

<i>21900 exercises for Vocational Communication</i>	Notes for teachers	E3 / 22
<i>General aim</i>	E: Evaluate a message	
<i>Level of difficulty</i>	3	
<i>Intermediate aim</i>	2: Give meaning to someone else's message	
<i>Operational aim</i>	2: Use a commentary to show the correctness and pertinence of an argumentation.	
<i>Pre-requirements</i>	None	
<i>Number of exercises</i>	4	
<i>Summing-up exercise</i>	E2/11-1.4	
<i>Applications (examples)</i>		
<i>Comments</i>		

At home in your sitting room, you overhear a discussion between your mother and your younger brother Kevin aged 14. This is what happens:

Your mother: *Kevin! Your room is in a terrible mess again! You can't set foot in there because of all the junk on the floor. Not to mention all your clothes spread all over the place. Why can't you put your dirty washing in the basket? How am I supposed to clean in there?!*

Kevin: *But I don't ask you to clean my room!*

Your mother: *Kevin! You can't possibly live in all that filth and dust!*

Kevin: *I don't care about the dust!*

Your mother: *And the clothes that I've just ironed and that are now all creased up because you left them on the chair instead of putting them in the wardrobe.*

Kevin: *I didn't see them! Otherwise I would never have sat on them.*

Your mother: *And stop playing those stupid video games! I really don't see the point of watching that stupid monkey prancing round on the screen all day!*

Kevin: *You can't possibly understand, you've never even tried to play!*

Your mother: *I haven't got time to waste playing games! I've got my work, plus everything I have to do in the house. You could at least offer to help from time to time!*

Kevin: *I take the dustbin out!*

Your mother: *Yes, after I've asked you 5 times to do it, and threatened to cut off the electricity so that you stop your video games!*

Kevin: *Yeah right! You do that and I'm out of here!*

And on that note, Kevin leaves the room and goes and shuts himself in his bedroom, slamming the door shut after him.

The exercise continues on the next page.

Your brother looks up to you and is inclined to listen to what you tell him. You actually think your mother is not entirely wrong here. She really is tired a lot of the time and could do with a bit of help. For your part, you do what you can, but you are not often at home because of your job. Kevin has a lot of free time and very long holidays, but he spends all his time playing video games.

You go to find Kevin in his room and, gently, you try to explain to him why your mother is not entirely wrong. Write what you will say to him, in at least ten sentences.

Look at the suggested answers for E3 / 22 – 1.1

Can I come in? OK, thanks. You know, Kevin, I overheard the discussion with Mum... She's not completely wrong, you know, even if the way she talks to you annoys you. You don't always realise it, but she is tired at the moment. She's got too much to do, what with her job plus looking after the house. She's not getting any younger, either, and I know we don't always realise it. Anyway, I think she's right to ask you to do a bit more in the house. For example, you could put your dirty washing in the dirty-clothes basket, and even put the washing machine on from time to time to wash them, hand them up, take them down, fold them and put them away... Think that Mum does that all the time for us all. You would realise just how long it takes her. And that doesn't include the ironing. You could also offer to do little jobs yourself, like laying the table, clearing it, filling and emptying the dishwasher. I know that you can't always stop in the middle of a game, but between two games, why not offer to do something in the house? Take out the dustbin, for example. That would avoid her having to ask you 5 times during a game. So there you are, Kevin, don't take this badly, think about it a bit, try to cooperate, and the atmosphere at home will be much better! For everyone!

Your friend Steph is going to take part in the preliminaries for the TV programme *School for Stars*. She is very nervous and has asked you to go with her. She is going to sing a complicated song to show off the different aspects of her voice. She doesn't feel quite ready, but she would rather sing this song than another simpler one that she has rehearsed better. She is practising her words in the car. She is frightened of getting them wrong.



The moment has come. Steph gives you one last frightened look in the wings and goes on stage to face her jury. At the end of the song, this is what the jury says:

The singing teacher: *Stephanie, I consider that you have not practised enough. First of all, you don't know the piece perfectly, and that is unacceptable. I can put the fact that your voice trembles and your memory failed you down to stage fright. But why did you choose such a complicated song with such a difficult text that you can't say, let alone sing? Your rhythm was terrible, and you didn't even seem to understand half the words. You would be better off with a simple text that you can sing easily. Secondly, you need to work on your voice, as it does not carry in the low notes, and in the high notes you seem to shout rather than sing, which is pretty hard on the ears of your audience! And please stop trying to copy the others outres. Try to find your own personality: I know you've got one. To my mind, you cannot be among the 100 finalists in this round.*

The acting teacher: *Unfortunately for you Steph, I would go along with what my colleague says. Your stage performance is less than mediocre. We don't know if you're trying to be a contorsionist or a dancer. Your feet get caught in your trousers that are too long and too baggy, and you're nearly falling over those stilts that you call shoes! It's no bad thing to follow fashion, in fact, it's preferable, but not if your choice of clothes works against your movement. If you don't know what to do with your arms, forget about them, instead of waving them around like windmills. And twice you were out of rhythm. You should take one or two dance lessons, as you are supple, you could be good, but it all lacks polish and method. I'm afraid I can't see you being a finalist this year.*

The manageress of the School for Stars: *Steph, you are 17 years old, you are very young and you have your future before you. Work on the different points that you have been given today and come back next year.*

The exercise continues on the next page.

<i>900 exercises for Vocational Communication</i>	Exercise	E3 / 22 – 1.2
		Eval.:

The jury was very critical...

Steph leaves the stage in a fury. It's true, she didn't sing very well. But she can't accept the criticisms of the jury. She tells you in a vengeful tone:

“Look at the three of them, thinking they're so important because they're at least fifty! It's disgusting! I was really counting on being selected! I wasn't sure of being in the final 20 who will go on to the School for Stars, but at least in the first 100 today! They can say what they like, I'm not going back next year!”

You take Steph by the arm and go to the cafeteria. You are going to explain to her that the teachers were pretty awful in the way they said what they did. But as to content, they were not completely wrong. Steph has to bear it in mind if she wants to improve. Go over the arguments of the jury and tell them again to Steph in the form of advice rather than criticism. Encourage her to try again next year.

Look at the suggested answers for E3/22-1.2

Listen, Steph, I agree, the jury didn't say it very well. They criticised you pretty brutally, but there are some things that you would do well to remember. Apart from the criticism, they gave you advice, even if it didn't sound like it. Et je pense qu'avec ces conseils, tu as toutes tes chances l'année prochaine Car il faut te représenter ! It's true that your voice isn't fantastic. I recorded you. You can listen to yourself, you'll see. All you need to do is work on the high and low notes, like the singing teacher said, or choose an easier repertoire. And it's true, you do try to copy the singer. If she told you to look for your real personality, she's probably right, and she did seem sincere, she believes in you. And why did you choose such a complicated song? I also agree with what they said about your clothes. You nearly fell on stage back there, right in the middle of the song. Watch how the professionals do it, take a few singing and dancing lessons, rehearse a bit more before you go on, and you have every chance of getting through to the first 100. I can even see you getting through to the last 20 finalists if you follow all their advice.

You are replacing a secretary for a firm of publishers: Playton Books Ltd. This morning, Sophie Dunn, your colleague, arrives 10 minutes late. As she is hanging up her coat, the manager's personal assistant comes into the office:



Mrs Marshall: *Mrs Dunn, you are late again today!*

Sophie Dunn: *I'm sorry, Mrs Marshall. My son is ill and I had to take him to his grandmother's so she could look after him.*

Mrs Marshall: *Again! Last week you took two days off because he was ill ...*

Sophie Dunn: *I can't help it if he's ill!*

Mrs Marshall: *Then get yourself organised! We cannot tolerate all these days off nor your constant lateness. You've already had 5 days off in one month and you've been late 7 times for various reasons. A lot of people would give anything for a job like yours...*

Sophie Dunn: *Mrs Marshall, there's nothing wrong with my work.*

Mrs Marshall: *Yes, when you are actually in the office! What with the cigarettes that you're always smoking in the yard or in the toilets when it's raining, and the numerous phone calls on your mobile, the work never gets done! Not to mention all the unanswered calls on your extension.*

Sophie Dunn: *But...*

Mrs Marshall: *Don't contradict me, unanswered calls are transferred directly to my number!*

Sophie Dunn: *Sorry...*

Mrs Marshall: *And don't say "sorry", that's not polite. Say "I'm sorry"! This is a publishing firm, not a factory!*

The exercise continues on the next page.

Mrs Marshall leaves the office, slamming the door behind her and Sophie, who has turned red and is furious, shouts out:

“Oh that stupid woman! She keeps spying on me to try to catch me out! She’s hoping to get me fired, when I’ve got a child to look after! It’s really disgusting! Anyway, I’m sure she’s jealous of me. She’s as old as the hills and really ugly!”

But you interrupt her: *« Sophie! Shhhh! Someone might hear you! Don’t make things worse for yourself! »*

You think that Mrs Marshall isn’t totally in the wrong and it is in Sophie’s own interest to take heed of her comments. Even if the way they were given was pretty horrible... Explain to Sophie what you think she should do. Write at least ten sentences.

Look at the suggested answers for E3/22-1.3

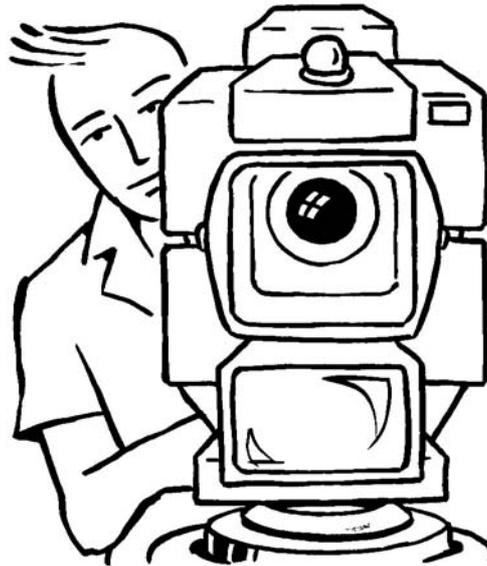
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But you interrupt her: *« Sophie! Shhhh! Someone might hear you! Don’t make things worse for yourself! »*

You think that Mrs Marshall isn’t totally in the wrong and it is in Sophie’s own interest to take heed of her comments. Even if the way they were given was pretty horrible... Explain to Sophie what you think she should do. Write at least ten sentences.

“You know, Sophie, it’s in your own interest to take note of what she says. I know that her remarks are very unpleasant. I agree with you. But if you make an enemy of Mrs Marshall, she can probably do you a lot of harm. She could possibly even get you fired. The best thing to do would be to avoid any problems in the next few weeks. For one thing, it would show her that she was overdoing it a bit, and for another thing, to prove to her that you can hold the job without being open to criticism. Maybe she doesn’t mean any harm, she just wants the firm to do well, because she’s partly responsible for it. Try to be on time and avoid leaving the office. Don’t forget she’s watching you and she writes everything down in her little book. Try to stay on the right side of her and everything will be all right. And if that’s not possible, you could complain to the management. Think about it.”



You and your friend Alice are listening to a film critic on the radio. He's talking about a film that has just come out. This is what he says.

"Absolute Power is John Cashey's third film. If the first two were only just worth seeing, this one is absolutely not worth buying a cinema ticket for. The scenario is not at all credible, nothing is clear, and the end is predictable from halfway through the film. The story is banal: a man wants to avenge the woman he loved and also his old friends, and avenge himself he does, all through the very long film, with the deafening noise of all the firearms imaginable! Not recommended for children under 13, *Absolute Power* is amazingly violent from beginning to end. To make matters worse, this violence is totally unnecessary, and very often aimed at women or animals. Men come out of it the best, of course, in a dialogue of extreme male chauvinism combined very often with racist remarks to shame the worst terrorist. The main actor, Andrew Catchum himself, does not manage to raise the level of the film in spite of his physical prowess (he does all his stunts himself). His performance is monotonous, and it is obvious he does not really believe in his character. But then, what actor could possibly make anyone believe in a character so full of resentment and contradictions? *Absolute Power* has the power to leave you absolutely indifferent for three long hours. Three very long hours! If *Absolute Power* is "not recommended for children under 13" as it is written on the poster (in very small print!), but I personally would not recommend it to anyone." And that's all from our film critic for this week. Thank you Laura MacGregor.

The exercise continues on the next page.

Alice is indignant on hearing this. She has seen the film as she adores the principal actor, Andrew Catchum. You have also seen the film and did not like it at all. You think that your friend Alice is so bowled over by the actor that she is not thinking straight. You are going to reexamine the arguments given by Laura MacGregor and try to convince Alice that, in spite of the presence of her favourite actor, the film is no good. What is more, Alice is very involved in women's rights and the protection of nature and animals. You can hardly believe that she liked this film ...

NB. This film was made up for the purposes of this exercise, so you are free to invent arguments and explanations as you wish.

Look at the suggested answers for E3/22-1.4

You and your friend Alice are listening to a film critic on the radio. He's talking about a film that has just come out. This is what he says.

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I saw the film too, Alice, and I agree with what the critic said. I know your favourite actor is in it, and that's why you went to see it. Quite honestly, if he wasn't in the film, would you have gone to see it anyway? You who hate violence and defend women's rights, you who are so involved in the protection of nature and animals??? You should be disgusted with the way they treat women, with the pollution from those cars with their overpowerful motors, with the fires caused by the use of all those firearms and all the animals that are shut in and maltreated. And weren't you shocked by the racist remarks that your darling actor had to say? Didn't it shock you even more that he actually agreed to say them? To be in this awful film? It's true that he doesn't do much to make his character convincing... that's one good point for him! And his stunts are pretty good. But really, all the rest of it just isn't worth seeing!