

Customers & Clients

Topic Development Ideas

Classes might want to learn more about...

- common practices for returns and exchanges
- cultural differences in servicing customers/clients (e.g., the positive effects of being polite when returning items)
- customer/client expectations in Canada
- personal qualities valued in customer service representatives
- private and government training courses for small businesses
- strategies for improving customer service
- training courses to improve customer service
- warranties and guarantees on products


Strategies for Learners


Learners find it useful to...


- circumvent taped messages to get to a customer service representative (press “0”)
- learn some strategies for conflict resolution
- use repetition and rephrasing to avoid misunderstandings
- write, memorize, and practice common phrases for apologizing, giving suggestions and advice

Resources for Developing and Teaching Topic

 *Steps to Employment – Call Centre, Entrepreneurs, Personal Services Trades and Occupations*

 *CLB Listening/Speaking Resource: Stage II, Shopping dialogues 22–24*

 CBSR (Canadian Business for Social Responsibility): <http://www.cbsr.bc.ca>


 Customer Service Training: <http://www.infowhse.com> (Links and information)

 Dr. Avila Customer Service Hotline:

<http://www.customerservicehotline.com/content/customerservice.shtml>

 The Business Research Lab: <http://www.busreslab.com>

 The Right Answer: <http://www.therightanswer.com> (Quiz Center and Articles Archive)

 **customer service**

Customers & Clients

Topic Outcomes (CLB 5, 6, 7)

Possible outcomes for this topic:

- 🗣️ open and close short formal conversations
- 🗣️ express and respond to gratitude, appreciation, complaint, dissatisfaction, satisfaction
- 🗣️ make simple and extended suggestions on how to solve a problem and provide reasons
- 👂 identify facts and inferences in a conversation expressing and responding to appreciation, complaints, satisfaction, dissatisfaction
- 📖 get factual details in moderately complex one-page note, e-mail message, or letter
- ✍️ convey a business message as a short five- to six-sentence letter or e-mail message
- ✍️ take a phone message or voice-mail message with five to seven details
- ✍️ write a one- or two-paragraph story or report to narrate a sequence of events, give detailed descriptions, or tell a story

Language Focus

Items to help learners achieve the outcomes:

- vocabulary (*customer, client, rebate, merchandise, sales staff, sales slip, return policy, rain check, in stock*)
- idioms (*something costs a bundle, clean someone out of something*)
- expressions (*service with a smile, the customer is always right, money back guarantee, satisfaction guaranteed, all sales are final*)
- polite expressions for apologies
- adjective clauses
- noun clauses
- modals: suggestions, advice (*must, should, can, could*)
- pronouns: demonstrative, relative
- verb tenses: present and past perfect
- pronunciation: intonation of polite phrases for apologies (*I'm very sorry about this misunderstanding*)

Sample Tasks

1. Role-play handling a customer service complaint.
2. Listen to a dialogue between a customer and a customer service representative. Answer questions about the complaint and the resolution of the complaint.
3. Read case studies of problems related to customer service and decide on the appropriate course of action. (See http://alphaplus.ca/linc/customer_service.htm for a sample activity.)
4. Write a report to a manager describing a customer complaint and the action taken.

Additional Tasks

- 🗣️ **All Levels:** Tense Buster – Upper Intermediate – **Past Continuous – Test: Errors.** Read the letter of complaint and click on grammar mistakes. Check score and note mistakes.
Skills: Open/Close Application, Select and Navigate Through Options, Mouse Skills
- 🌐 **All Levels:** Go to: <http://www.therightanswer.com> (Quiz Center, Quiz I, II, III, IV) and complete the customer service quizzes. Print results for review.
Skills: Internet Basics, Browsers, Search Engines, URL, Hyperlink

Starting a Small Business

Topic Development Ideas

Classes might want to learn more about...

- business vocabulary
- impact of e-commerce on small businesses
- incorporating a business
- legal issues in starting a business
- market research before starting a new business
- possible difficulties of financing a small business through chartered banks in Canada
- preparing a business plan
- registering a business name
- registering for a GST number
- web sites for advertising own business

Strategies for Learners

Learners find it useful to...

- access free government-sponsored business counselling centres for information on starting a small business
- ask someone to translate information in government publications
- consult a local library, chartered accountant, major chartered banks, or local chamber of commerce for information about starting a business
- look at examples of actual business plans
- practice presenting their business plan to a friend before approaching a lending institution
- use first-language community resources for assistance and information

Resources for Developing and Teaching Topic

- 📖 *Ontario Reader 1997*: “Starting a business in Ontario”
- 📖 *Picture Stories for Beginning Communication*: Unit 13, “The Young Lawyer”
- 📖 *Steps to Employment – Entrepreneurs*
- 📖 *Words We Use*: Unit 14, “Small Business”
- 🏢 business and industry associations for information about market plans
- 🏢 Ontario Ministry of Economic Development & Trade for information on business plans
- 🏢 Small Business Loans Administration, Industry Canada, for loan information
- 🌐 Canada-Ontario Business Service Centre: <http://www.cbsc.org/ontario/index.html>
- 🌐 Canadian Bankers Association: <http://www.cba.ca> (Small Business)
- 🌐 Entrepreneurship Institute of Canada: <http://www.entinst.ca>
- 🌐 Industry Canada: <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca>
- 🌐 Ministry of Business and Consumer Affairs: <http://www.cbs.gov.on.ca> (Business Information)
- 🌐 Settlement.org: <http://www.settlement.org> (Employment, Self-Employment)
- 🔑 **small business Canada**

Starting a Small Business

Topic Outcomes (CLB 5, 6, 7)

Possible outcomes for this topic:

- ask for and respond to recommendations and advice
- ask for and give detailed information about starting a business
- describe a business idea
- understand details in spoken exchanges that involve suggestions, advice, encouragement, requests
- understand factual details and some implied meanings in a 10- to 15-minute presentation
- understand a one-page moderately complex report, interview, new items, or story
- write a one- to two-paragraph formal letter or e-mail message expressing thanks or responding to an offer of assistance
- write a one- or two-paragraph report about a business idea

Language Focus

Items to help learners achieve the outcomes:

- vocabulary (*business plan, e-commerce, financing, assets, liabilities, equity capital, financial statement, investment, franchises, retail, wholesale, corporation, entrepreneur*)
- adjective clauses
- modals: advice, necessity, obligation, possibility, requests, suggestions
- passive voice
- phrasal verbs (*start up, set up*)
- questions: embedded, tag
- formal letter-writing conventions
- pronunciation: stressed and unstressed vowels in multi-syllable words (*investment, corporation, repayment*)

Sample Tasks

1. With a partner, match questions about starting a business with answers from a worksheet. Then take turns asking and answering the questions, using the answers listed or suggesting other solutions.
2. Listen to a presentation by a guest speaker who has started a small business and ask questions.
 - **Novice:** Create and show a presentation about planning a small business.
 - **Skills:** (PowerPoint) Create a New Presentation, Font, Font Alignment, Insert Bullets and Numbering, Insert Clip Art, Show a Presentation
3. Read information about starting a business in Ontario and answer questions.
4. Write a letter of thanks to someone who has provided you with information about starting a business.
 - **Novice:** Word-process Language Task 4. Include your return address, date, and sign the letter in the appropriate places. Preview and print.
 - **Skills:** Keyboarding, Insert Date and Time, Save As, Print Preview, Print

Additional Tasks

- **All Levels:** Tense Buster – Advanced – **Passives** – **Practice:** Coca Cola story.
- **Skills:** Open/Close Application, Select and Navigate Through Options, Mouse Skills

Team Building

Topic Development Ideas

Classes might want to learn more about...

- building effective teams
- cultural differences in conflict resolution
- cultural differences in how decisions are made in the workplace
- effective communication skills
- formal and informal forms of address in the workplace
- importance of teams in today's workplace
- personality typing questionnaires (e.g., Myers Briggs, True Colors)
- procedures for reporting a problem that cannot be resolved within the group (e.g., sexual harassment)
- resolving conflicts at work
- verbal and non-verbal communication

Strategies for Learners

Learners find it useful to...

- learn strategies for becoming part of a team
- practice expressing disappointment, dissatisfaction, and disapproval diplomatically
- practice polite ways of interrupting and listening actively
- use body language to indicate attentive listening and participation
- use repetition and rephrasing to avoid misunderstandings
- write, memorize, and practice common phrases for apologizing, giving suggestions and advice

Resources for Developing and Teaching Topic

- 📖 *Communicating in the Real World*: Chapter 10, "What's the Problem?"
- 📖 *Steps to Employment* – Entrepreneurs: Unit 9, "Communication"
- 🎧 ELLIS – Senior Mastery – Discussing Business
- 🌐 Developing a Productive Team: <http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/Misc/cc352.htm>
- 🔑 **team effectiveness**

Team Building

Topic Outcomes (CLB 5, 6, 7)

Possible outcomes for this topic:

- 🗨️ open and close a short routine formal conversation
- 🗨️ maintain a conversation by asking follow-up questions, holding the floor, changing the topic, continuing after an interruption
- 🗨️ express and respond to appreciation, complaint, dissatisfaction, satisfaction in a work situation
- 🗨️ make simple and extended suggestions on resolving different problems and provide reasons
- 🗨️ express opinions; qualify own opinion; express reservations, approval, and disapproval in a small group discussion
- 👂 understand factual details and some implied meanings in a 10- to 15-minute presentation
- 📖 understand a one-page moderately complex report or story about team work
- ✍️ write a one- or two-paragraph story about working as part of a team

Language Focus

Items to help learners achieve the outcomes:

- vocabulary (*confrontation, problem-solving, compromise, leadership, co-operation, team player*)
- polite phrases for giving suggestions, expressing opinions, showing satisfaction, dissatisfaction
- conditionals: real, unreal
- modals: obligation, ability, suggestions, advice
- verb tenses: simple past, past continuous, future with going to
- pronunciation: intonation when expressing dissatisfaction, satisfaction, approval, disapproval, reservation

Sample Tasks

1. In groups, decide on a project that will benefit your school (e.g., graduation party, field trip, newsletter, bake sale) and discuss how to accomplish the task. Report the roles and responsibilities of each team member.
2. Listen to a discussion about the characteristics of a good team and recall the main points.
3. Read simple case studies of conflict situations. Answer comprehension questions and give suggestions for resolving the problems.
4. Write about your experience of working as part of a team (e.g., Language Task 1).
 - 📄 **Novice:** Word-process Language Task 4. Spell-check the document and then print for peer evaluation.
 - Skills:** Keyboarding, Save As, Spelling, Print

Additional Tasks

- 🌐 **All Levels:** ELLIS – Senior Mastery – **Discussing Business**
Skills: Open/Close Application, Select and Navigate Through Options, Mouse Skills