

Literacy Volunteers of Maine ESoL/ EL Civics/ABE Curriculum Development Project

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Literacy Program: TriCounty Literacy

Program Address: Wing Farm Road, Bath, Maine

Job Type: Customer Service Clerk at Supermarket



OVERVIEW

The course outline and lesson plan that follow benefit from the generous cooperation of the Human Resources Department at Hannaford Supermarket in Brunswick, Maine, an employer of English language learners. I was able to discuss job expectations, and was given printouts of interview guidelines and company policies all of which informed the content and direction of the sample lesson and other materials. Though small companies might not have these in written form, a brief conversation with the hirer could serve a similar purpose. If the sample lesson included below were to be expanded to a fully developed, 12-unit course, that course might look something like this:

CUSTOMER SERVICE CLERK AT SUPERMARKET

An introductory-level job that could lead to future advancement

- Unit 1:
- A. Discover why your learner interested in this job. Ask for a narrative explanation.
 - B. Help your learner understand the expectations of the job:
 - 1) Review the job description and develop a list of new vocabulary necessary for full understanding.
 - 2) Homework: Complete vocabulary exercises
- Unit 2:
- A. Review homework and continue practice with vocabulary
 - B. Practice conversations using vocabulary
 - C. Homework: Dialogue-completion exercises using vocabulary
- Unit 3:
- A. Review Vocabulary
 - B. If possible, visit the job site to familiarize your learner with the

environment and to place job expectations in a visual context.
C. Continue practicing dialogues
D. Homework: Continue working on vocabulary and dialogues

Unit 4: A. Help your learner draft a one-page resume to include with the job application:
1) Ask learner to offer a narrative history of his/her work experience and take notes.
2) Read notes back to learner. Together, draft a one-page resume for use in job application process.
B. Homework: Ask learner to review and fine-tune resume.

Unit 5: A. Review the resume with your learner
B. Help your learner fill out the job application (either online, if required, or on paper, if supplied).
1) Taking questions one by one, ensure that your learner understands all the vocabulary.
2) As your learner fills in answers, coach as needed.
C. Homework: Ask your learner to review the application and master it.

Unit 6: A. Review application draft and work with learner to correct errors and omissions.
B. Role-play, if your learner will drop off the job application in person; or, help your learner complete and send the application on line.

Unit 7: Repeat work in 5 and 6 for other applications, if needed.

Unit 8: Preparing for the interview (part 1)

Unit 9: Preparing for the interview (part 2)

Unit 10: (if/when job is secured):
A. Review company policies for employees and safety precautions
B. Highlight new vocabulary
C. Homework: New vocabulary exercises

Unit 11: Review policies and safety vocabulary
Homework: Exercises on all cumulative vocabulary

Unit 12: Early follow-up: Review with learner early challenges of job

NEXT COURSE WORK:

Working toward mastery of job skills

Working toward advancement/promotion and self-advocacy

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN



Unit I: Understanding Job Expectations

Overview: The goal of this initial lesson is to work with vocabulary specific to the job description. Mastery of the skills presented in this lesson will involve a one-hour lesson; homework; and follow-up during the next hour-long session. Throughout the entire course of this curriculum, the vocabulary presented here will be reinforced.

Learning Goal(s):

1. Master vocabulary of the lesson
2. Work with the vocabulary in a way that allows the learner to use it actively and spontaneously.

Time required: 1-hour lesson; 1 hour homework; 30-minute follow-up next time

Pre-Assessment (10 minutes)

Ask your learner why he/she is interested in pursuing this job. Then ask what your learner believes the expectations of the job to be (take notes on all).

Read your notes back to your learner and ask if your understanding is correct.

Vocabulary/Comprehension Building (20 minutes)

- 1) Review the job description with your learner, then ask your learner to read

the description back to you. Highlight any new vocabulary words.

Job Description: The Customer Service Clerk will assist cashiers and customers by bagging groceries at the checkout counter. He/she will be trained to do this in ways that will ensure the protection, freshness and safety of food items and the safe handling of non-food products. The clerk will need good social skills in order to greet customers warmly and ask if they need help carrying their bags to their cars. The clerk will be asked to retrieve carts from the parking lot, as needed, and to do light cleaning work consisting of cleaning shelves, moldings, and fixtures throughout the store. No prior experience is necessary, but strong candidates will have a neat appearance and a flexible schedule that will include availability on evenings and weekends.

Vocabulary: Check comprehension of the following words: customer; service; clerk; assist; cashier; bag/to bag; groceries; check-out counter; train; ensure; protection; freshness; safety; items; handling; products; social skills; greet; warmly; retrieve; cart; parking lot; cleaning; shelves; moldings; fixtures; throughout; prior; experience; necessary; candidate; neat; appearance; flexible; include; availability

Use photographs from supermarket websites to cue use of vocabulary (see samples below):

- 1) In what stores have you been a customer?
- 2) At what store in Brunswick do you get excellent service? Explain why the service is excellent. At what restaurant in Brunswick do you get excellent service? Explain why the service is excellent.
- 3) Have you ever seen a clerk in a clothing store? What does the clerk do in that store?
- 4) How does a customer service clerk assist the cashier in a supermarket?
- 5) When you are at the supermarket, when do you take your cart of groceries to the checkout counter? Who helps you at the checkout counter?
- 6) Have you received job training in other jobs you have done? What does training help you to do?
- 7) How can you ensure that ice cream will not melt in your kitchen? How can you ensure that meat won't spoil in your kitchen?
- 8) How can you judge the freshness of the fish that you buy?
- 9) How can you ensure the safety of little children when they are riding in cars? How can you ensure the safety of frozen foods?
- 10) Describe a person who has good social skills? What is that person able to do? Does that person have a lot of friends? Do you have good social skills?
- 11) What do you say when you greet a visitor to your house?
- 12) How do you reply warmly to a friend's greeting?
- 13) Why do clerks need to retrieve shopping carts from the parking lot? What would happen if clerks did not retrieve the shopping carts? Why is it hard to retrieve shopping carts from the parking lot during the winter?

- 14) Do you keep your room clean? Who does the cleaning at your house?
- 15) Do you have bookshelves in your room? Do you clean your bookshelves?
- 16) Look at the ceiling above you. Is there molding along the edge of the ceiling? Look at the floor? Is there molding along the edge of the floor?
- 17) There are many fixtures in a supermarket that hold groceries and other products. For example, the glass case that holds the fish in the fish market is a fixture. What are some other fixtures in the supermarket?
- 18) Throughout (or "all through") means everywhere in a certain space or time period. Do you have good light throughout your house? Do you drink a good amount of water throughout the day? What do you find throughout a library? Do you have a good idea of all the things being sold throughout the supermarket?
- 19) Where did you live prior to coming to Brunswick?
- 20) Do you have experience working at any other jobs?
- 21) Do you know who the candidates are for the next presidential election in the United States? Who is the male candidate with the crazy hair? Who is the female candidate who is married to a former President? Are you a good candidate for this job? Why?
- 22) Are you hoping to be hired for this job?
- 23) Describe a person with a neat appearance. Why is it important to have a neat appearance when you apply for a job?
- 24) To do a good job as a clerk, you have to flexible in your work (because you will be asked to do different things throughout your work day) and in your schedule (because the market is open at night and on weekends). Are you a flexible person? Do you have a flexible schedule?
- 25) Describe the jobs that are included in the supermarket clerk's workday.
- 26) Are you available for tutoring next weekend? When will you be available to start work if you get the job at Hannaford? What is your availability in the evenings? Are you free in the evenings?



PRACTICE DIALOGUE

Read the exercise once all the way through together with your learner. Then practice the dialogue, switching roles.

CLERK: Hi! How are you today?

CUSTOMER: I'm fine, thanks. How are you?

CLERK: I'm good, thank you. Are plastic bags OK?

CUSTOMER: Oh, wait! I have my own bags. Here they are.

CLERK: That's great. Thanks.

CUSTOMER: Could you please put my fish in a separate plastic bag?

CLERK: Sure, no problem. Would you like your milk in a bag?

CUSTOMER: No. That's OK. I'll carry the milk.

CLERK: Do you need any help taking your bags to your car?

CUSTOMER: No, thank you. I'm all set. Thank you for bagging.

CLERK: You're welcome! Have a nice day.

HOMEWORK:

Write sentences with as many of the vocabulary words as you can. Use complete sentences.

Imagine a dialogue between you (the clerk) and a customer at the checkout counter. The customer sees that her box of cereal has been opened and asks for a new box. How would you respond? If possible, write the dialogue down. If not, tell it to me when we meet next time.

Go to the supermarket and observe the bagging clerks. Do you think you can do the job? What questions do you have about it?

FOLLOWUP

At next meeting, after a warm-up casual conversation about the learner's visit to the supermarket, review the vocabulary (from 3 X 5 cards) and ask your learner to read the homework sentences.

Ask your learner to show you (or tell you) the imagined dialogue between clerk and customer.

MATERIAL FOR USE IN UNITS 8 and 9 (PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW)

NOTE: These could be adapted for other jobs.

The following interview questions have been adapted from questions given to me by the Human Resources office at Hannaford Supermarket, Brunswick, Maine. They are meant to be used as guidelines for the interviewer. Not all questions will be asked at every interview. Some questions are general and others relate specifically to the Hannaford brand.

1. Tell me 2-3 things about yourself as they relate to the job of customer service clerk so I can understand why you are interested in the job and what your qualifications are. What prompted you to apply for work as a customer service clerk here? How would you define “customer service”? What do you think it means?
2. What skills do you think you will need to be a good customer service clerk?
3. Give me one example of a time when you gave your very best effort (at school or at work) and what motivated you to work so hard?
4. At Hannaford, we say “ONE STOP FOR THE FULL SHOP.” What do you think that means? What do you think a clerk’s role in that is? In other words, if you work here, how would you help us achieve that goal?
5. Why do you think customers choose Hannaford for their grocery shopping needs?
6. Are you proficient with computers?
7. What types of situations do you find stressful? How do you manage your stress in those situations?
8. Describe a difficult situation you had with someone (at school, at work, at home) and how you resolved that situation.
9. If I were to contact your past employers, what would they tell me about you?
10. What are your long-term goals? Where would you like to be in 5 years?
11. What type of schedule can you work?
12. After being here for a while, can you tell me why you think you would be a good choice for the job? Why are you a good match for Hannaford?