

Unit 5 Starting a job

Activity/Task	Title	Approx. Duration	Internet access necessary	Can be done offline
Activity 1	Before starting a job			
Task 1	Types of contracts	15 minutes		x
Task 2	Understanding your contract and working conditions	30 minutes	x	X
Task 3	Negotiating terms of employment	20 minutes	x	X
Activity 2	First day at work			
Task 1	First impressions	15 minutes		x
Task 2	Asking for help	15 minutes		x
Task 3	Establishing roles	15 minutes		x
Activity 3	Getting to know the work environment			
Task 1	Cultural awareness at the workplace	15 minutes	x	
Task 2	Cultural sensitivity	20 minutes	x	
Task 3	Digital literacy	20 minutes		x
Activity 4	Collaboration skills			
Task 1	Establishing first contacts at work	20 min	x	
Task 2	Collaborating and Teamwork	30 min		x
Activity 5	Resilience and wellbeing			
Task 1	Learning from experiences of others	20 Minutes		x
Task 2	Shaping your career	20 Minutes	X	
Task 3	Five ways to wellbeing	20 Minutes		x
	Worksheets			
	Answer key			
	Personal Evaluation			
	Personal Reflection			

Activity 1: Before starting the job

Unit B5	Starting a job
Activity 1	Before starting a new job
Duration	1 hour
Rationale	To learn about types of contracts; to understand your contract and work conditions; to be able to negotiate terms of employment; to understand the probation period
Focus	Related to starting a job
PICC skills	Ability to understand complex work-related documents like contracts; as well as to prepare and realise negotiations in the workplace
Language work	The language of negotiating - Conveying own standpoints and arguments in a respectful manner with appropriate vocabulary

Focus & Reflection

Step 1:

Think about your employment history. What different types of contracts have you come across in terms of employment duration and regulation of your salary?

What contractual rights and responsibilities are important to you?

Step 2:

Now think about your current work contract. Were there any striking differences to the contracts you had in the past?

Preparation

While studying this activity you should ideally have access to a pc/laptop with internet connection. You will be asked to look at online sources and/or to watch video recordings. Ideally, you will have your current work contract to hand.

TIP! If you don't have a work contract to hand don't worry, this won't prevent you from benefiting from this activity.

This activity is broken up into 3 tasks. You can take a break in-between tasks. Ideally, the tasks should be studied in the order in which they appear but it is also possible to skip a task. There are variation and extension activities to some of the tasks, which you will find at the end.

Task 1: Types of contracts

Duration: 15 minutes

Before you start a new job it is important to inform yourself about **typical contracts in the EU**. It is likely that you will be given a contract that matches your skills and qualities as well as the employer's needs and requirements. In the majority of cases, the contract is drawn up by the employer, and people don't get to choose the type of contract. Therefore, read it through carefully and critically, and finally, if you agree with the terms stated, sign.

This task helps you to gain understanding of the typical types of contracts in European countries. Based on this knowledge you can evaluate your contract, whether it suits you and your employer, and whether you want to negotiate parts of it. Read through the five types of contracts given and evaluate which of these would suit the persons described below:

Five types of contracts:

- **Permanent** (permanent staff) – common type of contract which allows you to stay employed until you or your employer no longer wish to work together.
- **Fixed-term** (contract staff) – with this contract, you can work on a fixed-term contract basis, most often as manual or administrative support.
- **Temporary** (temporary staff) – this contract offers employment on a temporary basis, most often reserved for highly specialised fields (e.g. scientific research).
- **Short-term** (interim staff) – this contract is mostly offered for secretarial roles and are usually of 6 months duration.
- **Traineeship** – is designed for people who wish to increase and develop their professional skills

Each contract requires different set of stages and procedures.

1. In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of each contract?

TIP! To learn more about types of contracts in EU, see https://ec.europa.eu/info/jobs-european-commission/contract-type_en

Task 2: Understanding your contract and working conditions

Duration: 30 minutes

To ensure a great start in your new job, it is very helpful to know what is expected from you as well as your rights and obligations. This is why carefully reading and evaluating your contract critically is essential.

Take your employment contract (if you have it to hand) and try to answer the questions below.

TIP! If you don't have an employment contract, see

German: https://ec.europa.eu/info/jobs-european-commission/contract-type_de

Dutch: https://ec.europa.eu/info/jobs-european-commission/contract-type_nl

English: <https://www.gov.uk/contract-types-and-employer-responsibilities>

What kind of contract have you been offered in your new employment?

- What are your responsibilities?
- What are your employer's responsibilities?
- On what basis and how often would your salary increase?
- Is there a possibility of promotion?
- How are bonuses regulated?
- Can the employer reduce your salary and on what grounds?
- How does this type of contract suit you?
- What are the good things about your new contract?
- Is there anything that you would like to change?
- Do you have a chance for further training?

In Austria, it is stipulated by law that salaries have to be paid 14 times a year. This is usually done in June and November. However, in other European countries, such as Netherlands and the UK, this is not the case. Number of salaries largely depends on the country's policies and regulations and, therefore, differs across Europe.

Useful contract vocabulary

- befristet
- unbefristet
- Zustimmung
- Bedingung
- Urlaub
- Krankenstand
- erfüllen
- rechtfertigen

German



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- temporary
- permanent
- agreement
- condition
- holiday
- sick leave
- fulfil
- warrant

English



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- tijdelijk
- vast
- overeenkomst
- periode
- vakantie
- ziektenverlof
- vervullen
- rechtvaardigexn

Dutch



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Task 3: Negotiating terms of employment

Duration: 20 minutes

Negotiating the terms of employment is rarely easy and whether and how it is appropriate is influenced by cultural aspects like the cultural background of employee and employer, but also work place culture. For example, In Austria people typically negotiate their contracts, whereas this is very uncommon for jobs in the UK.

1. Think about the following questions:
 - Have you ever negotiated terms of employment before?
 - Were your negotiations successful in the past?
 - Do you feel comfortable negotiating? Why or why not?
 - What could you negotiate in your new job?
 - What do you think is appropriate to negotiate and what is not?
2. Take a look at the Harvard Business Review article '15 rules for negotiating a job offer' <https://hbr.org/2014/04/15-rules-for-negotiating-a-job-offer>

Depending on your evaluation of the situation and your wishes and needs, you will want to negotiate, or not. In either, case, however, it will be useful to have clarity over the expectations your employer has towards you, and of course, your expectations towards your employer – It's all about communication! Having clarity over expectations on both sides prevents disputes and supports you in organizing your priorities at work.

3. Now imagine you have just received a job offer. Think about the following:
 - Think about what you would like to negotiate in your new job and write it down.
 - Think about how you would make the argument to convince your employer to agree with your suggestions and ideas and write them down. Words and phrases you have learned in this unit so far should be of help.



TIP! Stand in front of a mirror or take your phone and video record yourself trying to negotiate what you have just written.

Here are a few phrases to get you started:

English

- "I am excited about the opportunity to work together"
- "I was wondering if (e.g. workhours) could be negotiated?"
- For some positions, salary is fixed and for some it is not. In case your salary could be negotiated, this might be a useful phrase for you "Would that number be flexible at all?"
It is a polite way of creating an opportunity to be offered more
- "I would be more comfortable if..."
- "I would really appreciate if you could..."
- **"Thank you!"** 😊

German

- "Es freut mich sehr, mit Ihnen zusammenarbeiten zu dürfen."
- "Ich wollte Sie auch fragen, ob (z. B. Arbeitszeiten) noch zu verhandeln sind?"
- Für manche Arbeitsverhältnisse, ist das Gehalt fixiert, bei anderen gibt es noch Verhandlungsspielraum. Du könntest fragen: "Bezüglich des Gehalts – ist dieser Betrag denn noch verhandelbar?"
- "Es wäre für mich einfacher, wenn"

Dutch

- "Ik ben enthousiast over de mogelijke samenwerking"
- "Ik vroeg me af of er nog te onderhandelen is over (bijv. werktijd)?"
- Voor sommige functies ligt het salaris vast en voor sommige functies nog niet. In het geval dat er over het salaris onderhandeld kan worden, zou dit een nuttige zin kunnen zijn: "is het bedrag nog onderhandelbaar?"
- "Het zou mij beter passen wanneer..."
- "Ik zou het erg waarderen wanneer u ..."
- "Bedankt!"

Activity 2: First day at work

Unit B5	Starting a job
Activity 2	First day at work
Duration	45 minutes
Rationale	To leave a great first impression on your first day of work; to understand the welcoming process; to learn asking for help in a professional way; to establish roles and practice self-confidence
Focus	Related to starting a job
PICC skills	Navigating through a new work environment, making contacts in a new language and establish expectations and responsibilities
Language work	Introducing and presenting oneself

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Focus & Reflection

Step 1:

When you meet a stranger who is new to your group, what behaviours or characteristics do you pay attention to?

Step 2:

Since you arrived in your host country, in what contexts did you try to make a good first impression? What did you do in order to come across as polite, friendly or likeable?

Preparation

For this activity, all you need is a piece of paper and a pen.

This activity is broken up into 3 tasks. You can take a break in-between tasks. Ideally, the tasks should be studied in the order in which they appear but it is also possible to skip a task. There are variation and extension activities to some of the tasks, which you will find at the end.

Task 1: First impressions

Duration: 15 minutes

The first days at work can be challenging, sometimes even stressful, as, regardless of our previous experiences, we are new to this work place and the people around us. Preparation can help you to anticipate situations and work out strategies of handling them, when the moment comes to do so.

1. Make yourself a preparation checklist and collect useful information and strategies. Start with questions like: Do you have your documents (if asked from HR – human resources)? What are you going to wear? How will you get there? Do you have your pen and notebook with you? Who is the person you are addressing if you need anything? Add your own questions.

You will meet many of your co-workers during the first weeks at your new work place. Show your interest in people and show them the best version of you. Be on time, keep your friendly tone and don't hesitate to ask questions if you have some – this signals your interest and opens a pathway to communication with your co-workers.

2. Think about the following questions:

- What kind of first impression do you think you are making in your new position?
- How have you established contact with your co-workers?
- What helps you to start a conversation?

3. The following task "Elevator Pitch" can help you to take the opportunity of meeting someone and connecting with them within the short time spans of a busy day at work:

- Imagine that you are in an elevator with a few colleagues from your new work. They ask who you are, where you were working before, and what your new position will be. You only have 30 seconds to reveal these details. Write down a couple of sentences to reflect this.



Task 2: Asking for help

Duration: 15 minutes

When starting a new job, you will have to take time and find out how certain procedures necessary for your job are done (e.g. where do you get your post from, where do you get new stationary). These are often matters that have become obvious to colleagues who, therefore, might not realize where you would need help. So, it is up to you to ask questions and learn about what it is you need to your work properly.

1. Think about the following questions:
 - What do you usually do when you seek for help in the work place?
 - In how far might cultural diversity play a role in how you seek help?
 - Which strategies for seeking help do you think are most promising?
 - How can you turn your request for help into an invitation to help you?

2. Now think of a concrete challenge you faced in your past professional life, or you are facing at work right now. Formulate a request for help. If possible, play it through with a colleague or discuss it with someone.
 - Describe the problem
 - What do you do before?
 - Who will you ask?
 - How will you ask?
 - What do you do afterwards?

Task 3: Establishing roles

Duration: 15 minutes

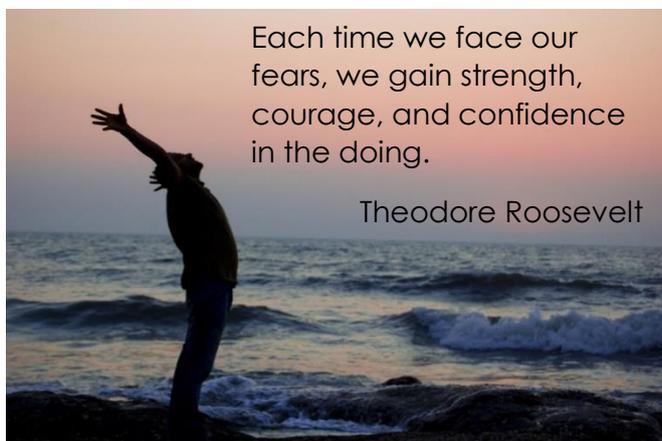
Research has shown that people often feel nervous and anxious in new situations. This is sometimes due to our lack of confidence in how to introduce ourselves. Preparing what you would like to say, like in the elevator pitch would be one strategy. Another one is to have a confidence Mantra: A Mantra is a motivating chant, a phrase or a sentence that you say repeatedly, for example “I can deal with whatever comes my way” or “I can do it!” This is a great chance to think and write down statements of what you can do. Write something that makes you feel better and helps you boost your self-confidence.

1. Think about the following:

- Have you practiced a mantra before?
- What other strategies do you have to boost your self-confidence?

2. Next, write down a mantra.

Tip! You can do this in your first language if you prefer. Take the piece of paper, fold it, and keep it in your pocket or your wallet and repeat it often. Neuroscientists have found that a mantra, when repeated can be a powerful meditation and therapy tool which calms down your nervous system and frees your mind!



Each time we face our fears, we gain strength, courage, and confidence in the doing.

Theodore Roosevelt

Activity 3: Getting to know your workplace

Unit B5	Starting a job
Activity 3	Getting to know your workplace
Duration	50 minutes
Rationale	To develop awareness of the role of culture in the work place; to learn cultural sensitivity and critical thinking; to learn work-related language and strategies of how to acquire it; to develop digital skills and know how to improve them
Focus	Related to starting a job
PICC skills	Cultural Awareness and Digital Literacy
Language work	Awareness of the impact of Culture on language use and interactions

Focus & Reflection

Step 1:

What elements of culture could matter in the workplace? Consider beliefs, values, practices, manners of interacting, rituals, customs, roles and language.

Can you think of an example in your current or past workplaces?

Step 2:

How digitally literate are you?

Take a test online: <http://www.digitalliteracy.eu/>

Preparation

While studying this activity you should ideally have access to a pc/laptop with internet connection. You will be asked to look at online sources and/or to watch video recordings.

This activity is broken up into 3 tasks. You can take a break in-between tasks. Ideally, the tasks should be studied in the order in which they appear but it is also possible to skip a task. There are variation and extension activities to some of the tasks, which you will find at the end.

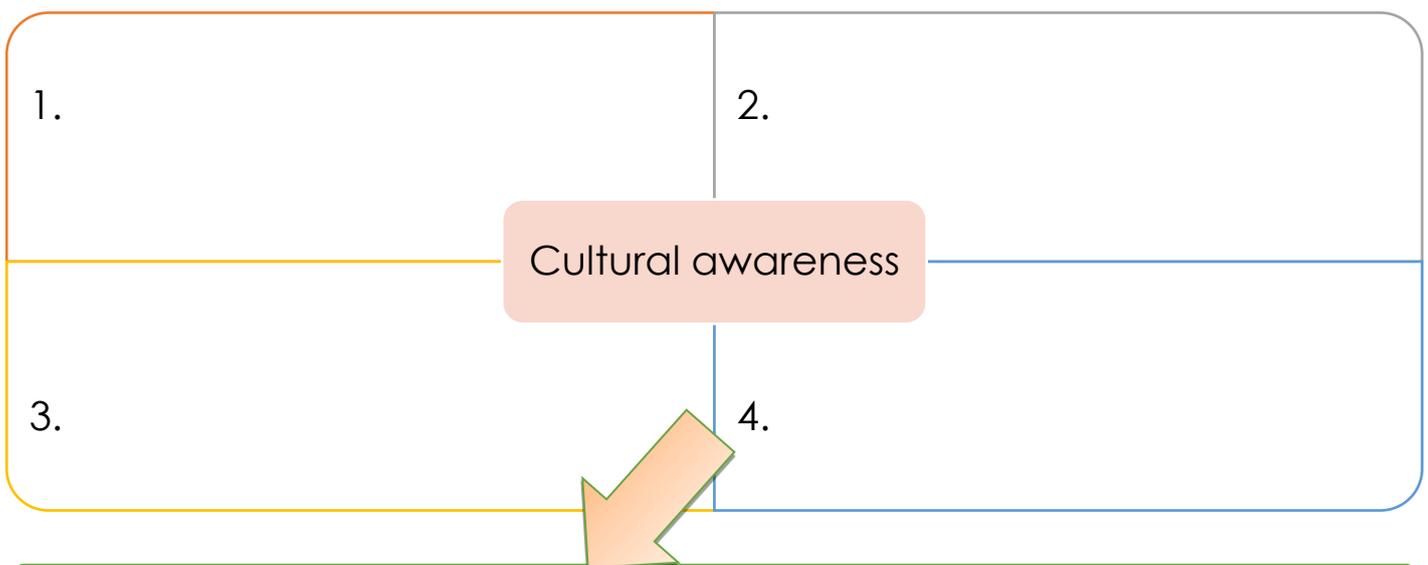
Task 1: Cultural awareness in the workplace

Duration: 20 minutes

1. Think about cultural diversity at your workplace. Whenever we enter a new workplace, we will be challenged to get to know what people think, behave, and interact and find out how we relate to these and whether we can and want to adapt.
2. Whenever we enter a new workplace, we will be challenged to get to know what people think, behave, and interact, and find out how we relate to these and whether we can and want to adapt. Watch the following video with your students and ask them to write down the four tips the speaker gives on how to communicate with cultural awareness:



https://www.cloudschool.org/activities/ahFzfmNsb3Vkc2Nob29sLWFwcHI5CxIEVXNlchiAgICA_d-UCgwLEgZDb3Vyc2UYgICAgOjSigoMCxIIOWN0aXZpdHkYgICAgPSvlgkMogEONTcyODg4NTg4Mjc0ODkyOA



Ideas for research questions

- What do people say to others when they enter the workplace for the first time this day/when they leave?
- How do people approach the other if they need to interrupt the other's work?
- How do people ask for help?
- How close do people stand next to each other while they are talking?
- How do people approach someone higher in rank?
- How do people approach each other if they need help/if they ask a favour?
- How do people signal attention through their **body language**?



Tip To find out more about **body language** and the interplay of verbal and non-verbal communication go to Unit 4!

TIP

By **being observant** in your daily routines at work, you can already find out a lot about the workplace culture. For example, you could pay attention to who is already there when you enter the building and who is still there when you leave. Thereby, you can find out about people's working habits and who you can talk to at which times.

TIP

Take 10 minutes each day to make a **mini research** about the workplace culture if they are new to a work environment. For example, during the lunch break, find a place where you can observe others and pay attention to how they interact. Make sure to observe discretely, so that people do not feel under observation. The questions below can help you to focus on cultural elements.

Task 2: Cultural Sensitivity

Duration: 15 minutes

In Cultural Studies, researchers compare the visibility of one's culture to an iceberg, as only a fraction of it is visible on the surface. Values, roles and thought patterns can only be assumed when we first meet someone. Keeping this in mind, we should not be too quick to judge.

Cultural awareness coaches point out that it can be helpful to distinguish between **universal** (behaviour that all people have in common), **cultural** (what a group of people have in common), and **personal** (individual characteristics) dimension of human behaviour to develop a critical attitude towards conclusions on peoples' culture.

1. Mark the described behaviour with "U" for Universal, "C" for cultural, and "P" for personal dimension. Discuss the different dimensions with a friend and reflect upon experiences you have made.

1. Sleeping with the bedroom window open _____
2. Shaking when it is cold _____
3. A man holding the door for a woman _____
4. Preferring to play soccer over reading a book _____
5. Eating with knife, fork and spoon. _____

🔑 See answer key at the end of the module for the right answers

2. Can you think of an example for a situation in which the behaviour of your new work colleagues surprised you? What was visible on the surface, and what assumptions did you make?
 - Does the above described example fit into the universal, the cultural or the personal dimension?

Task 3: Digital Literacy

Duration: 20 minutes

In almost every job today people's work is related to computers, programmes, and databases. When we know how to use these digital tools effectively, it can greatly benefit our work.

1. Watch the following video 'Digital literacy and why it matters' and pick three digital skills that are mentioned. Rate yourself, using the numbers 1 (unskilled) to 10 (very skilled):

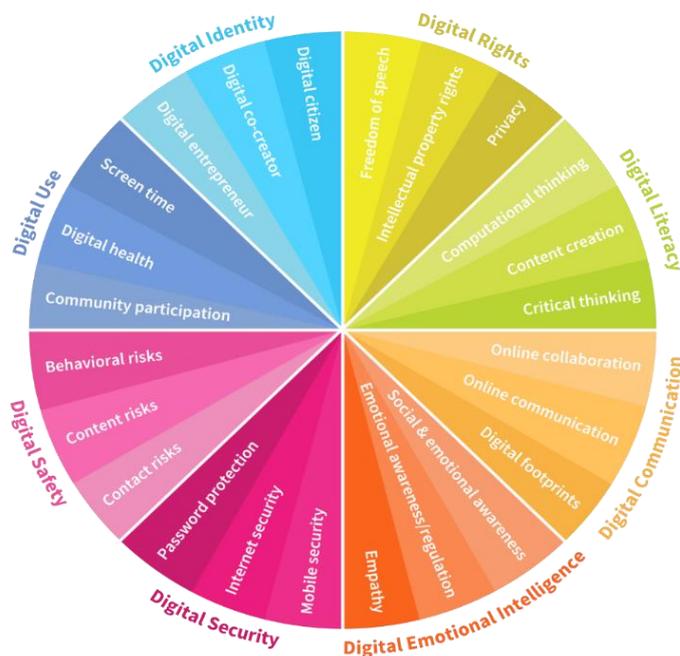
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2k3C-iB88w>

Skill 1: _____ Score: _____

Skill 2: _____ Score: _____

Skill 3: _____ Score: _____

- 2- Did you give yourself a score of 7 or higher in one of the three skills? If yes, how did you acquire this skill, and in what ways could it be useful for your new job?
3. Did you give yourself a score of less than 5 for one of the skills? If yes, how do you think you could develop this skill? Does your workplace offer any training?
4. Now take a look at Worksheet 2 and complete the exercise on writing a professional e-mail.



Activity 4: Collaboration Skills

Unit B5	Starting a job
Activity 4	Collaboration Skills
Duration	50 minutes
Rationale	To develop strategies of establishing contacts at a new work place and to enhance the integration into a new workplace.
Focus	Related to starting a job
PICC skills	Ability to form and maintain successful work collaborations
Language work	Asking relevant questions

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Focus & Reflection

Step 1:

Think about your own experiences relating to teamwork.

Name 3 potential challenges for a collaboration.

Name 3 factors for a successful collaboration.

Step 2:

Pick two elements of collaboration you feel confident about and complete the following statement for each element:

I feel confident about _____ . My strength in this area is

_____ . It is beneficial to my work, as I can

_____ .

Preparation

While studying this activity you should ideally have access to a pc/laptop with internet connection. You will be asked to look at online sources and/or to watch video recordings.

This activity is broken up into 2 tasks. You can take a break in-between tasks. Ideally, the tasks should be studied in the order in which they appear but it is also possible to skip a task. There are variation and extension activities to some of the tasks, which you will find at the end.

Task 1: Establishing first contacts at work

Duration: 20 minutes

Throughout our lives we are entering new situations and new places, in which we find our position and roles. Every one of us, therefore, already has skills of connecting and integrating. Integrating into a new environment does not mean to give up who you are, but to see where you could and want to connect to people and make the group "whole".

At new workplaces it can be challenging to find time for you and your colleagues to talk and connect. Often these are so involved in their daily work routine that they do not look out for new contacts. The most important thing, therefore, is to find and take opportunities to talk to people and to be courageous and make the first step.

1. Visit the following website and read the advice on how to build professional networks: <https://careerservices.princeton.edu/graduate-students/exploring-options-outside-academy/networking/questions-ask>

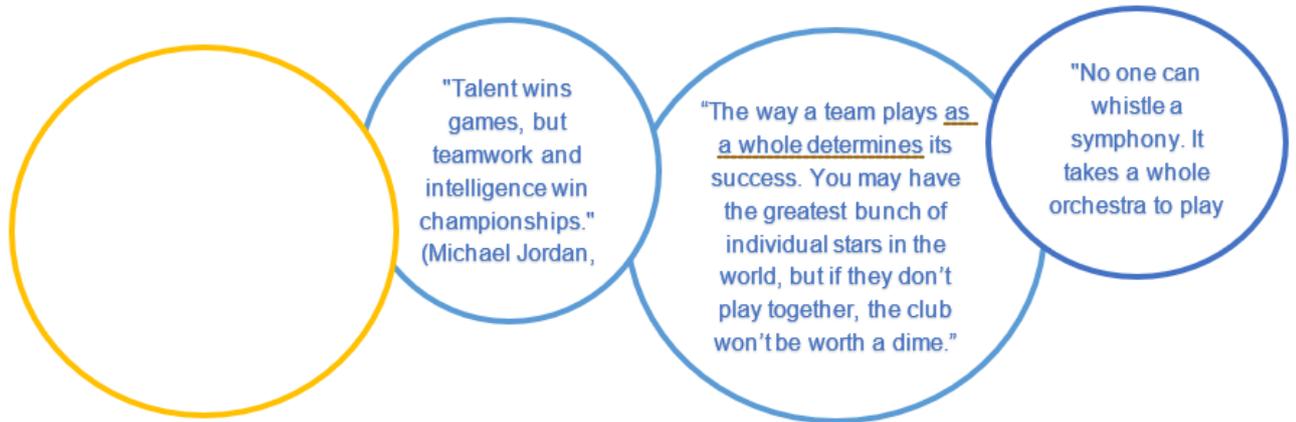
- Choose three questions that you could ask a new colleague in the target language:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

- 3. Do you now similar quotes or sayings in another language? If not, use your language to create a saying with a similar message.



Activity 5: Resilience and Wellbeing

Unit B5	Starting a job
Activity 5	Resilience and Well Being
Duration	1 hour
Rationale	Enable learners to become aware of their full potential; to raise awareness of the concept of wellbeing, its importance and to enable learners to integrate actions which enhance wellbeing in their everyday life
Focus	Related to starting a job
PICC skills	Ability to reflect on the role of resilience and wellbeing in workplace communication
Language work	Identifying key words that describe abilities and emotions

Focus & Reflection

Step 1:

Which elements of your job reflect your own abilities and ideals?

How do you make a job your own? What qualities and skills do you have that go beyond the job requirements?

Step 2:

What part of your daily routine has the purpose of making you feel happier?

Preparation

While studying this activity you should ideally have access to a pc/laptop with internet connection. You will be asked to look at online sources and/or to watch video recordings.

This activity is broken up into 3 tasks. You can take a break in-between tasks. Ideally, the tasks should be studied in the order in which they appear but it is also possible to skip a task. There are variation and extension activities to some of the tasks, which you will find at the end.

Task 1: Learning from the experiences of others

Duration: 20 minutes

Read through this story of a woman from Georgia* who came to Austria as a refugee and answer the questions below. Note that this is a true story and provides the woman's perspective on the challenges and opportunities, she took and how she developed throughout her first years after emigrating. To keep her identity anonymous, personal data have been changed.

Madiika has been trained to be a Russian Literature teacher, however, had to leave Georgia before she could start teaching. She flew to the Czech Republic and then further to Austria. She had very limited knowledge about Western European culture and Austria, and had not been traveling before emigrating, as there were bans on travelling from her country. When she arrived in Austria, she was reluctant to do manual labour, since she wanted to work in a job more related to her education. Upon arrival, she had no knowledge of German. This had a very debilitating effect on her. She was able to learn the language through formal education (language courses focusing on grammar, communication skills and intercultural communication, leading to B1 level), interactions at work, and visits to museums and libraries. She got in a training organized by an NGO, in which she focused on developing her language skills, communicative ability and conflict management skills. At the time, this inspired her to study more, with a view to becoming a kindergarten teacher and improve her German to C1 level, although she no longer wants to pursue these plans.

All of this is about 12 years ago from today. Today, Madiika is working as an integration assistant in a kindergarten and enjoys her work. Thinking back, integration in Austrian society was very hard for her. Societal attitudes towards migrants were a particularly salient problem and were associated with regular instances of prejudicial behavior. She pointed out how her modest attire had alienated many coworkers and parents at a kindergarten where she used to work. She also pointed out that this was not necessarily linked to migration, but that it is an issue minorities are facing in general.

The advice she would give migrants today: "Take the opportunity of vocational trainings in a field you like and have the courage to talk to people! You will only see the benefit of making contact with other people once you start communicating with them!"

1. Now answer the following questions:

- Which challenges did Madiika face, when she arrived in Austria?
- What skills did Madiika have to learn to get a job she found suitable for her education?
- Which character traits would you say Madiika needed to develop to keep going through these challenging times?
- Can you relate this story to your own experiences? Are there any parallels, or differences? Do you find these reports helpful for finding your own path?

Task 2: Shaping your career

Duration: 20 minutes

The job market offers positions to us which we might find suit us perfectly – but there is no perfect job, and there is no single way of doing a job perfectly. We, equipped with our personality as well as our unique skillsets, influence and shape every job we do. Some studies suggest that instead of adapting to a position, we should seek a position that allows us to adapt according to what we as applicants bring to the table. This is referred to as “Job Crafting”.

1. Visit the website <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/job-crafting/> and read the article on “Job Crafting”.
 - Reflect on your own career – where did your skills and interests unexpectedly help solving a task?
 - Could these insights be useful in your new career?

Task 3: Five ways to wellbeing

Duration: 20minutes

In the past two decades, scientists have emphasised the importance of wellbeing. It is defined as a state of being comfortable, happy and healthy. Personal fulfilment, inner satisfaction, and a positive sense of purpose are also components of our wellbeing. Our wellbeing is very important for our overall health.

There are five strategies that could improve your wellbeing:

1. Connect with people around you

This does not have to be a large number of people, having few people who you feel close connection to will do wonders to protect you from negativity and stress.

2. Be active

To maintain your health, being active is very important. Being active doesn't mean that you have to run a marathon or train every day. There are studies that show that exercising at least 10 minutes a day can bring you significant health benefits.

3. Take notice

Being engaged with your surroundings and being aware of what is going on in the present are very important for your wellbeing. This is also called mindfulness – consciously paying attention to what you are feeling, sensing, and thinking. It helps your sense of control, which is beneficial to how you feel about yourself.

4. Learn

Keep learning and seek for opportunities to learn. Continual learning will improve your self-esteem, which is a very important component of wellbeing. Learning does not only imply formal contexts such as schools, courses and universities. You can learn new things from the books, magazines, newspapers, and the internet.

5. Give

It is wonderful to take care of yourself and you should always keep doing it but doing something for someone else will enhance your feeling of wellbeing.

1. Think about your daily routines now: Which of these 5 steps have you taken in the past week?
2. Name two actions you can take to fulfil each of the above five strategies – how can they be beneficial for your wellbeing?

Extension

Duration: 15 minutes maximum

Activity 3: Getting to know your workplace

Think about the job you have just started. Think about (a) important objects and places, (b) people and (c) actions which might be relevant to your role. Use Worksheet 1 to complete this exercise.

Worksheet 1

Getting to know your workplace: Jargon

Find the job description you applied for or go to the website of your work place and start a list of words with the following categories. Add new words as you go along.

Objects I work with, places I work at	People I work with	My actions at work
For example: the reception, the printer, the surgery, ...	For example: the line manager, the nurses, the secretary, ...	For example: answering the phone, selling cars

Worksheet 2

Collaborating via e-mail

You are working for a news magazine and have the job to research on the challenges schools are facing today. You have asked for help to do your research with a colleague and your direct superior has asked your colleague Mr. Schmidt, who was a former teacher, to collaborate with you. You want to collect ideas on how to get more insights into what's going on in schools in your area. Continue the e-mail conversation in your target language and include the following points: •

- express your appreciation of having the opportunity to collaborate with Mr. Schmidt
- show that you have done your research and ideas you have thought of
- set up a common goal and interest
- ask for a meeting to brainstorm more ideas together
- suggest dates when you are available

TIP: Find language materials on work-based email correspondence in

German: <https://www.wirtschaftsdeutsch.de/lehmaterialien/ueberblickkor1.php#RRE>

English:

Dutch:

https://taaladvies.net/taal/advies/tekst/89/opmaak_van_een_zakelijke_email_algemeen/

<http://virtueletraining.com/schrijven/teksten-schrijven/brieven-en-e-mails/>

From: you@workplace.com

To: MrGeorg@workplace.com

Subject: Brainstorming ideas for article "Today's challenges in Location Schools"

Dear Mr. Schmidt,

Kind regards

Extension

Duration: 15 minutes maximum

Activity 3 Task 1: Cultural awareness in the workplace

Cognitive biases

Another way to develop culturally sensitive and critical thinking is to take a closer look at thought patterns. Our brain is trained to work efficiently, however, sometimes, this efficiency principle may cause us making decisions in the same way over and over again, rather than responding appropriately to the situation. These tendencies are called cognitive biases.

Everyone is influenced by cognitive biases, still we can train to recognize them and take self-aware decisions. The most effective way is to critically reflect upon your thinking. The following 20 cognitive bias descriptions are taken from this website: <http://mentalfloss.com/article/68705/20-cognitive-biases-affect-your-decisions>.

Worksheet 3

Cognitive Biases

Have a look at the following biases, and reflect – are there situations where your behaviour was influenced by one of these? Retrospectively, do you recognize certain biases in your friends' and colleagues' behaviour? Pick three examples of a cognitive bias for each question.

20 COGNITIVE BIASES THAT SCREW UP YOUR DECISIONS

1. Anchoring bias.

People are **over-reliant** on the first piece of information they hear. In a salary negotiation, whoever makes the first offer establishes a range of reasonable possibilities in each person's mind.



2. Availability heuristic.

People **overestimate the importance** of information that is available to them. A person might argue that smoking is not unhealthy because they know someone who lived to 100 and smoked three packs a day.



3. Bandwagon effect.

The probability of one person adopting a belief increases based on the number of people who hold that belief. This is a powerful form of **groupthink** and is reason why meetings are often unproductive.



4. Blind-spot bias.

Failing to recognize your own cognitive biases is a bias in itself. People notice cognitive and motivational biases much more in others than in themselves.



5. Choice-supportive bias.

When you choose something, you tend to feel positive about it, even if that **choice has flaws**. Like how you think your dog is awesome – even if it bites people every once in a while.



6. Clustering illusion.

This is the tendency to see **patterns in random events**. It is key to various gambling fallacies, like the idea that red is more or less likely to turn up on a roulette table after a string of reds.



7. Confirmation bias.

We tend to listen only to information that confirms our **preconceptions** – one of the many reasons it's so hard to have an intelligent conversation about climate change.



8. Conservatism bias.

Where people favor prior evidence over new evidence or information that has emerged. People were **slow to accept** that the Earth was round because they maintained their earlier understanding that the planet was flat.



9. Information bias.

The tendency to **seek information when it does not affect action**. More information is not always better. With less information, people can often make more accurate predictions.



10. Ostrich effect.

The decision to **ignore dangerous or negative information** by "burying" one's head in the sand, like an ostrich. Research suggests that investors check the value of their holdings significantly less often during bad markets.



11. Outcome bias.

Judging a decision based on the **outcome** – rather than how exactly the decision was made in the moment. Just because you won a lot in Vegas doesn't mean gambling your money was a smart decision.



12. Overconfidence.

Some of us are **too confident about our abilities**, and this causes us to take greater risks in our daily lives. Experts are more prone to this bias than laypeople, since they are more convinced that they are right.



13. Placebo effect.

When **simply believing** that something will have a certain effect on you causes it to have that effect. In medicine, people given fake pills often experience the same physiological effects as people given the real thing.



14. Pro-innovation bias.

When a proponent of an innovation tends to **overvalue its usefulness** and undervalue its limitations. Sound familiar, Silicon Valley?



15. Recency.

The tendency to weigh the **latest information** more heavily than older data. Investors often think the market will always look the way it looks today and make unwise decisions.



16. Saliency.

Our tendency to focus on the **most easily recognizable features** of a person or concept. When you think about dying, you might worry about being mauled by a lion, as opposed to what is statistically more likely, like dying in a car accident.



17. Selective perception.

Allowing our expectations to **influence how we perceive** the world. An experiment involving a football game between students from two universities showed that one team saw the opposing team commit more infractions.



18. Stereotyping.

Expecting a group or person to have certain qualities without having real information about the person. It allows us to quickly identify strangers as friends or enemies, but people tend to **overuse and abuse** it.



19. Survivorship bias.

An error that comes from focusing only on surviving examples, causing us to **misjudge a situation**. For instance, we might think that being an entrepreneur is easy because we haven't heard of all those who failed.



20. Zero-risk bias.

Sociologists have found that **we love certainty** – even if it's counterproductive. Eliminating risk entirely means there is no chance of harm being caused.



Answer key Unit 5

Activity 1, Task 1. Types of contracts

Iva – traineeship, Jan – fixed term, Zorica – temporary staff, Efe – permanent (assistant/secretary)

Activity 3, Task 2 Cultural Sensitivity

1. Personal
2. Universal
3. Cultural
4. Personal
5. Cultural

Personal Evaluation

This checklist is for your personal evaluation of what you have learned in this unit. Tick the boxes if you feel confident about your newly acquired knowledge. Any you are not sure about, you can either revisit or explore the additional resources section below for more online materials and ideas.

I can ...

- identify types of contracts
- understand and evaluate my contract and work conditions
- negotiate if I wish to do so
- leave a great first impression
- prepare well for my first day of work
- ask for help in a professional way
- use different strategies to get to know my work colleagues
- establish roles and boost my self-confidence
- interact sensitively in culturally diverse settings
- critically reflect my judgments about others
- use appropriate language required for doing my job
- develop and apply my digital literacy skills
- collaborate with my work colleagues
- describe my strengths in taking challenges
- give advice on personal well-being
- use different strategies of maintaining my own well-being

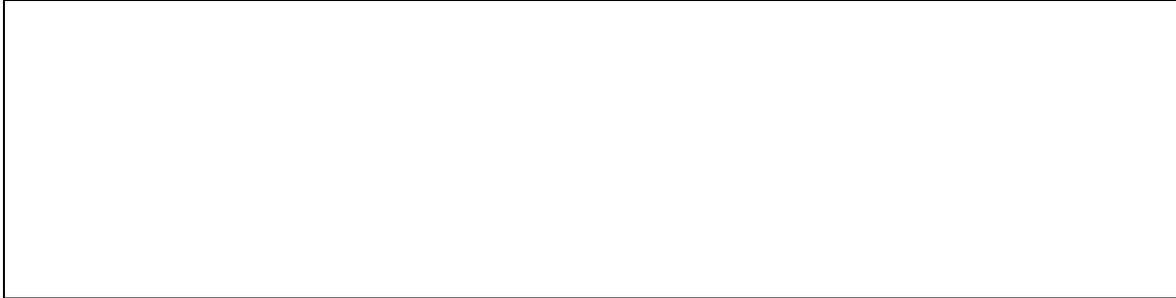
Personal Reflection

What have you learnt?

What were your strategies to ensure your own wellbeing before? Did you find the tips in this module helpful?

Have you encountered any behaviours or customs here that are hard for you to understand when meeting strangers? Are there any differences in your understanding of politeness and good first impressions to the customs in your host country?

How diverse is the cultural background of the new group of people you are working with?
Why is it good to be cautious with the judgments we make about others?



What type of contract would suit you best at this point in your career?

