7 At Your Service





UNIT OUTCOMES

- Connect technology
- Resolve technology problems
- Establish an organizational system
- Identify and resolve problems at work
- Report progress
- Explore careers in information technology

Look at the photo and answer the questions.

1. This man works at a distribution facility in Charlotte, North Carolina. What do you think his job is?
2. What technology is he using? What other technology do you think he uses every day to do his work?
3. What technology do you use on a daily basis? How does it help you?

Afaq-lc.com

Vocabulary Builder

A **Use these terms to label each item you might find in an office. Under each item, write a brief description of its purpose.**

card reader	~~laptop~~	printer	ring light	tablet
handheld scanner	point of sale (POS) system	projector	security camera	

1. 

laptop: process information, create reports, and do online research

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

7. 

8. 

9. 

Afaq-lc.com

B **Draw pictures for these terms. Use a dictionary to look up any words you don't know, but remember to look for the definition that is related to technology.**

headset	portable charger	HDMI port	ear buds

C **Write a definition for each term.**

1. troubleshoot: _____
2. paper jam: _____
3. scan: _____

D **Look at the verbs in the table. Find the nouns and adjectives in the verbs' word families.**

Verb	Noun	Adjective
accommodate		
avoid		
collaborate		
compete		
compromise		
motivate		
resolve		

Afaq-lc.com

LESSON 1

How Do You Connect It?

GOAL ▸ Connect technology

A **Read the instructions for connecting your computer to a printer.**

1. After you install and set up the proper software on your computer or device, make sure your printer is plugged in and turned on.



2. Find the document from your computer or phone that you want to print.





3. To print from your phone, make sure the Bluetooth is turned on. To print from your computer, make sure you are connected to wifi.



4. Click the print button and select the printer.





B **SUMMARIZE** **Reread the instructions in A. Then, in your own words, tell a partner how to connect and print from a phone or computer. (If you have a printer in your classroom, you can try to connect and print from a phone or laptop.)**

Afaq-lc.com

C **Connecting to a Bluetooth speaker is like connecting a printer. Number the pictures to match them with the instructions.**

1. Charge the Bluetooth speaker by plugging it in.
2. Turn on the Bluetooth speaker.
3. Turn on the Bluetooth on your phone.
4. In the Bluetooth setting on your phone, select the name of the speaker. (It should say "Connected to XYZ speaker.")
5. Troubleshoot: If the speaker doesn't connect, push the pairing button on the speaker.











D **What are some other technology items that you can connect your phone to? What other technology items can you connect a Bluetooth speaker to? Make two lists on a separate piece of paper.**

I can connect my phone to…
I can connect a Bluetooth speaker to…

Afaq-lc.com

E **Read about barcode scanners and answer the questions.**

A barcode scanner is an optical device that can read and translate the series of lines and numbers on a product. It tells the computer what the item is and how much it costs. The scanner scans the barcode's black and white stripes by illuminating the code with a red light and the decoder interprets that signal, validates the barcode, and converts it into text.

Employees use barcodes when looking for information about products and processing purchases, but these days many stores have scanners you can use by yourself.

Here are some tips for using scanners:

- If you are using a handheld scanner to check the price, put the product's barcode near the scanner and press the button. You will get the cost of the product and it will also tell you if it's on sale.
- If you are using a barcode scanner at checkout (connected to a point of sale or POS system), put the product near the scanner with the barcode facing down. There will be a beep to let you know the bar code has been scanned and the price added to the POS system.
- If you're buying loose items that need to be counted or weighed, you'll need to know the item number. Sometimes there will be a small sticker on the item with a barcode or you can do a search in the POS system. Once the POS system knows what item you have, it will ask you to type in how many items you have or to put your items on the machine to be weighed.

1. What is a barcode? _____
2. What does a barcode scanner do? _____

_____

3. How do you know that a barcode has been scanned? _____
4. Explain what to do if the item doesn't have a barcode on it.

_____

_____

_____

_____

F **GENERATE** **Look back at the list of technology items at the beginning of the unit. Choose one item that you are familiar with and write a list of instructions with illustrations. Review your instructions with a partner. Can your partner follow the instructions easily? Is the sequence of your instructions correct?**

Afaq-lc.com

LESSON 2

Troubleshooting

GOAL ▶ Resolve technology problems

A **Think of some problems you have had in the past with technology. In a small group, discuss what the problems were and how you fixed them.**

B **Carla is having trouble with her printer. No paper comes out when she tries to print. Read what she found online.**

Search Online	Suggestions
printer paper jam	• Clear jam by following instructions on printer screen. • Make sure the printer can handle the paper weight you are using.
printer paper stuck together	• Don't put too much paper in the printer tray. • Take the paper out, fan the pages, and put them back in. **Note:** Humidity can cause pages to stick together.
paper won't go through printer	• Remove any obstructions from inside the printer. • Open printer and look for obstructions.
document won't print	• Make sure both devices are connected (by Bluetooth or wifi). • Make sure printer is on.

C **Answer the questions based on the troubleshooting guide in B.**

1. What should you do if the document won't print?

   _____

2. What causes pages to stick together? _____

3. What should you do if the paper won't feed through the printer? _____

   _____

4. What should you do if there is a paper jam? _____

   _____

D **Read Carla's problem in B again. Write three suggestions you might give her.**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Afaq-lc.com

E **Listen to the conversations between employees at different companies. Write the technology type, the problems, and suggestions for fixing them in the table.**

Technology	Problem	Suggestions
		1. 2.
		1.
		1. 2. 3.
		1. 2. 3.

F **Using the information you wrote in E, role-play the conversations with a partner. Take turns being the person with the problem.**

G **Maya has to take photos for her job as a home appraiser. She is having trouble with her phone. Match each problem to its solution. Some problems may have more than one solution.**

_____ 1. Battery is losing its charge quickly.

_____ 2. Storage is full.

_____ 3. Camera app is frozen.

_____ 4. Camera app won't open.

a. Close other apps not being used.

b. Close out of app and restart.

c. Delete photos / videos.

d. Plug in a portable battery.

e. Restart phone.

f. Store photos / videos in the cloud.

Afaq-lc.com

H **SEQUENCE** **Troubleshooting is a critical skill for Information Technology (IT) professionals. Sometimes, it is as simple as making sure the technology is plugged in or just restarting it. But that's not always the case. There are six steps IT professionals use to solve technology problems. What do you think the order is? Number the steps from 1–6.**

_____ Determine what caused the problem.
_____ Check that the solution solved the problem.
_____ Establish a plan of action to solve the problem.
_____ Document your findings, actions and outcomes.
_____ Implement your solution.
_____ Identify the problem.

I **Choose one of these problems. Then write the steps (1–6) you would follow to solve it.**

a. Your laptop screen is frozen.
b. A Bluetooth speaker won't connect to your phone.
c. Your tablet won't turn on.
d. An app won't open on your phone.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

J **Share your troubleshooting list with a partner.**

Life ONLINE

There are thousands of resources online to help you troubleshoot just about every technology problem you can face. From problems installing a computer operating system or a new doorbell camera, to issues with home appliances, devices, or your car, you are sure to find a tutorial or instructions manual online. Your owner's manual should always be your first resource—you don't want to invalidate your warranty—but if you're struggling to know how to use a feature of your new washing machine, or you can't figure how to use of a power tool to complete a home project, you can find lots of help online.

Afaq-lc.com

LESSON 3

Get Organized!

GOAL ▸ Establish an organizational system

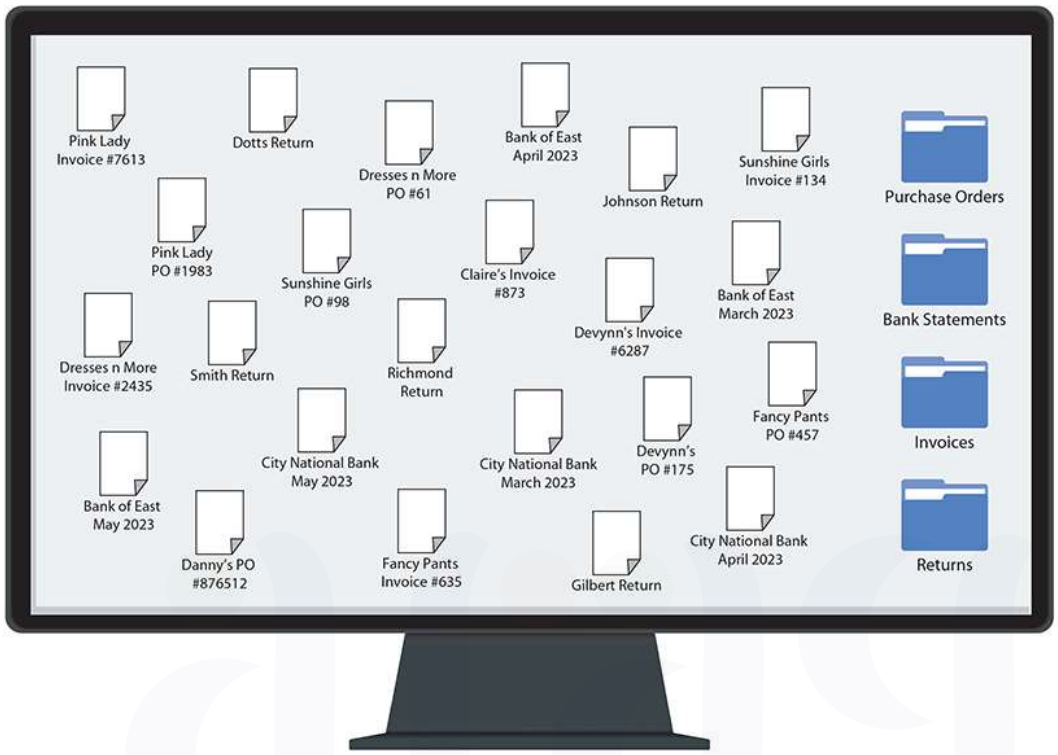
A **CLASSIFY** One way of organizing things is by putting similar items in groups. How would you organize this supply closet? Discuss your solutions with your classmates.



B Write how you would reorganize the supply closet. Then, on a separate piece of paper, do a simple drawing of the closet and show where you would keep each item.

Afaq-lc.com

C **Help Narit organize her files. Label the file *P* if it goes in the *Purchase Orders* folder. Label it *B* if it goes in the *Bank Statements* folder. Label it *I* if it goes in the *Invoices* folder. Label it *R* if it goes in the *Returns* folder. Compare your work with a partner.**



D **On a computer, you can have a folder within a folder (a *subfolder*). You can also organize things in different ways. Answer the questions.**

1. Which folder in **E** could have more than one subfolder folder? _____

2. What are the two different ways you could organize the subfolders?

   a. _____

   b. _____

E **Take the documents from the *Invoices* folder and write them in order by invoice number.**

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

5. _____ 6. _____

F **Narit decided to organize the invoices and purchase orders using the folders *Invoices* and *Purchase Orders*. What is another way she could have organized these files? Discuss with a partner.**

Afaq-lc.com

G **Dave works for a satellite TV company and uses his phone for work. He can never find anything when he needs it. Look at his phone screens. Make a list of at least five different folders he could use to organize his apps. Label each folder. Then write the apps that go in each folder. Some apps won't fit into a folder.**







Health

B-fit				

H **Share your work with a partner. Did you group your apps in the same way? Did you come up with similar folder names?**

I **Think of something at your workplace or in your home that needs to be organized. On a separate piece of paper, answer the questions.**

1. What needs to be organized?
2. Why? What is the problem?
3. How would you plan to organize it?

Afaq-lc.com

LESSON 4

What's the Problem?

GOAL ▶ Identify and resolve problems at work

A **Answer the following questions with a partner.**

1. What is *conflict resolution*?
2. Where are some places that conflicts might occur?
3. Who are some people that you might have conflicts with?
4. Think about the ways you handle conflicts with people. What would you say your personal style of behavior is when speaking to people in a conflict?

B **PREDICT** **Read the questions before each section of the article. Think about them as you read.**

1. What are the three benefits of resolving conflict?
2. What can happen if conflict is not handled effectively?
3. What are the five steps to resolving a conflict?

Conflict Resolution: Resolving Conflict Rationally and Effectively

In many cases, conflict in the workplace just seems to be a fact of life. The good news is that by resolving conflict successfully, you can solve many of the problems that it has brought to the surface, as well as get benefits that you might not at first expect.

1. **Increased understanding:** The discussion needed to resolve conflict expands people's awareness of the situation, giving them an insight into how they can achieve their own goals without undermining those of other people.

2. **Increased group cohesion:** When conflict is resolved effectively, team members can develop stronger mutual respect and a renewed faith in their ability to work together.

3. **Improved self-knowledge:** Conflict pushes individuals to examine their goals in close detail, helping them understand the things that are most important to them, sharpening their focus, and enhancing their effectiveness.

However, if conflict is not handled effectively, the results can be damaging. Conflicting goals can quickly turn into personal dislike. Teamwork breaks down. Talent is wasted as people disengage from their work. And it's easy to end up in a vicious downward spiral of negativity and recrimination.

Afaq-lc.com

C **Choose the best answer according to what you read in B.**

1. What is NOT one of the benefits of resolving conflict?
   a. learning more about yourself
   b. a negative workplace
   c. better understanding of one another
   d. stronger respect for team members

2. What can happen if conflict is not handled effectively?
   a. You can lose your job.
   b. The company could file for bankruptcy.
   c. People will disengage and not want to work together.
   d. You may get a promotion.

D **It can be challenging to talk through a conflict. Read the phrases and choose the ones you are familiar with. Discuss with your teacher when these phrases are used.**

- ☐ Let's take a break and come back to this when we've thought about it and cooled down a bit.
- ☐ Help me understand where you're coming from.
- ☐ Thank you for being honest with me.
- ☐ How can I support you?
- ☐ What I heard you say is . . . Did I get that right?
- ☐ I agree with you about . . .
- ☐ Let's work on this problem together.
- ☐ I see how I've been a part of the problem.
- ☐ I'm sorry.
- ☐ What do you suggest we do about this?
- ☐ Let's see how we can prevent this from happening in the future.
- ☐ I hear your point of view, but I have a different way of thinking about it.
- ☐ Agree to disagree?

afaq Language Center

Afaq-lc.com

E **Read the text.**

Using the Tool: *A Conflict-Resolution Process*

Step One: Set the scene.

Make sure that people understand that the conflict may be a mutual problem, which may be best resolved through discussion and negotiation rather than through raw aggression.

Step Two: Gather information.

Here, you are trying to get to the underlying interests, needs, and concerns of the other people involved. Ask for the other people's viewpoints and confirm that you respect their opinions and need their cooperation to solve the problem.

Step Three: Agree on the problem.

This sounds like an obvious step, but often different underlying needs, interests, and goals can cause people to perceive problems very differently. You'll need to agree on the problems that you are trying to solve before you can find a mutually acceptable solution.

Step Four: Brainstorm possible solutions.

If everyone is going to feel satisfied with the resolution, it will help if everyone has had fair input into generating solutions. Brainstorm possible solutions and be open to all ideas, including ones you never considered before.

Step Five: Negotiate a solution.

By this stage, the conflict may be resolved—both sides may better understand the position of the other, and a mutually satisfactory solution may be clear to all.

F **With a partner, write a conversation using one of these scenarios (a–e). Try to use the five steps to conflict resolution from E as well as some of the phrases from D.**

a. You are working in a team to create a product design. One of the team members isn't contributing. Instead she is on her phone, taking long breaks and coming in late.

b. The manager of a clothing boutique has started a friendly competition between employees, offering a $1,000 bonus to whoever sells the most this week. Two employees have started acting dishonestly to steal customers from one another.

c. Elias is an accountant for a software production company. He needs the sales figures at the end of each month to create his reports. Dalia always gives him her figures late, which affects his report.

d. Your company is relocating to a new office, at least 45 minutes away from the current one. Several employees are resistant to this change.

e. Andre is speaking in a meeting when his co-worker, Selena, interrupts him. In the next meeting, he notices that Selena interrupts him a few more times, and he cannot fully express his ideas.

G **Practice your conversation and present it to the class.**

Afaq-lc.com

LESSON 5

What Did You Do?

GOAL ▶ Report progress

A **Maria's supervisor asked her to write a progress report about a long-term project she is working on. Read the guidelines he gave her.**

Progress Report Guidelines

You write a progress report to inform a supervisor, associate, or customer about progress you've made on a project over a certain period of time. In the progress report, you explain all of the following:

- what the project is
- how much of the work is complete
- which part of the work is currently in progress
- what work remains to be done
- what problems or unexpected issues have arisen

B **ANALYZE** **Read part of Maria's report. Is she following the guidelines so far?**

To: Henry Kim, Human Resources Director
From: Maria Avalos
Date: April 14th
Subject: Program for Employee Training

It seems that many problems have arisen from the employees working such long hours and not being able to communicate effectively with one another. It was proposed that I put together a training program for our employees on conflict resolution.

So far, I have been conducting research on whether it is better to bring in an outside training organization or do the training ourselves. I have concluded that it would be more cost-effective for us to do the training ourselves. So, I am currently working on putting together a training manual that can be used for the conflict-resolution training. I foresee that it will take me another two weeks to complete the manual. Once it has been completed, we will need to choose several people to conduct the training and train them to be effective leaders.

C **Is anything missing from Maria's report? If so, write what is missing.**

_____

_____

Afaq-lc.com

D **Study the chart.**

Noun Clauses as Objects		
Subject + Verb	**Noun Clause**	**Explanation**
I did	*what* I was asked.	• A noun clause starts with a question word or *that* and is followed by a subject and verb. • In these examples, the noun clause is the object of the sentence.
She knows	*how* the computer works.	
They decided	*where* the location would be.	
My boss asked	*who* would be best for the job.	
I hope	*that* they work as a team.	

E **Complete each of the sentences with an appropriate noun clause from the list. More than one noun clause may be appropriate.**

how the filing system worked	~~what she told me to~~
how to complete the progress report	where the files were stored
that they would be promoted	who got to receive the training
that we knew what we were doing	who wanted to be the team leader

1. I did *what she told me to* _____.
2. She found _____.
3. The supervisor asked _____.
4. He explained _____.
5. Our team showed _____.
6. Sari asked _____.
7. Jared and Giulia hoped _____.
8. The representative chose _____.

F **Complete each sentence with a noun clause of your own.**

1. I asked _____.
2. I hoped _____.
3. I decided _____.
4. I explained _____.

Afaq-lc.com

G **Maria reports that she has encountered problems. Read the problems and write a paragraph from Maria's perspective. Include what she might suggest as solutions.**

- The employees do not want this training.
- None of the supervisors who could be trainers want to lead the training.

H **With the information given, write a progress report. Use the guidelines in A and the format of Maria's report in B. Using the examples in D and E, include noun clauses in your report.**

Project: Change the way scheduling of staff is handled.

Work completed: Servers and bartenders have been interviewed.

Currently in progress: Interviewing the kitchen staff.

To do: Take information from interviews and come up with a better way to handle scheduling in the future.

Problems: Last-minute shift-switching without manager approval; some shifts are too short.

Afaq-lc.com

LESSON 6

Explore the Workforce

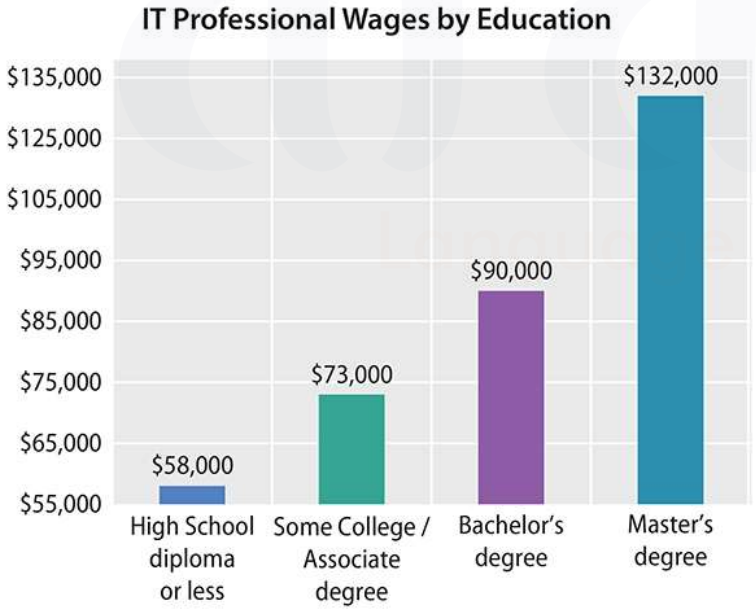
GOAL ▶ Explore careers in information technology

A **Information Technology (IT) is one of the most popular career fields. What do you think IT professionals do? Brainstorm a list of jobs or tasks.**

IT professionals…

repair computers	

B **What education do you think is required for careers in IT? Discuss with a partner. Then look at the bar graph and answer the questions on a separate piece of paper.**



1. Do you need a college degree to work as an IT professional?
2. What is the difference in pay between people with a high school diploma and people with some college?
3. Is there a big difference in pay between a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree?
4. Based on the education and pay, would it interest you to become an IT professional? Why?

Afaq-lc.com

C **This chart gives some information on different IT jobs. Write a title for each column.**

Computer and Information Research Scientist	design innovative uses for new and existing technology	Master's	$131,490
Computer Network Architect	design and build data communication networks, including local area networks (LANs), wide area networks (WANs), and intranets	Bachelor's	$120,520
Computer Programmer	modify and test code and scripts that allow computer software and applications to function properly	Bachelor's	$93,000
Computer Support Specialist	maintain computer networks and provide technical support to computer users	Some college/ Associate	$57,910
Computer Systems Analyst	study an organization's current computer systems and design ways to improve efficiency	Bachelor's	$99,270
Digital Designer	develop, create, and test website or interface layout, functions, and navigation for usability	Bachelor's	$78,300
Database Administrator	create or organize systems to store and secure data	Bachelor's	$101,000
Information Security Analyst	plan and carry out security measures to protect an organization's computer networks and systems	Bachelor's	$102,600
Network Systems Administrator	responsible for the day-to-day operation of computer networks	Bachelor's	$80,600
Software Developer	design computer applications or programs	Bachelor's	$109,020
Web Developer	create and maintain websites	Bachelor's	$78,300

D **Practice asking and answering questions with a partner. Use information from the chart in C.**

A: What does a computer support specialist do?

B: A computer support specialist maintains computer networks and provides technical support.

A: How much does a web developer make?

B: About $78,000.

A: Do you need a Master's degree to be a digital designer?

B: No, you just need a Bachelor's degree.

Afaq-lc.com

E **Practice making true and false statements with a partner. Use information from the chart in D.**

A: You need a Master's degree to be a web developer.

B: That's not true.

F **Read the job post and find this information: job title, location, salary, education required, experience required, skills required, job responsibilities.**



G **Choose one of the jobs in C. Find an online job post. Write these details on a separate piece of paper.**

Job title

Location

Salary

Education required

Experience required

Required skills

Job responsibilities

Afaq-lc.com

Review

A **Read the instructions for connecting a Bluetooth headset to your computer. Then answer the questions.**

Step 1: Make sure your Bluetooth headset is in "discoverable mode." To do this, push the button on the right headphone to enter "pairing mode."
Step 2: Click on the *Start* menu on your PC and go to your PC settings.
Step 3: From the settings, click on *Devices*.
Step 4: Enable Bluetooth by clicking on the toggle and selecting *Add Bluetooth or Other Device*.
Step 5: In the pop-up window, click *Bluetooth*. This will scan all nearby Bluetooth devices.
Step 6: Once your headphones show up in the list, select them and click *Connect*.

1. How do you put your headset into discoverable mode?

_____

2. Where do you find *Devices* on your computer?

_____

3. How do you enable Bluetooth?

_____

4. What do you click once your headphones show up in the list?

_____

B **Read the troubleshooting tips for a Bluetooth headset. Then choose the best answer.**

What to do if your headphones won't connect:

1. Check that they are fully charged.
2. Check the Bluetooth set up. It may need to be reset.
3. Make sure your headphones aren't connected to another device.

1. If your headphones won't connect,
   a. reset them.
   b. make sure they are fully charged.
   c. disconnect them from all other devices.
   d. all of the above
2. If your headphones won't connect, why should you check the Bluetooth set up?
   a. They may be connected to another device.
   b. They may need to be reset.
   c. You may need to buy a new pair.
   d. The batteries may need charging.

Learner Log

I can connect technology. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

I can resolve technology problems. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

Afaq-lc.com

C **These files need to be organized in folders. Create and write a folder name in each box. Then match the files to the correct folder.**

Order #13245.docx
Order #7754.docx
Printer Manual.pdf
Tax Return 2021.pdf
Order #16278.docx
Bluetooth Speaker Manual.pdf
Order #7826.docx
POS System Manual.pdf
Tax Return 2022.pdf
Camera Manual.pdf
Digital Assistant Manual.pdf
Tax Return 2023.pdf
Tax Return 2020.pdf

D **Answer the following questions about the conflict-resolution articles in Lesson 4.**

1. What are three benefits of resolving conflict?

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

2. What are the five steps for resolving conflict?

   a. _____ b. _____

   c. _____ d. _____

   e. _____

E **Write the five things a progress report should include.**

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

5. _____

Learner Log	I can establish an organizational system.	I can identify and resolve problems at work.	I can report progress.
	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

Afaq-lc.com

Vocabulary Review

A **Put each term in the correct column according to its part of speech: *noun, verb,* or *adjective*.**

click	cost-effective	force	organize	reorganize
conflict	effective	long-term	paper jam	satisfactory
connect	files	mutual	power supply	settings

Noun	Verb	Adjective
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____	5. _____

B **Use words from A to complete the sentences. Not all the words are used.**

1. Did you get a chance to put the _____ in alphabetical order?
2. The computer wasn't working because the _____ wasn't plugged in.
3. _____ on the settings from the *Start* menu.
4. It doesn't seem _____ to have so many computers running at the same time. That wastes a lot of energy.
5. Tim, can you _____ these files? They seem to have gotten out of order.
6. If you _____ the paper into the feeder, it will probably cause a _____.
7. The project isn't going well. It seems like the members of her team are having a _____.
8. We need a(n) _____ solution to this disorganized supply closet.
9. I hope we can come up with a _____ solution.
10. I wonder why the Bluetooth speaker won't _____ ?

Afaq-lc.com

Looking for a Job

SOFT SKILL ▶ Active Listening

A **Units 6 and 7 have covered a variety of workplaces. In a group, brainstorm workplaces and different jobs you might find in them.**

Office		

B **Mark the jobs in A that you think earn the most money.**

C **Research jobs online and see if you can add to your lists in A.**

D **Choose two jobs that seem the most interesting to you and fill in the table.**

Job Title	Salary	Training / Qualifications Required

ACTIVE LISTENING:

Polite disagreements

Polite interactions are key to the success of any team. If disagreements arise, let others express their thoughts fully without interrupting them. Then confirm that you understand what was said by repeating it or asking clarifying questions. Allow others to elaborate on their thoughts. It is important to not try to force our ideas on others. The goal of a brainstorming session is to quickly gather as many ideas as possible. Not all ideas will be good. The team as a whole has to decide which ideas are the best ones and how to refine them.

Afaq-lc.com

Reading Challenge

A **Think about the workplace 20 years ago compared to today. How do you think it was different? Brainstorm in a small group.**

B **PREDICT** **You will see these phrases in the reading. Guess their meanings.**

no match: _____

the new norm: _____

hybrid model: _____

healthy spaces: _____

strikes a balance: _____

on the rise: _____

C **Read *The New Workplace*. Underline the phrases from B.**

D **Look at the underlined phrases. Does the meaning you wrote in B fit the meaning in the reading? Choose three of the phrases and write your own sentences with them.**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

E **SUMMARIZE** **Write a one-paragraph summary of the new workplace, according to the reading.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

F **At the end of the article, the author says, "Hopefully, this new model is here to stay." Do you agree or disagree? Why?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

Afaq-lc.com

The New Workplace

The Covid pandemic showed us how much we value human interaction. Although working from home was a necessary solution during that time, some people think that online meetings are no match for a shared workplace experience and human connection. Others agree that physical presence in an office space is not necessary. Many good things came out of the pandemic, one of them being how we view the workplace.

The new workplace is mobile. Employers and employees have realized that many people can be just as productive, if not more, at home. And now that the office is open again, many people are still at home. Research has shown that people who spend at least some of their workweek out of the office have higher workplace satisfaction, job commitment and engagement and are more innovative. A hybrid model has become the new norm, where employees spend some time at the office and work from home for the other part of their workweek.

The new workplace also has more focus on health and wellness. Before 2020, workers' desires for a healthy workplace were not being met. During the pandemic, people began to prioritize well-being, learning to take care of themselves and keep themselves healthy. As they came back to the workplace, they wanted this focus on health to continue. Therefore, employers are feeling pressure to prioritize physical and psychological well-being by offering flexibility and healthy spaces at work, whether it be outdoor workspaces or fitness opportunities during breaks.

The new workplace strikes a balance between open spaces and privacy. The open space concept, where employees work collaboratively instead of having their own private offices, has been on the rise for years. Although open spaces have been associated with higher performance and a greater work experience, the noise, lack of privacy, and the inability to remain focused are detrimental to this concept. It is key for companies to work on a better space allocation that still allows for collaboration but also gives employees the option of private spaces to work in.

We have learned that working completely from home or spending 40 hours in the office does not necessarily bring out the best in everyone. Employees have realized what they want and need, and employers have learned that achieving workplace balance is key to productivity and healthy, happy employees. Hopefully, this new model is here to stay.



A man works from home enjoying the company of his dog.

Afaq-lc.com