

# Office Practice

Book

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Clerical Duties

**Pauline Naidoo,  
Maryvonne Bolch,  
Margaret Walker**

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## PREFACE

The Special English series from Collier Macmillan International introduces titles on a wide range of technical subjects that will be of interest to students of English as a second language. Each volume illustrates the special English of a particular trade or profession in both its spoken and written forms. It is not possible, of course, for books of this size to cover the subject matter exhaustively, so the authors have concentrated on those topics and activities that should have the widest appeal. The conversations which are the basis of each chapter or unit are deliberately written in the colloquial and idiomatic speech used by technicians and specialists as they go about their everyday activities.

It must be emphasized that these books are *not* primarily intended to teach the subject matter itself, although the technical content is accurate in every respect. Nor are they intended to teach the introductory stages of English. It is assumed that the reader is already familiar in his own language with the subject matter of the book, and has a good grounding in the basic grammatical patterns and vocabulary of English. He will use these books to improve his knowledge of English within the framework of a technical vocabulary that is of interest to him either privately or professionally.

The authors in this series each have their individual approach, but all the volumes are organized in the same general way. Typically, each book is based on a series of situational dialogues, followed by narrative passages for reading comprehension. Exercises give the student practice in handling some of the useful and more difficult patterns, as well as lexical items, that occur in each unit. Tape recordings, of the dialogues and selected exercises, may be used either in the language laboratory or for private study. Each volume is provided with a glossary of technical terms, with i.p.a. equivalents as used in the Daniel Jones Pronouncing Dictionary.

PETER STREVENS  
*General Editor*

## INTRODUCTION

In writing this book we had in mind the young (and not so young) person who is either already working in an office or is about to embark on a clerical career. English may or may not be his mother tongue, but he needs to improve it. We believe this book is the first to combine the two subjects of English and Office Practice, and by concentrating on the contemporary usage of the language and on modern office procedure we hope to serve our students doubly well.

Our awareness of the needs of such students, and the English errors commonly made by them, is based on many years' experience in teaching office practice and other secretarial subjects to overseas students in London.

This book does not claim to cover every aspect of either subject; but that which is included is realistic, practical and relevant. The dialogue form should provide good classroom activity and at the same time help to improve the student's oral English.

The exercises following each chapter, if conscientiously performed, will consolidate the subject matter and extend the student's vocabulary and knowledge of grammar. They follow a consistent pattern and with a little practice will soon be mastered. A key to the exercises is included at the back of the book.

We have provided a glossary for those words which a standard dictionary might not include, at least not in their technical sense. The pronunciation of each word is given in the International Phonetic Alphabet. Idiomatic expressions are footnoted at the bottom of the pages where they appear.

PAULINE NAIDOO  
MARYVONNE BOLCH  
MARGARET WALKER

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# CHAPTER 1

## AN INTERVIEW WITH THE \*EMPLOYMENT OFFICER

### Dialogue

*Employment  
Officer:*

Good morning, Miss Graham. Please take a seat.  
I'm Mr. Barker. Now, what can I do for you?

*Jennie Graham:*

I'd like to get a job in an office, but I haven't got any  
experience and I don't know where to start looking.

*Mr. Barker:*

Would you like to work for a large company or a  
small one?

*Jennie:*

I really don't know. Is there much difference?

*Mr. Barker:*

In a small firm the work is often varied and more  
interesting, but the training can sometimes be  
haphazard. In a larger firm, however, there is  
usually an induction scheme, and so you can be  
sure of proper training.

*Jennie:*

What exactly is an induction scheme?

*Mr. Barker:*

It's a training programme designed to introduce a  
new employee to the company as a whole, the  
product it manufactures, and the way in which its  
various departments function. They give you  
information about welfare facilities and, if you  
wish, they can make arrangements for further  
education.

*Jennie:*

But what about the atmosphere in a large office?  
Wouldn't it be rather impersonal? I might have  
difficulty in making friends.

## 2 OFFICE PRACTICE: CLERICAL DUTIES

- Mr. Barker:* Oh, I shouldn't worry about that. The social facilities usually include sports and recreation clubs where there are plenty of opportunities for meeting people and making new friends. Many firms also have regular outings and picnics.
- Jennie:* How do the \*salaries compare?
- Mr. Barker:* The starting salaries are usually much the same, but in small offices the increases tend to be awarded according to one man's assessment of your work. And if you want a \*rise you sometimes have to pluck up courage<sup>1</sup> and ask for it. Large companies, on the other hand, have set \*salary scales and you are saved from this sort of embarrassment.
- Jennie:* From what you say, I think I'd like a \*clerical job where I can be properly trained, so I suppose a large company would be the best place for me at this stage.
- Mr. Barker:* Well then, on my books at the moment I have a request from British Enterprises Limited. They are looking for someone who is willing to join them as a \*trainee clerical worker. Here is their address. I suggest you send them a \*letter of application, and they will no doubt call you for an \*interview.
- Jennie:* Thank you, Mr. Barker, that's very kind of you. I'll write to them immediately.

pluck up courage: give oneself the courage to act

### EXERCISE 1: COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the advantages of working for a small firm?
2. What are the advantages of working for a large company?
3. What is an induction scheme?
4. What sort of social facilities do large firms provide?
5. How are salaries awarded in small firms?
6. How are salaries awarded in large firms?
7. Why would Jennie prefer to work in a large firm?
8. How does Mr. Barker suggest that Jennie should approach British Enterprises?



## EXERCISE 2: SIMPLE SUBSTITUTION DRILL

**Statement:** How do the salaries compare?

**Prompt:** *induction schemes*

**Response:** How do the *induction schemes* compare?

Now, you do it.

**Statement:** How do the salaries compare?

**Prompts:**

1. induction schemes
2. welfare facilities
3. social facilities
4. opportunities for education
5. companies
6. departments
7. offices
8. products

## EXERCISE 3: PROGRESSIVE SUBSTITUTION DRILL

**Statement:** I'd like to get a job in an office.

**Prompt:** *I want*

**Response:** *I want* to get a job in an office.

Now, you do it.

**Statement:** I'd like to get a job in an office.

**Prompts:**

1. want
2. a large company
3. find
4. small
5. firm
6. post
7. would like
8. obtain

#### 4 OFFICE PRACTICE: CLERICAL DUTIES

##### EXERCISE 4: STRUCTURAL PRACTICE

Notice the structure of this sentence:

*I haven't got any experience and I don't know where to start looking.*

Use the parts in *italics* to make complete sentences.

1. a job and / where to find one
2. any special skills and / what job to get
3. any money and / when I will be paid
4. a telephone number and / how to contact him
5. any details and / much about it
6. any information and / how the department functions
7. a rise and / how to ask for one
8. a proper training and / what I should do

##### EXERCISE 5

Complete the following sentences, choosing the appropriate word from the list below:

assessment	impersonal
designed	embarrassment
salaries	subsidized
haphazard	opportunities

1. After working in a small, friendly office, she found the atmosphere in a large company too ———.
2. The canteen could not supply meals so cheaply unless it was ———.
3. After a favourable ——— of her work, she received a rise in pay.
4. Their work was inefficient because of their hasty and ——— training.
5. Our office staff are paid monthly; they get their ——— on the last Friday of each month.
6. In a large office there are many ——— for making friends.
7. An employment office is ——— to help people find jobs more easily.
8. Asking for a rise can often be something of an ———.

##### EXERCISE 6

Use the following words and phrases in sentences of your own to show that you understand their meaning and use.

- |               |             |                  |             |
|---------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1. experience | 3. outings  | 5. much the same | 7. properly |
| 2. trainee    | 4. clerical | 6. facilities    | 8. product  |



## CHAPTER 2

### LETTER OF APPLICATION

#### Dialogue

*Jennie:* Hello, Mum, have you just been shopping? Did you remember my chocolate biscuits?

*Mother:* Yes, I did, Jennie. How did your interview go? Did he have anything for you?

*Jennie:* He was very nice. We discussed the sort of place I wanted to work in and he told me that British Enterprises are looking for a clerical worker. He advised me to write to them straight away.

*Mother:* Is that the big office block in Marylebone? I think I've passed it on the bus. It looks a nice, modern place.

*Jennie:* Yes, it is. Would you like to read the letter I've written?

*Mother:* I've got to peel the potatoes; you read it to me.

*Jennie:* (reading)  
Dear Sir,

The employment officer at North Kensington has told me that you have a vacancy for a clerical worker, and I wish to apply for the post.

As you will see from the enclosed \*outline of qualifications, I have just left the West London \*Comprehensive School, where I obtained my \*C.S.E. in six subjects.

I have had no previous office experience, so I would particularly like to work for your company, as I understand I would be properly trained through your induction scheme.

Should my application interest you, I would be pleased to come for an interview at any time which is convenient to you.

Yours faithfully,

J. Graham.

*Mother:* That sounds all right, dear. I hope you've typed it properly?

*Jennie:* Of course I have.

*Mother:* Good. Now we'll have to wait and see if you're successful.

### EXERCISE 1: COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Jennie's mother know what the British Enterprises offices look like?
2. What reason does Jennie give in her letter for wanting to work for British Enterprises?
3. Why does Jennie's mother ask Jennie to read the letter to her?
4. Does Jennie ask for a particular time for an interview?
5. Why does Jennie write to British Enterprises immediately after her interview with the employment officer?

### EXERCISE 2: SIMPLE SUBSTITUTION DRILL

**Statement:** I hope you've typed it neatly.

**Prompt:** *set it out properly*

**Response:** I hope you've *set it out properly*.

Now, you do it.

**Statement:** I hope you've typed it neatly.

**Prompts:**

1. *set it out properly*
2. *been offered a good job*
3. *already written to them*
4. *got the qualifications*

5. remembered my chocolate biscuits
6. applied for the post
7. received my application
8. had some experience

### EXERCISE 3: PROGRESSIVE SUBSTITUTION DRILL

**Statement:** I wish to apply for the post.

**Prompt:** *job*

**Response:** I wish to apply for the *job*.

Now, you do it.

**Statement:** I wish to apply for the post.

**Prompts**

1. job
2. would like
3. be considered
4. vacancy
5. She
6. that
7. prefer
8. interviewed

### EXERCISE 4: STRUCTURAL PRACTICE

Notice the structure of this sentence.

*Would you like to read the letter I've written?*

Use the parts in italics to make complete sentences.

1. check / typed
2. correct / drafted
3. post / done
4. check / re-typed
5. run off / stencilled
6. type / dictated
7. read / received
8. translate / been sent

## 8 OFFICE PRACTICE: CLERICAL DUTIES

### EXERCISE 5

Complete the following sentences, choosing the appropriate word or phrase from the list below:

straight away  
vacancy  
office block  
obtained

application  
comprehensive school  
convenient  
peel

1. The company moved into a new ———, where they occupied the second and third floors.
2. After three attempts she at last ——— the qualifications she needed.
3. Her parents chose to send her to the ——— rather than to the grammar school, as it offered a wider choice of courses.
4. I understand that you have a ——— for an audio-typist.
5. The letter was urgent, so she decided to post it ———.
6. She was hoping for an interview on Tuesday, but the personnel manager said that this would not be ———.
7. As soon as she heard that the post was vacant, she wrote a letter of ———.
8. Before she could eat the orange she had to ——— it.

### EXERCISE 6

Use the following words and phrases in sentences of your own to show that you understand their meaning and use.

shopping  
properly  
sounds fine  
pronounce

set the table  
modern  
qualifications  
particularly

14 Westbourne Grove,  
LONDON, W.11.

30th September 1971

The Personal Manager,  
British Enterprises Ltd.,  
301 Marylebone High Street,  
LONDON, W.1.

Dear Sir,

The Employment Officer at North Kensington has told me that you have a vacancy for a clerical worker and I wish to apply for the post.

As you will see from the enclosed outline of qualifications I have just left the West London Comprehensive School where I obtained my C.S.E. in six subjects.

As I have no previous office experience I would particularly like to work for your company where I understand I would be properly trained through your induction scheme.

Should my application interest you I would be pleased to attend for interview at any time which is convenient to you.

Yours faithfully,

*J. Graham.*

J. Graham. (Miss)

enc.

## OUTLINE OF QUALIFICATIONS

**NAME:** Graham, Jennie Karen

**DATE OF BIRTH:** 19th March, 1954. **AGE:** 16

**ADDRESS:** 14 Westbourne Grove,  
London, W.11. **TEL:** 01-843-9821

**EDUCATION:** West London Comprehensive School,  
Notting Hill Road,  
London, W.11. (1965-1970)

**EXAMINATIONS:** Certificate of Secondary Education (1970)

English Language  
English Literature  
History  
Art  
Geography  
Domestic Science

**TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS:** Typing and \*Audio-Typing, two evenings a week at Paddington College for \*Further Education.

**PRESENT SPEEDS:** Typing ..... 25 words per minute.  
Audio-Typing ..... 20 words per minute.

**HOBBIES AND INTERESTS:** Judo, Reading, Swimming, Cinema, Dancing,  
Voluntary work for Task Force. 1

**REFEREES:** Mr. J. M. Baxter,  
The Principal,  
West London Comprehensive School,  
Notting Hill Road,  
London, W.11.

Dr. J. Hovenden,  
48 Westbourne Grove,  
London, W.11.

30th September, 1970.



## CHAPTER 3

### AN INTERVIEW WITH THE \*PERSONNEL MANAGER

#### Dialogue

*Personnel manager:* Come in, Miss Graham. Sit down. So you want to work with us?

*Jennie:* Yes, I do.

*Personnel manager:* I see from your letter that you have just left school but that you are still attending \*night school. That's a good sign. We like our young \*employees to continue with their studies, and, of course, if you learn typing, your chances of \*promotion are improved considerably.

*Jennie:* I'm doing audio-typing twice a week at night school.

*Personnel manager:* Yes, but remember the old saying, "All work and no play . . .<sup>1</sup>." Now then. I liked your letter; it was well composed, but I notice that your English is not quite up to standard. You realize you made a glaring spelling mistake? I am not a "personal" manager but a "personnel" manager. Do you know the difference?

*Jennie:* Oh, dear, yes. I'm so sorry. I always confuse them; I should have checked.

<sup>1</sup> All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy: a certain amount of pleasure is necessary if one is to lead a balanced life