Keep It Flowing

Activity One – Using some of the key expressions explain to your teacher in English how to accomplish a complicated task related to your job.

Activity Two – Read part of the Guide to Pronunciation and Intonation

Activity Three – Read the following article about flow charts, paying attention to your intonation, you can listen to your teacher's intonation as an example.

Flow Charts

Understanding and Communicating How a Process Works

Flow charts are easy-to-understand diagrams showing how steps in a process fit together. This makes them useful tools for communicating how processes work, and for clearly documenting how a particular job is done. Furthermore, the act of mapping a process out in flow chart format helps you clarify your understanding of the process, and helps you think about where the process can be improved.

A flow chart can therefore be used to:

- Define and analyze processes;
- Build a step-by-step picture of the process for analysis, discussion, or communication; and
- Define, standardize or find areas for improvement in a process

Also, by conveying the information or processes in a step-by-step flow, you can then concentrate more intently on each individual step, without feeling overwhelmed by the bigger picture.

How to Use the Tool:

Most flow charts are made up of three main types of symbol:

- Elongated circles, which signify the start or end of a process;

Within each symbol, write down what the symbol represents. This could be the start or finish of the process, the action to be taken, or the decision to be made.

Symbols are connected one to the other by arrows, showing the flow of the process.

Tip:
There are many other flowchart symbols that can also be used. However, remember that an important use of flow charts is in communication: If you use obscure symbols that only part of your audience understands, there's a good chance that your communication will fail. As ever, keep things simple!

To draw the flow chart, brainstorming process tasks and list them in the order they occur. Ask questions such as "What really happens next in the process?" and "Does a decision need to be made before the next step?" or "What approvals are required before moving on to the next task?"

Start the flow chart by drawing the elongated circle shape, and labelling it "Start".

Then move to the first action or question, and draw a rectangle or diamond appropriately. Write the action or question down, and draw an arrow from the start symbol to this shape.

Work through your whole process, showing actions and decisions appropriately in the order they occur, and linking these together using arrows to show the flow of the process. Where a decision needs to be made, draw arrows leaving the decision diamond for each possible outcome, and label them with the outcome. And remember to show the end of the process using an elongated circle labelled "Finish".

Finally, challenge your flow chart. Work from step to step asking yourself if you have correctly represented the sequence of actions and decisions involved in the process.

And then (if you're looking to improve the process) look at the steps identified and think about whether work is duplicated, whether other steps should be involved, and whether the right people are doing the right jobs.

Activity Four – Answer the following comprehension questions.

1. What can a flow chart be used for?
2. Why do they help people to concentrate?
3. What are flow charts made up of?
4. Why should you only use the common symbols in a flow chart?
5. How do you start to draw a flow chart?

Activity Five – Answer the questions using the key words and expressions.

1. What kind of routines do you have to explain to your colleagues?
2. Are the routines complicated?
3. Do a lot of people have trouble understanding new instructions?
4. How often do routines or processes change?
5. What means do you use to explain them?
6. What means are used to present new routines and processes to you?
7. Do you find that they are clear enough?
8. Do you use flow charts?
9. Do you agree with what is written in this article about flow charts?
10. How do you think you could improve your communication with your colleagues?

Activity Six – Now explain the same task as activity one, but this time use a flow chart!



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