



Soft Skill:

Communication

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Objectives:

- Identify different types of communication
- Successfully practice written, verbal and nonverbal communication skills

Purpose:

Good communication skills, both verbal and written, are important to have on the job. This lesson will give students a chance to evaluate effective communication and teach them how to improve their own communication skills.

Materials:

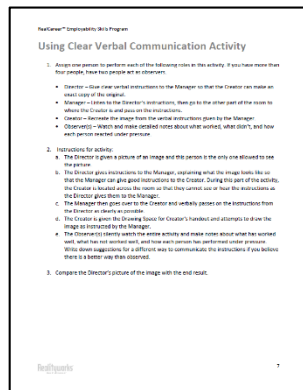
- *Images for Directors* handout
- PowerPoint Slide 2
- *Business Letter Assessment Rubric*
- Student Workbook

Activity 1 – Using Clear Verbal Communication

1. Divide the class into groups of four. If you do not have an even number of students, add one extra to various groups, making no group more than five.
2. Assign each person in the group one of the following roles:

- Director
- Manager
- Creator
- Observer(s)

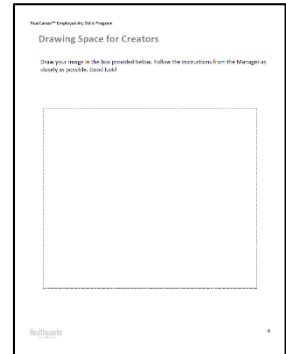
3. Reference the *Using Clear Verbal Communication* page in the Student



Workbook. Review the job of each of the roles in the group.

4. Give each Director the picture of their object.

Ensure no other team members can see it. Have each Creator use the *Drawing Space for Creators* page in the Student Workbook.



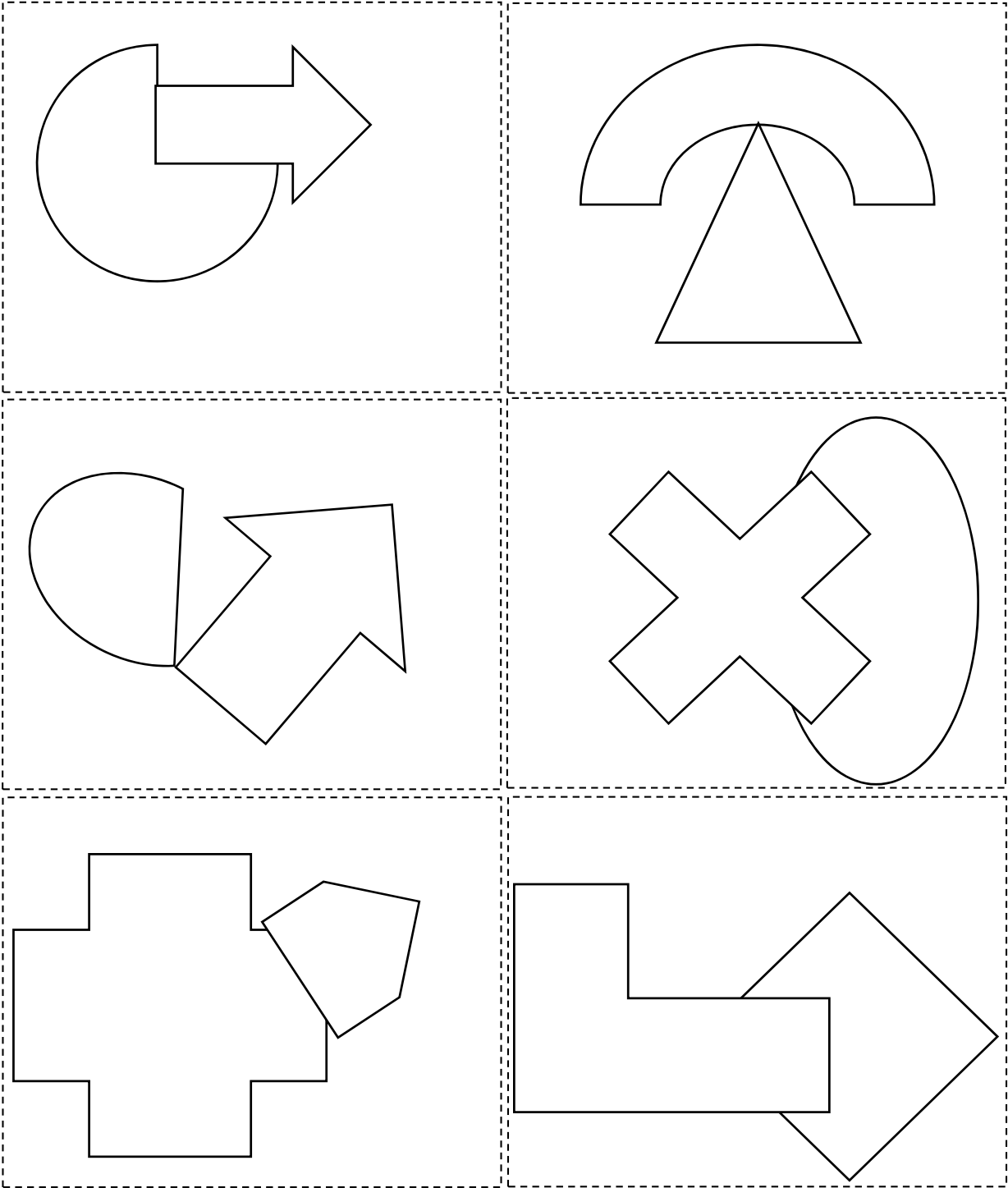
Observers should have paper for note-taking. The Creators are to sit in the

opposite corner of the classroom, away from the Directors. They should not be able to hear the conversation between the Director and the Manager. Observers should be free to move where they need to in order to watch each step of the activity.

5. Have each group follow the written instructions in their Student Workbook.
6. Give each group five to ten minutes to complete the activity. When the time is up, call the class back together. Have each group share the original picture of the Director's object and the final product of the Creator. While comparing the before and after results, have the Observers share what worked, what didn't work, and how everyone reacted under pressure. Have them share anything they believe they could have done differently and perhaps in a clearer way. This will provide a way for each group to reflect on how successful their communication was as a group.

Images for Directors

Cut each of the following images apart and give one to each Director. Make sure that the Director is the only one who sees the image in the group.

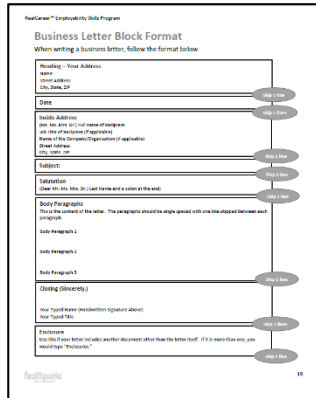


Activity 2 – Written Communication: Writing a Business Letter

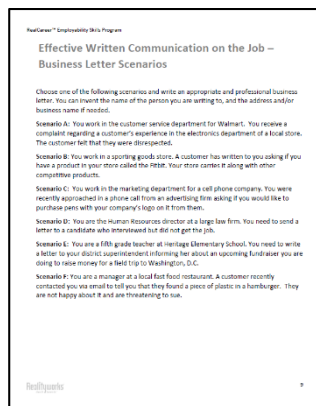
1. Introduce business letters. Tell students that an important skill in many job settings is to know how to write a proper business letter. One of the easiest and most widely used business letter formats is called the Block Format.

2. Have students reference the *Business Letter Block Format* page in the Student Workbook. Show PowerPoint Slide 2. Review the standard parts of a business letter with students:

- Heading
- Date
- Inside Address
- Subject
- Salutation
- Body Paragraphs
- Closing and Signature
- Enclosure



3. Have students turn to the *Effective Written Communication on the Job – Business Letter Scenarios* page in the Student Workbook. Students should choose one of the scenarios on the handout and write a business letter to address the situation. They should follow the block style format.



Scenario A: You work in the customer service department for Walmart. You receive a complaint regarding a customer’s experience in

the electronics department of a local store. The customer was felt that they were disrespected.

Scenario B: You work in a sporting goods store. A customer has written to you asking if you have a product in your store called the Fitbit. Your store does carry it along with other competitive products.

Scenario C: You work in the marketing department for a cell phone company. You were recently approached in a phone call from an advertising firm asking if you would like to purchase pens with your company’s logo on it from them.

Scenario D: You are the Human Resources director at a large law firm. You need to send a letter to a candidate who interviewed but did not get the job.

Scenario E: You are a fifth grade teacher at Heritage Elementary School. You need to write a letter to your district superintendent informing her about an upcoming fundraiser you are doing to raise money for a field trip to Washington, D.C.

Scenario F: You are a manager at a local fast food restaurant. A customer recently contacted you via email to tell you that they found a piece of plastic in a hamburger. They are not happy about it and are threatening to sue.

4. After each student has completed an initial draft, each student should have another peer edit their initial business letter draft. Peer editors should follow the template and make sure that each part is included in the draft, along with spelling and grammar checks.
5. Have students prepare the final business letter and turn it in as part of their grade for this lesson. Use the attached *Business Letter Assessment Rubric* for your convenience.

Business Letter Assessment Rubric

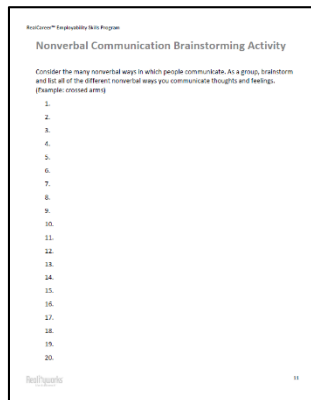
Name: _____

Topic (Weight)	1	2	3	4
Return Address and Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return address or letterhead is missing Date is missing 4 or more spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return address or letterhead is missing some information Date is there but format is incorrect 3 spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return address or letterhead is complete and accurate Date is complete and positioned correctly 1-2 spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return address or letterhead is complete and accurate Date is complete and positioned correctly No spelling, capitalization or punctuation errors
Inside Address and Salutation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inside address is missing Salutation is missing Subject line is missing More than 3 spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inside address is missing information Salutation is inappropriate Subject line information is misleading 3 spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inside address is complete and accurate Salutation is appropriate but incomplete A subject line needed or added correctly 1-2 spelling, capitalization or punctuation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inside address if complete and accurate Salutation is appropriate and complete A subject line needed or added correctly No spelling, capitalization or punctuation errors
Content Organization and Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No organization is apparent Paragraph order does not follow logical format Message has enough missing or incorrect information to be ineffective in meeting the writer's goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization is not appropriate to the writer's purpose Paragraph order is close to the suggested model Two pieces of information is missing or incorrect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization is appropriate to the writer's purpose Paragraph order is close to the suggested model One piece of information is missing or incorrect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization is appropriate to the writer's purpose Paragraph order follows the suggested model Message is complete and accurate
Closing and Signature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 2 pieces are missing or inaccurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two pieces are missing or inaccurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One piece is missing or inaccurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing is appropriate Written and typed signatures are present Reference initials and enclosure reminder are included if needed
Word Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word choice is unprofessional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word choice is inappropriate for audience Writer sometimes uses action verbs Overuse of passive voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word choice is mostly appropriate for audience Writer uses action verbs Use of passive voice only as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word choice is appropriate for audience Writer uses action verbs Use of passive voice only as needed
Sentences Fluency, Paragraphs and Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 2 sentence fragments Message is lost in poor construction Paragraphs do not follow suggested format Spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors make message unclear Grammar and usage errors makes message unclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two sentence fragments Message is there but underdeveloped Awkward paragraph construction clouds the message 3-4 spelling, capitalization or punctuation errors 3-4 grammar and usage errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some variation in sentence length Paragraph divisions are somewhat effective Main purpose of the message is clear 1-2 spelling, capitalization punctuation errors 1-2 grammar and usage errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete sentences of varying length Paragraph divisions are effective Number of paragraphs fits suggested format Main purpose of the message is clear No spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors Grammar and usage are correct

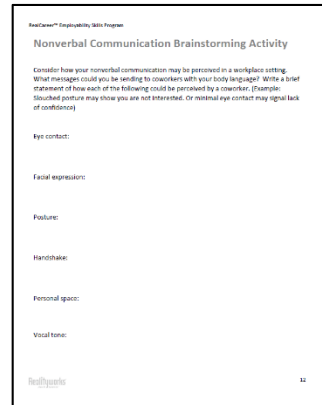
Activity 3 – Using Nonverbal Communication

1. Introduce nonverbal communication. Play an abbreviated version of a game of Charades. Pick three students and stand them at the front of the room. Tell them to pretend that they are all about to interview for a very important job and are waiting in a conference room for the interviewer. Have the rest of the class comment on what the students' postures convey to them. Change the scenarios and choose three new students for each of the following scenarios or come up with some of your own. Tell them they are just hanging out at home playing video games with a group of friends, or about to give a presentation to a group of 5000 conference attendees, or meeting their girlfriend or boyfriend's parents for the first time. Once you have gone through various scenarios, have everyone share their opinions on how body language affects the way others see you.

2. Form small groups of three to four students. Give them the *Nonverbal Communication Brainstorming Activity* handout. Have small groups complete the handout, brainstorming all of the nonverbal ways in which people communicate.



3. Have students complete the second page of the handout. Give them about 10 minutes to complete the activity.



4. Gather the class back together and have each group share some of items they brainstormed for nonverbal

communication, then have each group share one example for each category of how nonverbal communication may be perceived in the workplace.

5. Here are three tips for improving your nonverbal communication skills:

- Body movements include using gestures to illustrate the message you are trying to convey verbally. Use good eye contact and appropriate gestures. Have good posture and do not send mixed messages.

- Voice quality is important. It's not always what we say, but how we say it. Be mindful of tone when you speak. Tone has the power to turn a simple sentence meant with no ill intent into a chaotic mess. We also want to consider the volume at which we speak.

- Space and personal boundaries are especially important in nonverbal communication. In order to communicate effectively, we have to be aware of our own space as well as the space of others.