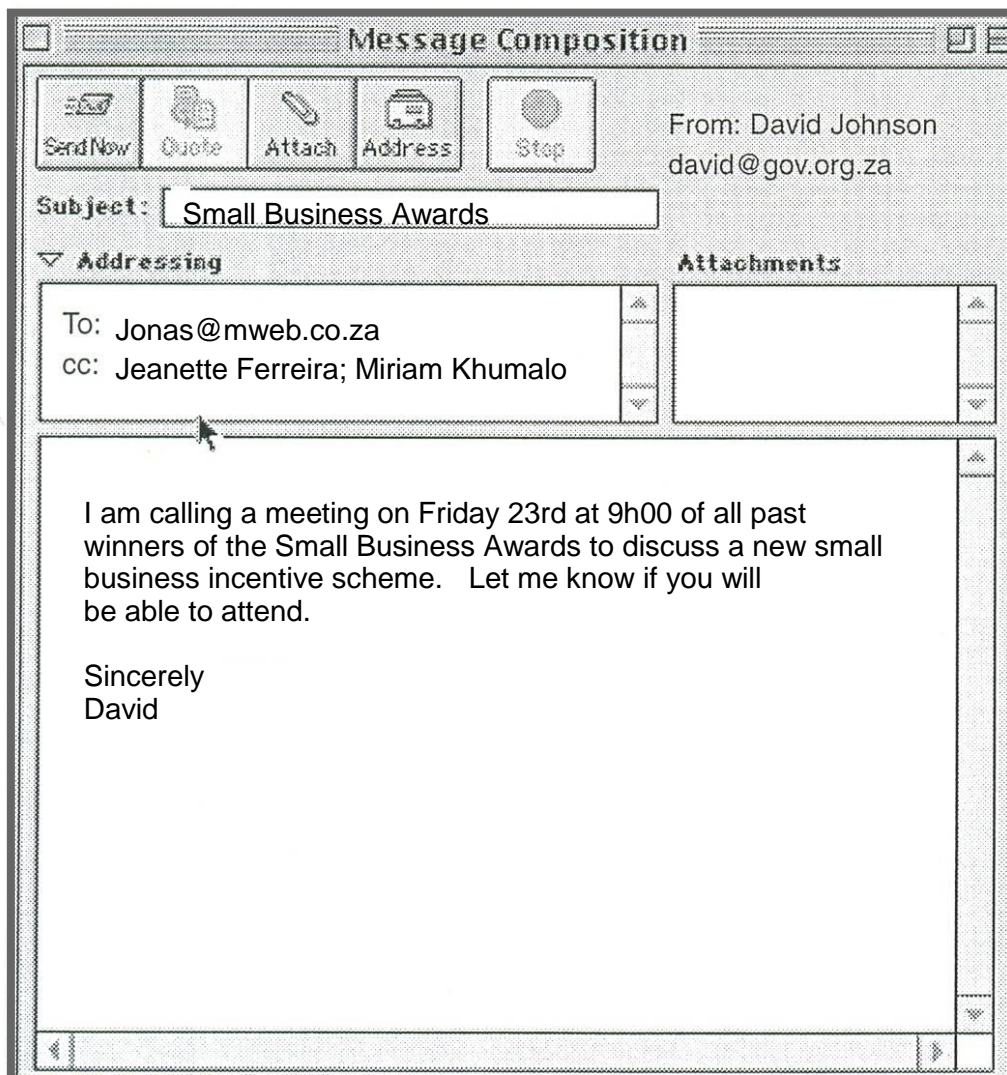
# Communicating by computer

So far, you have been looking at ways of communicating on paper. Increasingly, however, we are moving towards what has been called the 'paperless' society. This means communicating by computer. One computer can send a message or a document to another computer anywhere in the world using a system called e-mail (which stands for 'electronic mail'). To send or receive e-mail, your computer must be linked to a network.

The format of an e-mail is similar to a memo, except that you type e-mail addresses in the 'To' and 'From' blocks provided. Each person who has an e-mail facility on their computer is given a user identity. Your e-mail address consists of your user identity followed by @ (a sign which means 'at'), the name of your computer's network and your country's code.

You can get an e-mail address even if you only have occasional access to a computer. It is a fast, cheap, efficient way of communicating with anyone in the world. You can send copies of a message to many people at once.

This is what an e-mail message looks like:



'Cc' is an abbreviation for 'carbon copy', and is used when more than one copy of a message is sent.

E-mail messages are written in a short, informal style. You can use them for chatting to friends overseas, applying for jobs or sending memos to colleagues. Because they are so cheap to send and are received almost immediately, they are fast becoming the most popular means of business communication available today.

## CHECKLIST

Are you able to:

- r identify informal business skills
- r explain how to set a price for an item
- r take telephone messages
- r write a fax message
- r write a memo
- r explain what an e-mail message is.



## LESSON 4

# Skills we all need

## About this lesson

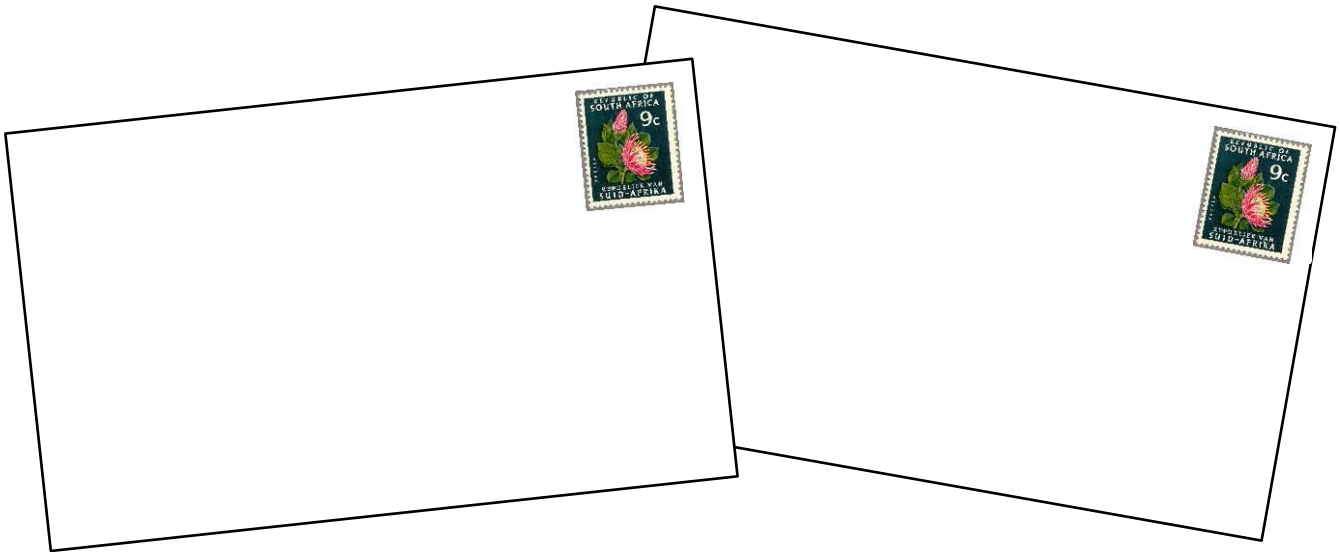
In the last lesson you looked at business skills. Skills which are valuable both in our working lives and in our lives outside work, are the skills of understanding and filling in forms, writing formal letters, and making telephone calls.

In this lesson you will be able to practice all of these skills.

## In this lesson you will

- | write a letter of application
- | analyse a form (try to have your identity number available for this)
- | listen to an interview on applying for bursaries
- | listen to a telephonic conversation and take notes of relevant details.





## Letters of application

A formal letter of application is very important. It introduces you to the employer. You must make a good impression in the letter, so that you convince him or her to interview you. It must be as short as possible, but give all the important information. Here is a checklist of eight important points to follow when you write a letter applying for a job:

1. Write your letter on good, plain paper.
2. The letter must be handwritten neatly by yourself or typed.
3. Make sure it's clean, and folded neatly.
4. Make sure it has no spelling mistakes or corrections. Get someone else to check it too, we often miss our own mistakes.
5. Make sure that you have followed the instructions that were given in the advertisement.
6. Check that your letter answers all questions that were asked in the advertisement. The information you provide must be clear and to the point.
7. Make sure your letter is written in simple, everyday English (not pompous, fancy or old-fashioned English).
8. Check that you have used the correct format for formal business letters.

Look at the two letters on the following pages. The first letter is a covering letter. This is the type of letter you send when you include your CV. The second letter shows a longer letter of application in which you give your personal details.

38 Bunga Ave

Langa

7455

19 November 2011

Address

Postal Code

Date

The Human Resources Manager

Goodwill Industries (Pty) Ltd

PO Box 1784

Cape Town

8000

Name and address  
of company

Dear Sir

Salutation

JOB APPLICATION: CLERICAL POSITION

Heading

I am writing to apply for the position of Clerk advertised in Cape Argus of 19 November 2011.

Say which job you  
are applying for and  
where you heard  
about it.

I feel confident that I meet the requirements of the job. I am at present employed by Drive Well Garage as a petrol attendant and have just completed writing my Grade 12 Certificate. I have attached a copy of my CV which includes all relevant details.

Give a short  
biographical  
description of  
yourself and say  
that details are  
attached to your  
letter.

I am available for an interview whenever it suits you and can be contacted at the above address or at (021) 798-5670.

Ask for a reply and  
indicate how you  
can be contacted.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Ending

Yours faithfully

W. Sixubane

WELCOME SIXUBANE

Signature (and your  
name in block letters  
as well).

Enclosure: C.V.

1182 Bunga Avenue  
P.O. Lamontville  
4027  
28 October 2011

The Human Resources Manager  
Southern Engineering Ltd  
PO Box 7625  
Durban  
4000

Dear Sir

JOB APPLICATION: SECRETARY

In reply to your organisation's advertisement for a secretary in the Daily News , Friday 25 October 2011, I wish to apply for the position.

I passed my Grade 12 last year after part-time study. My subjects included English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Mathematics, Accounting and Business Studies. I have six years work experience. My first four years were in domestic service, where I began studying. The last two years I have been employed as a filing clerk at N. B. Thomas and Sons. Apart from filing work, my duties include relief switchboard work and reception duties. However as I am eager to practise my management and office skills and further my career, I have decided to apply for secretarial work. I will also be registering to study word processing in the evenings.

I will make myself available for an interview at your convenience and am contactable either at the above address or on 031-245981.

I look forward to hearing from you.  
Yours faithfully

*Lindiwe Khumalo*  
LINDIWE KHUMALO

You are now going to do an activity similar to one you may find in an exam paper, which assesses your knowledge of how to write a letter applying for a job. But it's also practice for when you have to reply to a real advertisement.

## ACTIVITY 1

Write a letter of application for one of the following advertisements, or choose one of your own from a newspaper.

1. To do this activity, you have to imagine that you are applying for one of the jobs. Read the advertisements and decide which suits you best.
2. Write your letter of application. Remember:
  - | use your own address and the business address given to you
  - | always take note of the newspaper and date on which an advert appears. If it's a false situation like an exam, and this information is not given to you, make up the name of a newspaper and date
  - | read the requirements for the job applicant and try to show that you have these in the biographical description.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 160



## Filling in forms

Another skill that everybody needs is to be able to complete forms, and not many people seem to find it easy. Forms are used to collect and organise information.

In the next activity you can think about your experiences of and attitudes to filling in forms.

### ACTIVITY 2

1. Jot down a list of all the forms you need to fill in.
2. Read what other people say about filling in forms:



I hate filling in forms. I feel stupid and helpless whenever I fill in a form.



Sometimes I just fill in my name and address and get stuck.



Whenever I go to the hospital I have to fill in so many forms and often have to ask other people for help.



We really struggled with all the bursary forms for my son when he wanted to go to TUT.



You have to fill in a lot of forms when you want to send your children to a school.

3. What is your experience of filling in forms? Do you find it a difficult task? What problems do you have?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 161

### COMMENT

When you fill in forms, it's very important that you are neat and accurate. It helps if you understand what type of questions forms ask and the different ways in which they ask them.

### ACTIVITY 3

Now you're going to look in detail at different forms. This will help you to analyse the type of information forms ask for. The form you'll look at in Activity 3 is a Pay As You Earn (PAYE) tax-form. If you earn over a certain amount of money each month, you have to pay income tax to the government to help to run the country (for example, to pay for education, health-care and roads). If you start a job or change a job, you have to complete one of these forms.

1. Look at the form on the next page.
2. What questions does this form ask, i.e. what type of information does it require?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 161





INCOME TAX  
INKOMSTEBELASTING

IT 77  
IB 77

Application for registration as a taxpayer or changing of registered particulars: Individual  
Aansoek om registrasie as 'n belastingpligtige of verandering van geregistreerde besonderhede: Individu

WHERE REGISTERED PARTICULARS HAVE CHANGED, THE APPLICANT MUST ONLY FILL IN THE CHANGED PARTICULARS AND THE INCOME TAX REFERENCE NUMBER.  
IN GEVALLE WAAR GEREGISTREERDE BESONDERHEDE VERANDER HET, MOET DIE AANSOEKER SLEGS DIE INKOMSTEBELASTINGVERWYSINGSNUMMER EN DAARDIE BESONDERHEDE WAT VERANDER HET INVUL.

USE CAPITAL LETTERS AND WHERE APPLICABLE MARK WITH AN "X"  
GEBRUIK HOOFLETTERS EN WAAR TOEPASLIK MERK MET "X"

Income Tax reference number  
Inkomstebelastingverwysingsnommer  
Area Code  
Areakode

Personal particulars  
Persoonlike besonderhede

Surname  
Van  
First Name(s)  
Voorname  
Postal address  
Posadres  
Residential address  
Woonadres  
Magisterial District in which you reside  
Landdrostdistrik waarin u woonagtig is

Particulars: (Self)  
Besonderhede: (Self)

Language  
Taal  
Tel no - Work / Business  
Tel nr - Werk / Besigheid  
Tel no - House  
Tel nr - Huis  
Cellular phone number  
Sellulêre foonnommer  
Identity number  
Identiteitsnommer  
Other (eg. Passport)  
Ander (bv. Paspoort)  
Date of birth  
Dag van geboorte  
Occupation  
Beroep  
Type of marriage:  
Tipe huwelik:

LITHOTECHE AFRIC MAIL

## COMMENT

In order to make your writing more legible, you should complete forms in block letters. This means you print your details in capital letters.

## ACTIVITY 4

Forms often request that the date be written in numbers or in a variety of ways. Write down the birthdays of all the learners in your study group in your notebook. An example has been done for you.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>
Mary _____	(d/m/y) 22/11/1960 _____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## ACTIVITY 5

Forms usually require your signature. This too, is a very important part of the form, because it has a special meaning.

What does it mean when you sign

1. a bank cheque?
2. an oath/statement at the police station?
3. a sales contract?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 161

## COMMENT

Your signature shows that you:

- | are the person who filled in the form
- | are telling the truth
- | understand and agree with everything in the form.

Always make sure you understand everything in a document before you sign it! Take important documents like Hire Purchase agreements home with you to study carefully before you sign them. Once you have signed them, it's too late to argue that you didn't understand the conditions.

## Applying for a bursary for further education

Many learners need to apply for a bursary in order to be able to study full-time. When you apply for a bursary, you usually need to write a formal letter of application, and to fill in application forms. You may also need to make enquiries on the telephone and participate in an interview.

In the next activity you can listen to Amin Abraham, Director of the Educational Opportunities Council who has some good advice to give you on applying for bursaries. Here is some vocabulary you may need to know:

- | field of study: what area you intend studying, e.g., business management, tourism, languages, etc.
- | institution: the college, technikon or university where you intend studying
- | testimonial: a written statement, or reference, by someone in a good position, stating what your abilities, merits, qualifications, etc. are.

### ACTIVITY 6



Listen to the section on your audio-cassette labelled Lesson 4: Applying for a bursary: Communication in English: Grade 12: Side A.

1. Listen for the answers to these two questions in the first part of the interview.
  - a. What three things must be stated in your initial application letter?
  - b. What fields of study are usually given preference?
2. Then listen to the rest of the interview and take brief notes in your notebook on the following:
  - a. Tips for filling in application forms.
  - b. Tips for interview situations.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 161

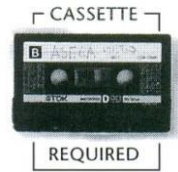
## Making telephonic enquiries

To find out information about bursaries and jobs, you often need to make enquiries on the telephone. It's very important that we make the right impression on the telephone. We must speak clearly and politely, and know what we are talking about. Remember too, many jobs require learning good telephone skills.

## ACTIVITY 7

You are going to listen to a telephone conversation where somebody is answering a job advertisement.

1. Read the advertisement below. Then listen to the conversation on the tape. While you are listening, take down notes of important details about the job interview. The section of the tape is labelled Communication in English: Grade 12: Side A. The title of the programme is Unit 2: Lesson 4: Phoning about a job.



### LIBRARY ASSISTANT

The City Library is looking for an enthusiastic applicant with a Further Education and Training / Grade 12 Certificate and/or a person with library experience. Fluency in English is essential. Ability to speak several of South Africa's official languages is an advantage. Library training will be given plus an opportunity to study further.

Suitable applicants to phone 011 448-7921.

2. Now answer the questions below in your notebook.
  - a. Do you think the applicant meets the requirements of the advertisement?
  - b. What is the name of the person she must see?
  - c. What is the address?
  - d. When is the interview?
  - e. What must she bring with her to the interview?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 162

### COMMENT

Your chances of being successful when you apply for a job or bursary increase when you supply clear, accurate information on forms, in letters or over the telephone. You should always take down notes when you are given important details such as names, addresses, etc. over the telephone as you could easily forget the information.

## CHECKLIST

Are you able to:

- r write clear, neat letters of application
- r fill in forms with more confidence and understanding
- r explain the meaning of your identity number and the implications of using your signature
- r apply for a bursary
- r listen carefully, take notes and respond confidently on the telephone.

## LESSON 5

# Know yourself

## About this lesson

We all want to do work we enjoy. If you want to make the right career choice you need to understand what kind of person you are. You can't always choose your job, but when you can, self-knowledge is very important. You need to know what you enjoy doing, what you are good at and what you are not good at. Answers to these questions will help you to write your curriculum vitae (CV) and to answer questions about yourself in job interviews.

In this lesson, you'll complete self-assessment questionnaires. These questionnaires will help you to understand your strengths, values and goals. You will also write an essay about yourself. Essays showing self-awareness are sometimes used in bursary applications.

## In this lesson you will

- | read a text from a career guidance book
- | apply self-analytical thinking skills to a series of questionnaires
- | develop a vocabulary for writing about yourself
- | make a summary of your self-analysis
- | write an essay about yourself.



## Good self-concept

A person who achieves what he or she wants to in life usually has a good self-concept. Your self-concept is the picture made up of all the ideas and images you have of yourself. It's the way you see yourself and the way others see you.

The text below comes from a career guidance book by Niels Lindhard. He was born and educated in Denmark, and has a degree in Business Studies. He has lectured in careers and life-skills all over Southern Africa and written eight books on the subject. The forms which you will complete at the end of this lesson are adapted from his book.

### ACTIVITY 1

Read the text below. You will notice the specialised vocabulary that you need when you talk about your personality. Try to work out the meanings of words from their contexts, or use your dictionary.

#### Why you should know yourself

Self-knowledge is the root and basis for our maturity, self-esteem and self-reliance, and it is very important for our decision-making, assertiveness and relationships.

Probably the most important function of our self-concept is confidence. A positive self-concept, or confidence, is the basis for successfully coping with life's problems.

Your self-concept is your picture of yourself. It is everything you think and know about yourself. It is the centre of your being, your inner world. A self-concept can be realistic (true) or unrealistic (false). It can also be positive (you like yourself and see yourself as succeeding), or negative, (you don't like yourself much, and see yourself as failing). The best self-concept, of course, is positive and realistic.

'Until you know who you are, you will not know what you can become.' This modern Danish proverb tells us how

ADAPTED FROM: LINDHARD, N. DLAMINI, N. LIFESKILLS IN THE CLASSROOM.  
MASKEW MILLER LONGMAN, CAPE TOWN, PP 39-40, 46, 54, 55, 57, 62.



## How do we learn about ourselves?

A great deal of what we learn about ourselves we learn from others. The love of parents and family makes us confident and loving. Those who were never loved may struggle to love. So we reflect, as in a mirror, the image of ourselves that others show us. We learn from others whether or not we are beautiful, clever or friendly. We don't have to accept all that people say, but when we learn something about ourselves that we think is important or significant, then we must listen.

We can also learn about ourselves by comparing ourselves with others. While we must know who we are, we must also know who we are not! Lots of people go through life pretending or even believing that they are something they are not, such as unselfish, caring, important and good company. Others may find them self-centred, talkative and unhelpful! These people have a positive self-concept which is unrealistic, or false.

### ACTIVITY 2

Think about your own self-concept. Write about five paragraphs to answer the question 'Who am I?' (Include what you do, what type of person you think you are, your roles in life, for example, wife, mother, domestic worker, church member, learner, daughter, etc.)

Think about some of these questions while you write:

- | How positive is my self-concept? Do I enjoy being me? Am I happy with myself?
- | Do I need to improve my self-concept?

learner ...  
unemployed worker ...  
road runner ... brother...  
friend ...son...?



## Self-assessment questionnaires

In the last lesson you looked at official forms or questionnaires. Their purpose was to collect information. The questionnaires in this lesson are different. They are confidential and meant only for yourself. They require careful reading and self-analytical thinking. They are there to help you think about yourself. Some of them are quite complex and will take quite a long time to complete, depending on how seriously you think about yourself before you answer them. The answers depend entirely on what you think you are like. This information will help you in the next lesson when you write your CV.

You'll find the questionnaires at the end of this lesson on pages 61-63.

## ACTIVITY 3

### Questionnaire 1: My personality

What kind of person are you? Are you shy and quiet, or confident and outgoing? As you complete Questionnaire 1 on page 61, remember that there are no right or wrong answers. The world would be a very boring place if everyone was the same.

When you have completed the questionnaire, fill in the following summary showing what you've learnt about yourself so far:

<p>My personality type</p> <p>These are my strong traits from Column A:</p> <hr/> <p>1.</p> <hr/> <p>2.</p> <hr/> <p>3.</p> <hr/> <p>4.</p>
---

## COMMENT

It is useful to understand your own personality. Knowing whether you are shy (often called 'introvert') or outgoing (often called 'extrovert') can help you make decisions about the kind of work you will enjoy, the kind of partner you need and the ways in which you can most enjoy your leisure time.

These important aspects of your life (work, relationships and leisure) are also affected by your values. In Activity 4 you can work out which values are most important to you.

## ACTIVITY 4

### Questionnaire 2: My values

What do you care about most in life? What things make you happy? Complete Questionnaire 2 on page 62 in order to discover what your values are.

When you have completed the questionnaire, fill in the following summary showing what you've learnt about yourself so far:

My values - what is important to me?

---

I want to have:

- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
- 

I want to be:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

## COMMENT

The values you have just listed probably came to you from a variety of sources. Your parents, education and religion as well as your life experiences have all played a part in forming your values. Because values tend to be formed early on in life, they don't change very easily. You are probably happy with your values the way they are and you may also be proud of them.

But what about the things in your life you would like to improve? In the third questionnaire you can discover your strengths and weaknesses as far as communicating with other people is concerned.

## ACTIVITY 5

Questionnaire 3: My strengths and weaknesses communicating with people

As you have found in your English course, there are many different aspects to communication. Complete Questionnaire 3 on page 63 in order to discover where your strengths and weaknesses lie.

When you have completed the questionnaire, fill in the following summary showing what you've learnt about yourself so far:

My strengths and talents

---

Six ways in which I communicate well:

- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
  - 6.
- 

Two areas in which I feel I could communicate better:

- 1.
- 2.

## COMMENT

Now that you have completed the questionnaires and summarised your findings, you should have a clearer picture of yourself. This, however, is still very much a 'skeleton' of your personality, values and goals. You are now going to add some 'muscle' and 'fat', and turn this outline into an essay about yourself.

## Writing about yourself

We don't often write about ourselves, but sometimes we are asked to write an essay about ourselves. Quite often the essays are used to select learners for bursaries, and occasionally universities and technikons use them. Because we get so little practice in writing personal essays, we often find them difficult, so that's why you're going to write an essay about yourself in this lesson. It will also help you to stop and think about who you are and where you are going in life!

### ACTIVITY 6

In this activity you are going to write between 1 and 1½ pages on one of the following topics:

Who I am and what I want to become

OR

Write about an important event in your life and what you learnt from it. Choose an event which helped you to learn about yourself.

Before you choose your topic, read what is required for each essay:

Topic 1: Who I am and what I want to become

In this essay, you should focus on your personality and inner-self. Although you can mention your roles in your family, at work and the community, you should discuss what type of person you are and how you feel about yourself.

Look at the title. There are two parts to it: Who I am and what I want to become.

In the first part of the essay, you can use your summary sheets to act as a guide. Don't just write a list of traits from each summary. Explain where the different aspects of your personality come from and how they affect your everyday life.

For example, you could think about how to complete the following sentences:

A loving relationship is the most important thing in my life. I first learnt the importance of love ...

I am a very shy person. When I walk into a large gathering of people I...

Once you have described who you are, you can go on to the second part of your essay: what you want to become. This involves thinking about your hopes and career goals as well as areas in which you'd like to improve.

Topic 2:

Imagine that you are applying for a bursary. The application form asks you to write the following essay:

Write about an important event in your life and what you learnt from it. Choose an event which helped you to learn about yourself.

This is not as easy as it may seem! It's not simply a story or a description. There are two parts to this essay:

1. the description of the event itself
2. what you personally learnt from it.

The event you choose must show personal growth. It must show how you grew in maturity and understanding of life and yourself. You must write it in an interesting way, and show an awareness of what sort of person you are.

Note: For both essays remember to do the following things:

- | brainstorm your ideas and then organise them into similar groups
- | plan your paragraphs carefully - overall structure is important
- | use ideas and linking words to link one paragraph to another
- | plan interesting introductory and concluding paragraphs
- | edit your first draft.

Keep your essay until you have written your CV in the next lesson. Then give your essay and your CV to your tutor for assessment.

# QUESTIONNAIRE 1

## My personality type

Tick which columns apply to you. For example, are you shy 'most of the time', 'sometimes' or 'never'?

	A. Most of the time	B. Sometimes	C. Never
I AM			
shy			
outgoing			
confident			
unsure			
energetic / active			
relaxed			
I LIKE			
jobs with responsibility			
leading people			
power and authority			
following a strong leader			
working in a team			
working alone			



# QUESTIONNAIRE 2

## My values - What is important to me?

		A		
		Very	Less	Not
		1	2	3
I want to have:		Very <input type="checkbox"/>	Less important	Not <input type="checkbox"/>
Tick in one column only				
	A world of peace, equality and non-discrimination			
	A comfortable life			
	A challenging life			
	An exciting life			
	Independence and free choice			
	An enjoyable life			
	A religious life			
	Family security			
	A good job			
	Social status			
	Self-respect			
	True friendship			
	Lots of contact with people			
	A loving relationship			
	Success			
	Lots of money			

		B		
		Very	Less	Not
		1	2	3
I want to be:		Very <input type="checkbox"/>	Less important	Not <input type="checkbox"/>
Tick in one column only				
	Artistic and creative			
	Educated and wise			
	Good at communication			
	Competent and capable			
	A good decision-maker			
	Involved in the community			
	A good organiser			
	Secure			
	Responsible			
	Mature			
	Honest			
	Helpful			
	Ambitious			
	Disciplined			
	Good at what I do			

Find your four most important values from Columns A only, i.e. very important.

I WANT TO HAVE

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Find your four most important values from Columns B only, i.e. very important.

I WANT TO BE

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

# QUESTIONNAIRE 3

## My strengths and weaknesses in communication

Rate yourself according to the 1-4 scale.

1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good, 4 = excellent/very good

### Teaching/instructing people

teaching a child	1	2	3	4
teaching a co-worker	1	2	3	4
teaching groups of children	1	2	3	4
teaching groups of adults	1	2	3	4
giving orders or instructions	1	2	3	4
showing how a job is done	1	2	3	4

### Negotiating with people

listening patiently	1	2	3	4
discussing problems with people in power	1	2	3	4
communicating easily with people in higher positions	1	2	3	4
using different techniques to deal with different people	1	2	3	4
speaking more than one language	1	2	3	4
mediating between people who have differences	1	2	3	4

### Managing people

speaking to large groups	1	2	3	4
answering questions in a stressful situation	1	2	3	4
communicating easily with people in lower positions	1	2	3	4
telling someone they have done something wrong	1	2	3	4
congratulating a worker on a job well done	1	2	3	4
recognising other people's skills and delegating work to them	1	2	3	4

### Public relations skills

making other people feel at ease	1	2	3	4
helping customers or clients	1	2	3	4
apologising when necessary	1	2	3	4
calming an angry person	1	2	3	4
speaking on the phone	1	2	3	4
smiling or joking to lighten a situation	1	2	3	4
choosing the right word at the right time	1	2	3	4
treating old people and children with respect	1	2	3	4
introducing strangers to one another	1	2	3	4

### Friends and family

being loyal to friends and family	1	2	3	4
helping friends and family	1	2	3	4
taking care not to hurt friends and family	1	2	3	4

## CHECKLIST

Are you able to:

- r explain the importance of self-knowledge in building a good, realistic self-concept
- r complete a range of self-assessment questionnaires which demanded self-analytical thinking skills
- r use a wide range of vocabulary to describe personality traits and to write about yourself
- r plan and write an essay about yourself.

