

<i>900 exercises in vocational communication</i>	Notes for teachers	D3 / 21
<i>General aim</i>	D: Compose a written message	
<i>Level of difficulty</i>	3	
<i>Intermediate aim</i>	2. Organise and structure a message	
<i>Operational aim</i>	1. Give the meaning of your own message	
<i>Pre-requirements</i>	Ability to write complex sentences.	
<i>Number of exercises</i>	7	
<i>Summing-up exercise</i>	D3 / 21-1.8	
<i>Comments</i>		

Here are some expressions that you have very probably used:

That is...

I mean...

What I mean to say is...

Let me explain...

For me, that means...

People have no doubt said these things to you:

What do you mean by that?

Explain what you understand by that.

What does this word mean to you?

Explain yourself, I don't really understand...

So you repeat what you said, but in another way, to make yourself understood better. But when you write a message, the person you are writing to is not next to you to ask you for any explanations. That is why it is sometimes useful to explain what we mean precisely and to use words that are easy to understand.

**It avoids a lot of problems of communication!
And misunderstandings that can even ruin a friendship!**

Here are some examples:

You - Can you make me an organisation chart?

The other - ... a what?

The other person does not understand the term "organisation chart".

You - Kevin is really intelligent!

The other - Intelligent??? You think so?

You do not agree on the meaning of "intelligent".

You - And you cook it for as long as it takes.

The other - As long as it takes? How long is that exactly...?

The other person has no idea how long it takes to cook and knows nothing about cooking. You should give more precise details.

You - If you don't do it, you're a dastard!

The other to someone else - He called me a "bastard"! I never want to see him again!

The person you were speaking to did not understand the word « dastard » (which means "a coward, a sneak"). He does not know this word and heard a different one that sounds similar but means something entirely different, and not very pleasant... He is angry with you and you have no idea why, since you did not insult him!

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So to make yourself understood and avoid misunderstandings, make sure you:

- Make yourself understandable to the person you are speaking to, by using words that he can understand. For example when you speak to:

- . a child (who does not have your range of vocabulary)
- . a foreigner who does not speak your language very well
- . a person who is unfamiliar with the subject you are speaking about.

- Give details before being asked to do so. For example:

- . explain the meaning of a word that is unfamiliar or that the other person might not understand
- . explain how you are using a word when several meanings are possible
- . explain the meaning that you personally give to a word when it can be interpreted in different ways
- . develop or explain your opinion and give reasons
- . explain or specify what you mean when it is a little complicated (technical or philosophical for example)

- Give the explanations or details requested of what you have said or written. If you follow the advice above, this should not happen!



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Another example:

Anthony is walking his dog in his neighbourhood. A passer-by asks him how to get to the Post Office. This is what Anthony answers:

You're going to start by taking the first on the right. You go along the river for about 200 metres. Then take Broadmead Road to the haberdasher's (on the corner) and turn left. You'll get to a square with some statues. Go down the avenue just in front of the statue of Edvard Grieg and the Post Office is just after that.

Obviously, it is not very easy to find the Post Office. Anthony has given a lot of landmarks and details, but ...

Exercise:

You are going to do the following exercise to see just what might be complicated for another person, And put yourself in his place!

Underline what might be unclear or difficult to understand:

If the passer-by is a child of 11...

You're going to start by taking the first on the right. You go along the river for about 200 metres. Then take Broadmead Road to the haberdasher's (on the corner) and take a sharp left. You'll get to a square with some statues. Go down the avenue just in front of the statue of Edvard Grieg and the Post Office is just after that.

If the passer-by is a foreigner who does not understand English very well...

You're going to start by taking the first on the right. You go along the river for about 200 metres. Then take Broadmead Road to the haberdasher's (on the corner) and take a sharp left. You'll get to a square with some statues. Go down the avenue just in front of the statue of Edvard Grieg and the Post Office is just after that.

Look at the suggested answers for D3 / 21 – 1.2

Underline what might be unclear or difficult to understand:

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200 metres: a child of 11 will not necessarily be able to judge how far about 200 metres is. It would be better to give him a landmark (e.g. traffic lights).

Broadmead Road: The name is a little difficult to remember. It would be better to add where you take it (on the right, on the left, by giving a landmark, etc.)

haberdasher's: would a child of 11 know what that is?

Edvard Grieg: A composer whose name is pronounced GREEG but is written differently, which will not help the child to recognise it on a plaque among other statues. The child would probably know neither the name nor the person.

If the passer-by is a foreigner who does not understand English very well ...

You're going to start by taking the first on the right. You go along the river for about 200 metres. Then take Broadmead Road to the haberdasher's (on the corner) and take a sharp left. You'll get to a square with some statues. Go down the avenue just in front of the statue of Edvard Grieg and the Post Office is just after that.

going to start by: pointless, you will only confuse the foreigner. It would be better to say "Take the first..."

first on the right: the foreigner might wonder what this "first" is... You should add the word "road" as this is an expression understood by the native speakers or people who are used to the language of the country.

Broadmead Road: same remark as for the child of 11.

haberdasher's: the foreigner is unlikely to know this word and would have no idea what to look for ... he will not understand this landmark.

take a sharp left: an expression that the foreigner will probably not understand.

Edvard Grieg: same remark as for the child of 11.

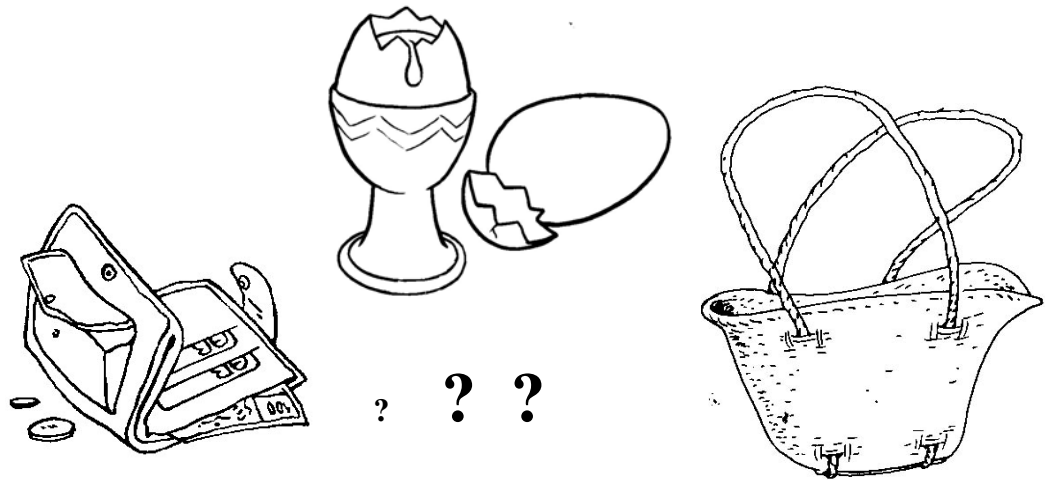
<i>900 exercises in vocational communication</i>	Exercise	D3 / 21 - 1.3
		Eval.:

Explain how to get from your house (or any other place that you decide on) to the Post Office:

To your 11-year-old nephew:

To a foreign friend of yours who does not understand the language very well:

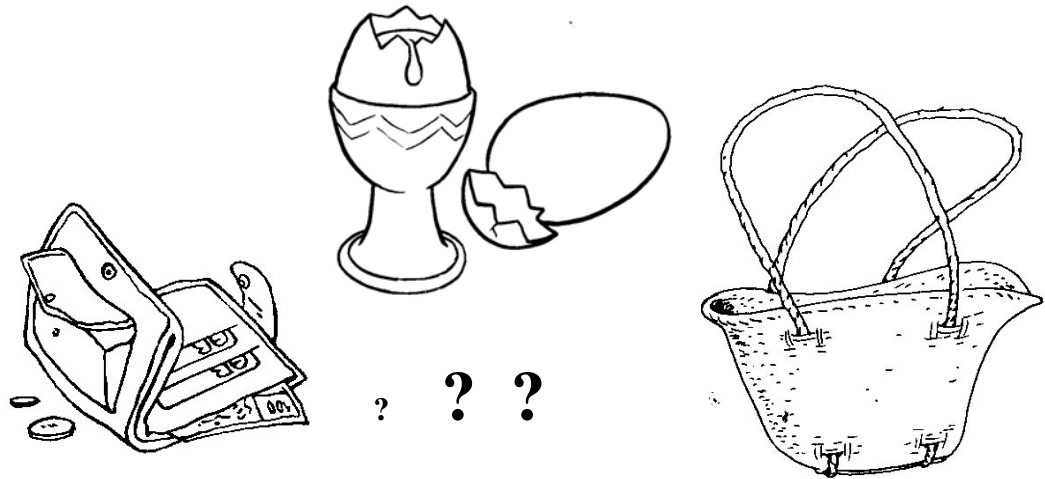
Show your work to the teacher



“Don't put all your eggs in one basket”

You say this sentence (which is a proverb) to a friend. He has just told you that he has invested all his savings in the shares of one company and it has gone bankrupt. Your friend thinks you are laughing at him, as he doesn't see the connection between the money he has lost and these eggs! Explain to him what you meant.

Look at the suggested answers for D3 / 21 – 1.4



“Don’t put all your eggs in one basket”

You say this sentence (which is a proverb) to a friend. He has just told you that he has invested all his savings in the shares of one company and it has gone bankrupt. Your friend thinks you are laughing at him, as he doesn’t see the connection between the money he has lost and these eggs! Explain to him what you meant.

«No, of course I’m not laughing at you! On the contrary I’m really sorry about it all! I said that because it was just a comparison. I think it’s a proverb. And it means that if someone who has collected all the eggs from his hens, to sell them, for example, puts them all in one basket, and then the basket falls... that person loses everything. It’s better to put your eggs in several baskets. If one of them falls, the others still have eggs in them. Well, your money is like those eggs. You put it all in one basket, the shares of that company that went bankrupt. And unfortunately, you lost everything.»

<i>900 exercises in vocational communication</i>	Exercise	D3 / 21 - 1.5
		Eval.:

You find that someone you know (or a well-known person) has a lot of “charm”. Your best friend, who does not think much of this person, does not understand what makes you say that. He asks you what you understand by “have a lot of charm”.

Answer him giving details.

Show your work to the teacher

<i>900 exercises in vocational communication</i>	Exercise	D3 / 21 - 1.6
		Eval.:

You have left a message on your cousin’s answering machine. This is what you told him:

As Geraldine told you, I’m going to this appointment first thing tomorrow morning. It’s very important, especially since Geraldine told him about my project and he seemed really interested... As we say: “You have to strike while the iron is hot”! See you this evening!

The problem is that Geraldine didn’t tell your cousin because she didn’t see him. He does not know about all this and does not understand your message. He calls you back. Explain to him what you meant. (You can make up the situation.)

Look at the suggested answers for D3 / 21 – 1.6

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The problem is that Geraldine didn't tell your cousin because she didn't see him. He does not know about all this and does not understand your message. He calls you back. Explain to him what you meant. (You can make up the situation.)

"So you didn't see Geraldine! That's why you didn't understand! Well, you know my research project about healthy eating... I was looking for someone who could really help me. Geraldine met this woman who is quite high up in the hospital. She's a dietician and says she's lots of information she can give me! So of course I contacted her as soon as possible, since, as you say, "You have to strike while the iron is hot". And I've got an appointment for tomorrow morning at... 8! Let's hope it works!"

<i>900 exercises in vocational communication</i>	Exercise	D3 / 21 - 1.7
		Eval.:

You are doing a placement and you this email from your home to your colleague:

“Hi Eric! I forgot to tell you yesterday... this morning I might arrive late as I have an appointment at the hospital.”

When you get to work, your colleague asks you if you are ill. Explain to him that you were at the local hospital in your town for a project you are working on.”

Look at the suggested answers for D3 / 21 – 1.7

You are doing a placement and you this email from your home to your colleague:

“Hi Eric! I forgot to tell you yesterday... this morning I might arrive late as I have an appointment at the hospital.”

When you get to work, your colleague asks you if you are ill. Explain to him that you were at the local hospital in your town for a project you are working on.”

“No, I’m not ill! I didn’t explain myself very well in my email, as I was in a hurry! The appointment at the hospital was to interview one of the doctors. I’m working on a project about healthy eating, and this person is a dietician. She was really helpful, and gave me loads of information about healthy food in schools and at work. And she says she’ll look over the paper when it’s finished!”

<i>900 exercises in vocational communication</i>	Exercise	D3 / 21 - 1.8
		Eval.:

In the staff canteen, you are having a discussion with a few colleagues. One of them is complaining that he never has enough money and can't always make ends meet at the end of the month. Another one says that his cousin doesn't work any more as he inherited a large sum of money! But he gets bored and depressed; he is not happy. The conversation continues. It is a question of whether money really makes you happy.

Give your opinion on this delicate matter and do not forget to explain what "happiness" means to you ... Specify when necessary exactly what you mean by certain words. Try to make yourself understood as well as possible but without necessarily wanting to convince everyone else!

Show your work to the teacher