

Unit 11 - Skills Practice



The objectives for this unit are:

- reading: read a text about how to set goals in order to become more successful.
- writing: write a proposal.

Unit 11 - Skills Practice - Reading

The following words and phrases appear in the text you are going to read in this section:

Tempt attract somebody or make them want to do something, even if they know it's wrong.
I was tempted by the dessert menu.

Explicit clear and easy to understand.
She gave me very explicit instructions on how to look after the dog.

summit the highest point of something, especially the top of a mountain.
We reached the summit at noon.

Feasible possible and likely to achieve.
I doubt very much that that suggestion is feasible.

doable able to be done.
None of the tasks were fun, but they were doable.

Drastically extreme in a way that has a sudden, serious or violent effect on something.
Things have started to go drastically wrong.

Sincere saying only what you think or feel.
He seemed sincere enough when he said he wanted to help.



In this interview, we ask professional counsellor Katarina Borg to give us her top tips for success.

Are there any general tips for success which apply to all types of activities, whether it be learning computer skills, losing weight, climbing mountains, or learning to speak in public?

Yes, I think there are some general tips that we can look at and I would say that, first of all, knowing exactly what you want to achieve is key. In other words, you need to set goals. It's a good idea to state your goals precisely and to express them in positive terms whenever possible. So for example, if you want to improve your diet, it's not good to state your goal as 'I want to stop eating chocolate,' as you'll be constantly reminded of the thing that you don't want to do. In this particular case, chocolate is very tempting and you're actually making it harder for yourself to resist that temptation. A far better way of stating your aim would be to say 'I want to eat healthy food.' That way you'll have something in your head which doesn't push you away from your

So we need to focus on what we want to achieve and not on what we want to avoid?

Exactly, but it's equally important to be very clear and specific. If your objective is not clear and specific, then you might not know when you reach it. If you're learning to play the piano, for example, then there's little point in saying 'I want to improve', as that's just not explicit enough. Improvements need to be measurable, otherwise we don't know how much we have advanced. A much clearer stated aim would be something like 'I'd like to pass the grade 1 piano exam.' This is specific and measurable; you know if you've reached your goal or not when you get your exam results. You can never reach a goal if it doesn't

So if you don't have a specific objective, it's a bit like climbing a mountain and when you think you've reached the summit you find that it isn't the top after all; there's another one in the distance and another after that ...

That's right, and it's in situations like this that you're tempted to give up. Success is satisfying and that satisfaction drives you on to new goals and more success. If you never achieve your goals, you'll probably lose interest. And that brings us on to our third point: setting a target which is within your control. This is important because it means your goal is really achievable. For example, if you're an athlete and you set a goal of winning a race, you may end up being disappointed because there are other people in the contest and you can't control them. You can only control what you can do, so it would be better to have a goal like 'I'm going to train hard and beat my

personal best during the race.' You might not win a medal but who can argue with your performance if you run faster than you've ever run before?

You mean, you shouldn't make promises you can't keep.

Absolutely. Your goal must be something that you can achieve and that means you should also think about the size of your goals. Success is more likely when goals are feasible as well as achievable. If you have a task which is very big, don't just set one massive objective, break it down into smaller short-term goals which are much more doable. This way your progress is quantifiable. You can see how you are progressing and that motivates you to keep going. There are also other benefits to having small short-term goals because they are more adaptable. As you go forward you might see that actually you're not progressing fast enough and you need to work harder, or that one aspect of your task needs extra time and resources, so you can put in more effort there. An example of this might be if you decide to take up tennis and set a first feasible short-term goal of keeping the ball in play for ten shots. As you succeed in your goals and set new ones, you may find that your backhand needs more work and you can dedicate more time and energy to that. Eventually, you could one day win a championship, but it's highly unlikely that you would be able to do that if you

That reminds me of the saying: 'the longest journey begins with one small step.'

It is exactly like a long journey, and if your motivation fails along the way, you'll never reach your destination. Motivation is extremely important for success. Without it, your chances of succeeding are drastically reduced, so you need to be sincere with your goals. By that I mean you should be sure that your goals are something that you really want to achieve. If you're only doing it to conform to what other people expect, then your motivation is probably not sustainable. Furthermore, motivation is crucial if you have conflicting goals, as it's very difficult to achieve them all if you're not highly motivated by each one. For example, if you need to work more because you want a promotion but you also want to spend more time with your family, you'll find that these goals are in conflict and that that conflict is quite hard to resolve. You'll need to really want to do both things and to think very carefully about those short-term goals beforehand in order to harmonize them and make it all work.

Steps to success: Read the text and answer the questions I

Choose the correct endings to complete the sentences.

1	Expressing goals in a positive way	makes people less likely to give up.
2	Making your goals measurable	helps to limit adverse behaviour.
3	Being able to see the end point	means you can check your progress.
4	Reaching a goal	encourages you to continue.
5	Having small short-term goals	reduces your chances of success.
6	Having goals which don't motivate	means you can change direction, if needed.

Steps to success: Read the text and answer the questions II

Are these ideas helpful or not helpful for achieving your goals? Put the phrases in the correct columns.

Not Helpful	Helpful

Pleasing other people	Realistic goals	Large objectives	Focussing on success	Specific aims
Opposing goals	Goals which motivate	Focus on what to avoid	Measurable goals	

Unit 11 - Skills Practice - Writing

The following words and phrases appear in this section:

consultation a formal meeting to discuss something.

There were extensive consultations between the two parties.

Enforce make sure people obey a particular law or rule.

It's the job of the police to enforce the law.

Peak times moments when the greatest number of people are travelling.

The train journey always takes longer during peak times.

core the central and most important part of something.

Nurses should be allowed to concentrate on their core activity - looking after patients.

Prior happening or existing before something else.

Prior knowledge of statistics is not necessary.

From: Amy Wallis and Trevor Seynour, Human Resources Managers
To: Eric Davies, Managing Director

1

This proposal is based on detailed results from staff surveys and information gained from consultations with line managers.

The company currently enforces a strict system of working hours, whereby each member of staff is expected to work 37.5 hours per week, with each day beginning at 9.00 a.m. and ending at 5.30 p.m. Any overtime is completed outside these hours. Several members of staff have recently requested a more flexible approach to working hours. Moreover, during exit interviews, employees have cited the strict working hours as one of their reasons for leaving. Due to these factors, we decided to conduct a staff survey on this issue.

The survey showed that a significant majority of staff want to have flexible working hours. The main reasons given were that staff are currently restricted to commuting during peak times which therefore adds time and stress to their journeys, and that many employees have families and would appreciate the possibility of being able to pick up or drop off children on certain days. Around a third of those asked would also like to be able to work from home on a regular basis.

We also consulted line managers. The majority are happy to allow a certain amount of flexibility, though some managers were concerned about being able to arrange meetings, and of being able to keep track of what staff are working on, etc.

2

We propose introducing flexible working hours, but with certain restrictions. Each employee will still be expected to work 37.5 hours per week and their usual 7.5 hours per day. They will also be expected to be at the office within core hours (between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m.) which means that an employee starting work at 10.00 a.m. will leave at 6.30 p.m. and an employee who wants to leave at 4.00 p.m. must start work at 7.30 a.m. We suggest that company policy on should continue to be allowed only in certain circumstances and with prior permission from a line manager.

3

By implementing these changes, the company will benefit from increased levels of motivation amongst staff. There should also be a reduction in traffic congestion in the immediate area during peak times, and punctuality on arrival to work should improve. Through the introduction of core hours, disruption to business will be minimal.

4

We suggest that all staff should be informed of the decision to introduce flexible working and core hours before the end of this month, with changes taking effect from the beginning of next month. We recommend that the scheme be initially implanted on a three-month trial basis. The scheme can then be reviewed and a decision can be made on whether the scheme will be permanent.

Proposals: Match the paragraphs to their headings

Match the headings on the right with parts 1-4 of the proposal.

1 Part 1	Proposal
2 Part 2	Introduction
3 Part 3	Conclusion
4 Part 4	Recommendations

Proposals: Passive sentences

Transform these active sentences into passive sentences

EXAMPLE

We based this proposal on detailed results from staff surveys.

This proposal is based on detailed results from staff surveys.

1 We expect each member of staff to work 37.5 hours per week.

2 Staff complete any overtime outside these hours.

3 We also consulted line managers.

4 We will also expect workers to be at the office within core hours.

5 We should not change company policy on working from home at this point.

6 We will continue to allow it only in certain circumstances.

7 We should inform all staff of the decision to introduce flexible working hours.

8 We could initially implement the scheme on a three-month trial basis.

9 We can then review it and can make a decision on whether it should be permanent or not.

Task:

Read your notes on a problem at your company. Write a proposal which includes the current situation and options open to the company, your preferred option, a conclusion explaining the benefits of your choice, and recommendations for further action that can be taken.

Problem: Low levels of staff motivation – a perception that no interest or investment is made in their personal development

Solution: Provide new training opportunities for staff

Ideas:

- shadowing scheme where staff follow colleagues from different departments to see how the company works as a whole
- allow staff access to a variety of online courses
- allocate a training budget to each department.

To do: prepare formal proposal

Proposals: Practice

Read the task and write a proposal according to the instructions.