

Mucky pups – taking the minutes

Teacher's notes

Aim

To practise writing minutes

What

Selecting the most important information from a meeting

Interaction

Teamwork

1:1

Student first decides what is important, then shares his/her ideas with you

When to use

With or any time after task 4 on page 52

What you need

One worksheet for each student

Preparation

Photocopy the worksheet to provide one for each student.

Here's how

1. Divide the class into groups of four students.
2. Give the students a worksheet each and ask them to read through the text. Explain the meaning of any phrases that they do not understand:
 - Leaves on the line*: often used to describe any unexplained delay of a train – originally from the danger of tracks becoming slippery when leaves fall on them in autumn.
 - (To) have your knuckles rapped*: to be reprimanded or told off for something.
 - Mucky pup*: someone who is messy – typically children who spill food on themselves but also used affectionately to describe a messy adult.
 - Donkey's years*: a long time.
 - Something to die for*: something very enjoyable or that you want very much.
3. Now ask each group to first discuss what can be left out of the minutes, then to write the minutes. When everyone has finished, the groups share their minutes with the class.
4. Finally ask the students to assume one of the following roles: *Tor*, *Arne*, *Kim* or *James*. Have them role-play the scenario and find a solution to the problem.

Possible answer

Agenda item: Damage to keyboards caused by staff eating at their stations during breaks.

Suggestions: Extending the lunch break to allow staff to go to the pub; moving the IT office to a smaller room – both considered impractical.

Person responsible: The meeting will be continued by James.

Action point: A decision must be made by the end of today. IT will then get a quote for new keyboards.

AOB:

- More calls were taken last quarter than the whole of last year.
- A rate for a people carrier is being negotiated with the local taxi company. Arne will find out what the latest situation is and report back.
- The time spent on meetings needs to be reduced.
- IT will look into the problem of the screens freezing during calls and consider installing a new operating system.

Mucky pups – taking the minutes

Amanda Wairimu works at a call centre for a travel company. Recently her boss asked her to take the minutes at a meeting. Because she was not comfortable with her language ability, she recorded what was said with a digital voice recorder. Here is that conversation:

Arne = Centre manager, James = a supervisor, Tor = IT manager, Kim = a member of the works council

Arne: Wasn't the traffic hellish this morning?

James: The S-Bahn wasn't much better!

Arne: Leaves on the line again, was it?

James: Think so.

Kim: How are the plans for a staff shuttle service coming on?

Arne: Last I heard they were negotiating a rate for a people carrier from the local taxi company. I'll find out and get back to you.

Tor: Ahem.

Arne: Ok, yes, let's get on, shall we? Thanks for coming to the meeting everyone. I'll try to be brief as I've had my knuckles rapped about the time we spend on meetings and we need to cut down on that. You're all doing a wonderful job. Last quarter we took more calls than the whole of last year. Well done!

James: ((sarcastically)) Wonderful!

Arne: Unfortunately however, we do have a slight, ehm, issue, that IT have brought to my attention.

Kim: What's that?

Tor: Dinner!

James: How kind of you to ask, Tor!

Arne: Eh? Oh, very funny. CSRs* aren't leaving their stations to eat during their lunch breaks.

Kim: And why is that a problem?

Tor: Because they're mucky pups!

Arne: Spilt food is causing damage to the keyboards.

James: Really? I've never spilt anything!

Tor: But yesterday someone in your team dropped a whole pot of yoghurt over their work station!

James: A one off! I spoke to him about that.

Kim: These keyboards have been here for donkey's years. On some you can't even read the key any more. Can't we get some new ones in?

Arne: Tor, please look into that and get some quotes for me. But first we must find an answer to this problem!

James: The thing is we don't have anywhere to go for lunch.

Kim: How about extending the breaks so staff can leave the premises? There's a pub just down the road.

James: Fantastic idea!

Arne: No, ehm, that's hardly ideal, The 45 minutes we already have is more than enough time!

Kim: Ah yes, we need to make sure there's time for our meetings.

Tor: If we just had a room to go to during breaks, there wouldn't be a problem.

James: Good idea. Tor, your office is very spacious!

Tor: I'm not moving to a smaller room. It would create all manner of communication problems.

Kim: Which also reminds me – please can we update the operating system that we're using. Several people have complained that their screens keep freezing when they take a call.

Tor: I'll look into it, I'm not sure it's because of the OS though.

Arne: Good, keep me informed. Back to our mucky pups.

Kim: There's not really anywhere else to go. (Arne receives a phone call)

Arne: Sorry everyone, I need to take an urgent call. I don't really want to spend much time on this and we need a solution today. James, please take over, discuss it together and let me know what you've come up with by the end of today.

* CSR – customer service representative

