

## THE TASK AT HAND.- Session 2.- Bullying at work.

### Situation

Read the text and listen to the situation.



The girls continue doing some research on the task Mr. Parker asked them to do. So far, they have read a lot about negative phenomena at work like bullying, possible illnesses etc. and now they have decided to move on to possible ways of solving problems and create a positive atmosphere.

**Lourdes:** Hey **Susana**, how are you doing? **Lourdes** pops into **Susana's** desk.

**Susana:** Ugh! This is really tiring! I never imagined that reading articles in English would be so complicated!

**Lourdes:** I know! But it's normal, English is not our mother tongue after all. Did you find anything?

**Susana:** Well, I've got some interesting ideas about how to create a positive work environment; According to experts, the most important thing is that all members feel part of a team and they treat each other with respect.

**Lourdes:** Yes, that's a key point! I've just found an article about that. Do you want to read it? It's quite interesting!

**Susana:** Sure! Thank you, I'll take a look at it.

**Lourdes:** Here you are, I'll go back to my seat. I don't want to have any problems with Mr. Parker. See you later! (**Lourdes** whispers).

**Susana:** Yes, you'd better go back to your place! See ya!



### Think about it

Write in the forum.

- ✔ What are in your opinion the main reasons of having a negative environment at work?
- ✔ What would you do to change it?
- ✔ Have you ever worked under these conditions? What happened?
- ✔ If you haven't experienced anything of the kind, tell about a friend's or a relative's experience.



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[Aviso Legal](#)

## 1.- What to say: Doing some research.

### Quotation

"When people go to work, they shouldn't have to leave their hearts at home."

*Betty Bender*

### Situation

**Susana** takes **Lourdes** article and starts reading it:

"Looking for the perfect environment."

**Susana**: Ummm, it seems quite interesting! (**Susana** says excitedly). "It's almost lunch time but I think I'll be able to finish it before break time. Let's see... We have all worked..."

(A few minutes later)

**Lourdes**: Lunch time! (**Lourdes** says excitedly) I'm so hungry! I never imagined that I would be able to have lunch at 12 a.m.!

**Susana**: I know! before coming here it sounded **weird** to me, but once you're here it sounds even natural!

**Lourdes**: Especially when you had breakfast at 6 a.m. in the morning!! Did you finish reading the article?

**Susana**: Yes, I think it can be very useful, I even underlined a few ideas but let's go to the canteen, I'm **starving!!!**



## 1.1.- Looking for the Perfect Environment.

We have all worked in places where we **grew to dread** getting up in the morning, and a few of us have had the pleasure of working for a boss who makes us feel like we can do anything. Let's take a look at the main differences between working in a positive and a negative work environment.

On the one hand, negative work environments are usually **ruled** by an unfriendly and critical boss. People don't get much performance feedback, there is high employee **turnover**, and people watch the clock constantly.

However, in a positive work environment, the boss demonstrates interest in the employees; He or she has an encouraging attitude, and the employees like working there. So, what is the secret?



According to experts, creating a positive work environment is based on four key skills:

1. **Tell people what you expect of them.** It is very important that everyone knows what his/her task consists of so that all employees know what their responsibilities are.
2. **Show interest in your team members.** Look everyone in the eye and use **proper names**. Ask colleagues about their opinion and always smile to them. Doing the opposite **discourages** productivity because it makes people feel angry, less confident, and **stripped off** self-esteem.
3. **Create an encouraging environment** where your ideas are valued, creativity is encouraged and new ideas are rewarded. It is proved that when we feel appreciated at the work place, we feel like part of the team and our performance is better.
4. **Recognize and reward good performance.** **Praise** your employees and workers and encourage them to continue producing such good work. This increases the chances that the person will repeat the desirable behaviour.

It is proved that creating such an environment results in benefits to managers and business owners. There is less turnover, less sabotage, greater loyalty and higher productivity. So, what are you waiting for? Follow these tips and you'll create the atmosphere you always longed for.



### Now it's your turn

**Read the previous article again and answer these questions:**

**In a negative work environment...**

- workers come and go constantly.
- workers are really stressed out.
- the boss is always angry. Sorry!

**For a working environment to be successful...**

- all employees must be happy.
- all employees should know what their boss expects of them.
- all employees should do their best at work.

**When showing interest in your team members, be careful not to...**

- look your colleagues too directly in the eye.
- ignore anyone.
- praise their work too much.

## 1.2.- Tact and Diplomacy.

Tact and diplomacy are quite important when interacting to people. The English language lends itself to being tactful and diplomatic and speakers of English are generally far less direct than speakers of other languages like for example speakers of German. How do we do this? We achieve this not only through our tone of voice, but also our choice of language. Here are some ways in which we make our **utterances** more diplomatic:



### Making language more diplomatic.

#### 1. Use **would, could or might** to make what you say more tentative.

For example:

- ✓ *That would be too long a delay.*
- ✓ *That does not meet our specifications.*
- ✓ *That might not meet our specifications.*
- ✓ *You must visit our London office.*
- ✓ *You could visit our London office.*

#### 2. **Questions rather than statements** make your views less dogmatic.

For example:

- ✓ *It's a good idea to check with head office.*
- ✓ *Is it a good idea to check with head office first?*
- ✓ *The risk involved in this is far too serious.*
- ✓ *Would the risk be too serious?*
- ✓ *He's not the right person for the job.*
- ✓ *Is he the right person for the job?*

#### 3. **Introductory 'softening' phrases** prepare your listeners for an unwelcome or unhelpful message.

- ✓ "I'm afraid" ...
- ✓ "Frankly" ...
- ✓ "With respect" ...
- ✓ "To be honest" ...
- ✓ "To put it bluntly" ...
- ✓ "If I may say so" ...

Example:

- ➡ *A: Could I speak to John, please?*
- ➡ *B: I'm afraid he's out of the office.*

#### 4. **Use qualifying words** to soften what you say.

- ✓ "A slight misunderstanding."
- ✓ "A bit of a problem".
- ✓ "A short" delay.
- ✓ etc.

#### 5. **Soften your message by using a comparative form:**

- ✓ *Would Tuesday be a better day to meet?*
- ✓ *Would the afternoon be more convenient?*
- ✓ *Option C might be more cost-effective.*

## Translation

[Click here to read the Spanish version.](#)

### 1.3.- Now you put it into practice (I).



#### Now it's your turn

What would you write instead? Rewrite these sentences in a more tactful and diplomatic style suitable to business correspondence.



1. My report is going to be late.

2. I am not willing to give you more time to complete the project.

3. You still owe us 5,000 euros.

4. This information is wrong.

5. We want an immediate answer to this email.

6. I cannot accept your invitation because I'm already busy that day.

7. We can't give you the information because we don't know.

8. Can you tell us when did you send the [brochure](#)?




#### Think about it

**Change the tone of this email to make it both more diplomatic and more formal.**

Dear Mr. Oldman

We are changing the date of the meeting from Tuesday 2nd August to Thursday 4th

August. This is because the new chairman wants to meet you and he is only free on

that day. So ignore the fax I sent you yesterday telling you the meeting was on

Tuesday. I know you're actually going on holiday on Thursday but you'll just have

to [put it off](#). Sorry about that.

Frances Alerma.

## 2.- How to say it: Prepositions of movement.

### Think about it

1. Read the following sentences carefully and answer, what's the difference between them?

- ✓ *My boss **walked into** the office.*
- ✓ *My boss walked **across** the office.*



### Translation

[Click here to read the Spanish translation.](#)

Apart from many other functions, prepositions can be used to show movement. Here, you'll find the most common ones:

- ✓ We use **"to"** to show movement with the aim of a specific destination. For example:  
*I moved to London in 2010. She's gone to Paris on a business trip.*
- ✓ We use **through** to show movement from one side of an enclosed space to the other.  
For example: *The train went through the tunnel.*
- ✓ We use **across** to show movement from one side of a surface or line to another.  
For example: *Peter swam across the river.*
- ✓ We use **along** to show movement following the boundary of something.  
For example: *He walked along the park.*
- ✓ We use **down** to show the direction of the movement.  
For example: *My colleague went down the stairs immediately.*
- ✓ We use **over** when we talk about movement from one side of an open space to another.  
For example: *She walked over the bridge. The bird flew over the clouds.*
- ✓ We use **off** meaning leaving a place.  
For example: *Mr. Smith ran off the office. Who ran off with my keys?*
- ✓ We use **round** to talk about the movement from one side to another and start over again.  
For example: *He went round the tree. Anne went round the park.*
- ✓ We use **into** to talk about the movement of entering a place.  
For example: *He went into the building. Joseph walked into the office.*

**At** and **in** can also be used as prepositions of movement, but it's used to show the purpose of the movement.

For example: *Throw the paper in the bin. Let's have dinner at my place.*

When used after some verbs, the preposition **at** also shows the target of an action:

For example: *The little boy threw the ball at the wall, instead of to his dad.*

### A step ahead

To revise on this theory check the following link.

[Prepositions of movement.](#)



## 2.1.- Now you put it into practice (II).



### Now it's your turn

Fill in the gaps using the correct preposition of movement.



I jumped \_\_\_ the swimming pool.

- up.
- through.
- into.

Every morning I go jogging \_\_\_ the beach

- into.
- along.
- over the beach.

I ran \_\_\_ the beach and into the sea.

- across.
- into.
- out of.

The burglar jumped \_\_\_ the garden fence.

- over.
- up.
- through.

The road was closed so we couldn't drive through the town centre, we had to go it.

- across.
- into.
- around.

He climbed \_\_\_ the ladder to clean the second floor windows.

- over.
- along.
- up.

We drove \_\_\_ Newcastle on the way to Edinburgh.

- along.
- past.
- up.

When I was a student I travelled \_\_\_ Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic.

- over.
- along.
- through.

After 6 hours of walking, we decided to go back \_\_\_ the mountain.

- along.
- down.
- under.



## A step ahead

For further practice click on the links below.

[Prepositions of movement 1.](#)

[Prepositions of movement 2.](#)

## 2.2.- Prepositions of Place.

Place prepositions are those that are used to describe the place or position of all types of nouns. It is common for the preposition to be placed before the noun. Example: The stapler is **on** the table or My boss is **at** the office.



Let's take a look at the most common ones:

### Prepositions of Place

PREPOSITION	TRANSLATION	EXAMPLE
<b>Above.</b>	Encima de (sin tocarlo).	<i>Write your name above the line, please.</i>
<b>Among.</b>	Entre (a elegir entre muchos).	<i>He borrowed my stapler and pencil case among other things.</i>
<b>Around.</b>	Alrededor.	<i>Write a circle around the correct answer.</i>
<b>At.</b>	En (en un lugar concreto).	<i>I'll see you at the office.</i>
<b>Behind.</b>	Detrás.	<i>The post-office is behind the gym.</i>
<b>Below.</b>	Por debajo de.	<i>Write your name below the line.</i>
<b>Between.</b>	Entre dos cosas u objetos.	<i>My office is between the toilets and the reception desk.</i>
<b>In / Inside.</b>	Dentro de, dentro.	<i>The stapler is in/ inside the drawer.</i>
<b>In front of.</b>	Delante de.	<i>If you look right, you'll see the cabinet in front of you.</i>
<b>Near, by.</b>	Cerca de.	<i>There's a coffee shop near /by my office.</i>
<b>Next to.</b>	Al lado de.	<i>There's a public phone box next to the vending machine.</i>
<b>On.</b>	Sobre, encima (tocando el objeto).	<i>The telephone is on the table.</i>
<b>Opposite.</b>	De frente a / en frente.	<i>The coffee shop is opposite the office.</i>
<b>Out of / Outside.</b>	Fuera de, fuera.	<i>The document is out of the folder.</i>
<b>Under.</b>	Debajo.	<i>There's a wastepaper basket under the table.</i>
<b>With.</b>	Con.	<i>Peter is having a meeting with the boss.</i>
<b>Within.</b>	Dentro de.	<i>Write some words within the circle.</i>

## 2.3.- Now you put it into practice (III).



### Now it's your turn

Fill in the gaps using the prepositions "in", "on", "at."

1. He's swimming  the river.
2. Where's Julie? She's  school.
3. The plant is  the table.
4. Please put those apples  the bowl.
5. Frank is  holiday for three weeks.
6. I read the story  the newspaper.
7. The cat is sitting  the chair.
8. I'll meet you  the cinema.
9. She hung a picture  the wall.
10. John is  a meeting.
11. There's nothing  TV tonight.
12. I stayed  home all weekend.



### A step ahead

Keep practising prepositions of place by clicking on the links below.

[Prepositions of Place 1.](#)

[Prepositions of Place 2.](#)

### 3.- Words you need: Writing Formal Emails.

If you're used to using e-mail to **catch up with** friends, writing a formal e-mail might feel **pretty foreign** to you. It's not quite the same as writing a business letter, but it's definitely a **huge step** in that direction. Clarity, conciseness and being correct are the keys!



Writing formal emails may have lots of advantages compared to regular letters:

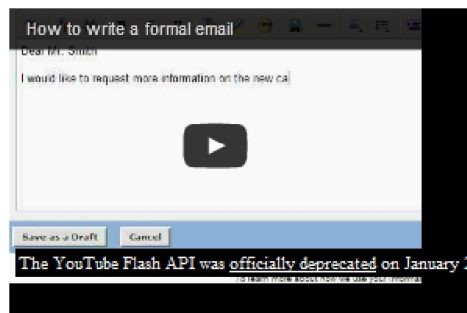
- ✓ It reduces telephone interruptions.
- ✓ It **breaks down** distance/time barriers.
- ✓ It **shortens** cycle of written communication.
- ✓ It improves productivity e.g., meeting planning and preparation.
- ✓ It allows people to work from any location with a computer.

However, there are also distinct **traps** you can fall into if you don't observe some simple rules. As with letters or faxes, emails can be misinterpreted since there is no body language or voice tone to enable the reader to **pick up** clues. The easiest way to check if your email is appropriate or not is to ask yourself how you would feel if you received it.

To write down a successful Formal e-mail follow these steps:

1. **Use a neutral e-mail address.** Your e-mail address should be a variation of your real name, not a username or nickname. Use periods, hyphens, or **underscores** to secure an e-mail address that's just your name, without extra numbers or letters, if you can.
2. **Use a proper salutation.** Addressing the recipient by name is preferred. Use the person's title (Mr. Mrs. Ms. or Dr.) with their last name, followed by a comma or a colon. Optionally, you can precede the salutation with "Dear..." (but "Hello..." is acceptable as well). If you don't know the name of the person you're writing to (but you really should try and find one) use "**To whom it may concern**".
3. **Introduce yourself in the first paragraph.** Also include why you're writing, and how you found that person's e-mail address, or the opportunity you're writing about.  
E.g. "My name is Alan Parker. I'm contacting you to apply for the administrative assistant position listed on CareerXYZ.com."
4. **Write the actual message.** Be sure to **get your point across** and do not **ramble on!** Be direct and to the point, otherwise the reader may **glance over** the important details.
5. The email should be no more than 5 paragraphs long, and each paragraph should be no more than 5 sentences long. Insert a line break between each paragraph (indenting isn't necessary).
6. **Use the correct form of leave-taking.**  
Yours sincerely,  
  
Yours cordially,  
  
Respectfully,  
  
Best,
7. **Sign with your full name.** If you have a job title, include that in the line after your name, and write the company name or website in the line after that. If you do not have a job title but you have your own blog or website related to the content of the e-mail, include a link to that below your name.
8. **Come up with a brief and descriptive subject.** E.g. Enquiry regarding sales position request for volunteer application
9. **Double-check your message to make sure that you have contained everything that you need in your message.** Read your email out loud. Ask someone to **proofread** the e-mail for you as well.

### A step ahead



[Text summary](#)

### 3.1.- Now you put it into practice (IV).



#### Now it's your turn

Read these Dos and Don'ts when writing Formal Emails and say if they are True or False. Then, correct the false ones.



**The subject line should be clear and concise. It should not contain negative words or expressions.**

- True.
- False.

**Always begin your email with a friendly greeting.**

- True.
- False.

**No matter if you include acronyms and abbreviations in your email, but use them properly so that they can be misunderstood and misinterpreted as being rude or demanding.**

- True.
- False.

**You don't need to pay a lot of attention to your spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Writing an email is not like writing a Formal Letter.**

- True.
- False.

**You should always sign off in a friendly way, but try not to end on a positive note. Be formal.**

- True.
- False.

**Make sure that your reader knows what you expect them to do in response to your email. Convey your message clearly and concisely.**

- True.
- False.

#### A step ahead

Click on the link below and practice Formal Email Writing.

[Formal Email Writing.](#)

Have you ever heard about "Snail mail" or "Smail"?

Traditionally, postal mail is really slow compared for example to emails. That is why today, people usually refer to postal mail as "snail mail" named after the snail, animal famous for its slow speed.

### 3.2.- How to Write a Fax Cover Sheet.

Fax cover sheets are essential when sending faxes. They help to ensure that the fax gets to the correct person and inform the receiver who sent the fax. Fax cover sheets also give the sender an opportunity to provide additional information about what is being faxed. Writing and setting up a fax cover sheet is simple. Once it is set up, you can re-use it over and over. All you'll need to do is fill in the correct recipient information each time.

Fax cover sheets should be treated like business documents and written accordingly. A cover sheet should be organized and include instructions for the recipient.

#### Appearance.

When writing a fax cover sheet, use clean white paper and black ink. Dark-coloured paper or light-coloured ink will not transmit well through fax and does not appear professional. Cover sheets should be typed whenever possible. A printed template with blank fields filled in by hand is acceptable but appears less professional than a typed cover sheet. Cover sheets should only be written by hand if the fax is informal and not intended for a business recipient.



To write a successful Fax Cover Sheet follow these instructions:

1. Add a letterhead to the top of the fax cover sheet. The letterhead can be for a company or an individual. The letterhead should include the company or individual's name, address, telephone number, fax number and email address.
2. List the date a couple of lines down from the letterhead.
3. Write "Company Name," followed by a colon. Below, write in the name of the company where you are sending the fax.
4. Write "To" and then a colon. A couple of lines down, fill in the name of the person who should receive the fax.
5. On the next line, write "From" and a colon. List the sender's name.
6. Write "Recipient's fax number" and then a colon. Fill in this line with the correct fax number where you are sending the fax.
7. Write "Number of pages of the fax including the fax cover sheet," followed by a colon. Count the number of pages that you are faxing and add one for the fax cover sheet. Enter this number on this line. This helps the recipient make sure that a page is not missing.
8. Write "Notes" and then a colon. Enter any additional information that is needed.

## A step ahead

Do you know where the word "Fax" comes from? Click on the following link and learn about it.

[Fax History.](#)

According to Wikipedia, the word "Fax" comes from facsimile and this other term from Latin "facsimile" meaning "made alike". Fax started to be used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, though modern fax machines became feasible only in the mid-1970s as the sophistication of technology increased.

### 3.3.- Now you put it into practice (V).



## Now it's your turn

Mr. Parker asks Lourdes to write down a fax cover sheet for Mr. Faulkner, manager director at London Thames Gateway Development Corporation.

Fill in the fax cover sheet below with the following information. Be careful, there is some information you don't need to include.



Information:

- ✔ **Email:** mparker@yahoo.co.uk
- ✔ **Post Address:** London Thames Gateway Development Corporation. 9<sup>th</sup> Floor. South Quay Plaza 3. 189 Marsh Wall.London E14 9SH.
- ✔ **Notes:** We need these items ASAP! Please contact us immediately if there is any back order or delay in shipping.  
Thanks, Alan Parker.
- ✔ **Recipient:** Mr. Steve Faulkner.
- ✔ **Tel:** 020 7517 4730
- ✔ **Date:** August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011
- ✔ **Number of pages:** 3

Company

Name:

<b>FAX</b>	<b>British Corporation</b> <small>32 Southend Street London WC2E 9EJ Phone: +44 (0) 20 7437 4370 Fax Number: +44 (0) 20 7300 3303 Email: info@britcorp.org.uk</small>
Company Name:	
To:	
From:	
Recipient's Fax number:	
Number of pages of the fax including the fax cover sheet:	
Notes:	

[Long description](#)

To:

From:

Recipient's Fax number:

Number of pages of the fax including the fax cover sheet:

Notes:

Submit



## A step ahead

If you want to take a look at different Fax Cover Sheets samples click on the link below.

[Fax Cover Sheets.](#)

## Appendix.- Licenses of resources.

### Licenses of Resources used in session 2. "Bullying at work."

Resource (1)	Resource information (1)	Resource (2)	
	By: Hufse. License: CC by-nc 2.0. From: <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/hufse/5749930/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/hufse/5749930/</a>		By: Lord Fe License: CC From: <a href="http://www.">http://www.:</a>
	By: Orange smell. License: CC by-nc-sa 2.0. From: <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/orangesmell/107501420/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/orangesmell/107501420/</a>		By: Macattc License: CC From: <a href="http://www.">http://www.:</a>
	By: Doug88888. License: CC by-nc 2.0. From: <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/doug88888/4533786093">http://www.flickr.com/photos/doug88888/4533786093</a>		By: @Doug License: CC From: <a href="http://www.">http://www.:</a>
	By: Ontario Wanderer. License: CC by-nc 2.0. From: <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/ontario_wanderer/4291761086">http://www.flickr.com/photos/ontario_wanderer/4291761086</a>		By: Sean M License: CC From: <a href="http://www.">http://www.:</a>
	By: Utnapistim. License: CC by-nc 2.0. From: <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/utnapistim/73429019/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/utnapistim/73429019/</a>		

