

# **Success on the Job**

## **Understanding What You Read**

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# To the Teacher

*Success on the Job: Understanding What You Read* is designed to help prepare students for reading in today's competitive workplace. We hope to help beginning workers go beyond simply comprehending printed materials to learning what to do with the information they are given. The exercises in reading comprehension and critical thinking included here will help learners develop the habit of using what they read on the job to perform well and get ahead.

Additionally, many of the extension activities included with the teacher notes address the teamwork environment of today's business world. Cooperating in small groups and being a "team player" are valuable skills to acquire.

Many of the exercises in this book are challenging, but very much worth the work. The fact is, the reading materials given to people in entry-level jobs are rarely entry-level reading. Many real-life pieces included here are good examples. Beginning workers are often given employee manuals containing very difficult terms and complex concepts. Yet, if employees are to understand their duties, opportunities, and rights, they should be able to decipher these materials, as well as everyday memos and instructions using some of the same vocabulary. The materials in this book will help prepare students for the real reading they will encounter on the job. The information and activities will also help them avoid or handle common first-job mistakes and stumbling blocks.

While meeting these needs, *Understanding What You Read* addresses many of the national standards for business education in informational reading, including, but not limited to the following:

- establishing a vocabulary of business terms, using context clues to arrive at meanings
- expressing reading comprehension by restating or summarizing
- retaining and interpreting information
- analyzing the integrity of printed materials
- reading and following directions
- interpreting real-life business materials, including graphics.

Your guidance is integral to the complete success of this program, though students can do the work sheets on their own or in pairs or groups. In-class discussion is very helpful. Invite students to share stories from jobs they've had. You can also ask them to bring in reading materials from their jobs to compare with those in *Understanding What You Read*.

For convenience, the materials are divided into four units, with each unit containing a teacher section and a number of reproducible student exercises. Unit 1, "You and the Job," provides some of the materials that employees might be given upon first landing a position. Unit 2, "Understanding the Workplace," considers some of the reading opportunities employees might encounter and use while finding their way around. Unit 3, "Doing the Job," looks at a number of printed pieces employees would use in actually performing their assigned jobs. As with the other units, this selection is not exhaustive but gives students practice with a reasonable number and variety of materials. Finally, Unit 4, "Advancing on the Job," studies some items employees would need or encounter while trying to move up.

Each student exercise includes a piece of reading, adapted from a real company's workplace, followed by two pages of questions. The teacher section for each unit includes a reproducible glossary of the boldfaced or listed terms in each exercise. You may photocopy this list and hand it out whenever it seems most appropriate, depending on your learners' needs.

The teacher section for each unit also includes objectives, suggested answers for each exercise, extension activities, and tips for diverse learning styles.

To proceed, we suggest you have students take their time reading the selection. The first response page asks learners to go back over the boldfaced or listed vocabulary in the reading and build definitions. Students may then reread before completing the questions. The first set of questions, "Finding the Meaning," tests students' comprehension of what they have read and their ability to skim for things they need to find. The second page of questions, "Looking Deeper," requires students to use reasoning and critical thinking skills to arrive at answers based on what they have read. Another section often included, "Using the Information," gives learners the opportunity to consider how they would work with or react to the printed material on the job.

After completing a number of these exercises, students should be more capable and confident in their on-the-job reading. We hope you and your classes all enjoy and profit from *Success on the Job: Understanding What You Read*.

## UNIT 1. YOU AND THE JOB

**Vocabulary***Organizational Chart*

<b>administration</b>	business management; department that oversees the business functions of a company; act of governing or controlling
<b>credit</b>	department that oversees customer accounts; entry of payment received on an account
<b>human resources</b>	department that oversees the hiring, firing, employee benefits programs, and work records of employees
<b>IS</b>	Information Systems; department that oversees the use of computers to record and track business activity
<b>marketing</b>	department that oversees the moving of goods or services from the producer to the consumer; may include advertising
<b>quality control</b>	department or activities that ensure the quality of produced goods
<b>TQM</b>	Total Quality Management; business theory and practice designed to involve all employees in ensuring the high quality of goods and services

*Job Descriptions*

<b>accommodations</b>	allowances or adjustments to ease use or to assist performance
<b>accrual</b>	adding up; accumulation
<b>downtime</b>	any period during which work stops. (On a production line, this may include times when machinery breaks down or is being cleaned, a different product line is being started or stopped, or an accident has occurred.)
<b>ergonomic</b>	arranged or designed to work safely and easily with the human body
<b>exempt</b>	not subject to (An exempt employee is one who is not subject to regulations, such as being paid for overtime. Most hourly line workers are not exempt; they must be paid for overtime.)
<b>mass-produce</b>	make or build many at once
<b>qualification</b>	a quality or skill that fits a person for a given job or task
<b>regulations</b>	laws or rules, such as for health and safety
<b>repetitive</b>	happening or doing again and again, as a task on an assembly line
<b>standardized</b>	made to be, look, or perform the same, time after time
<b>supervises</b>	oversees; directs the work of others



## UNIT 1. YOU AND THE JOB

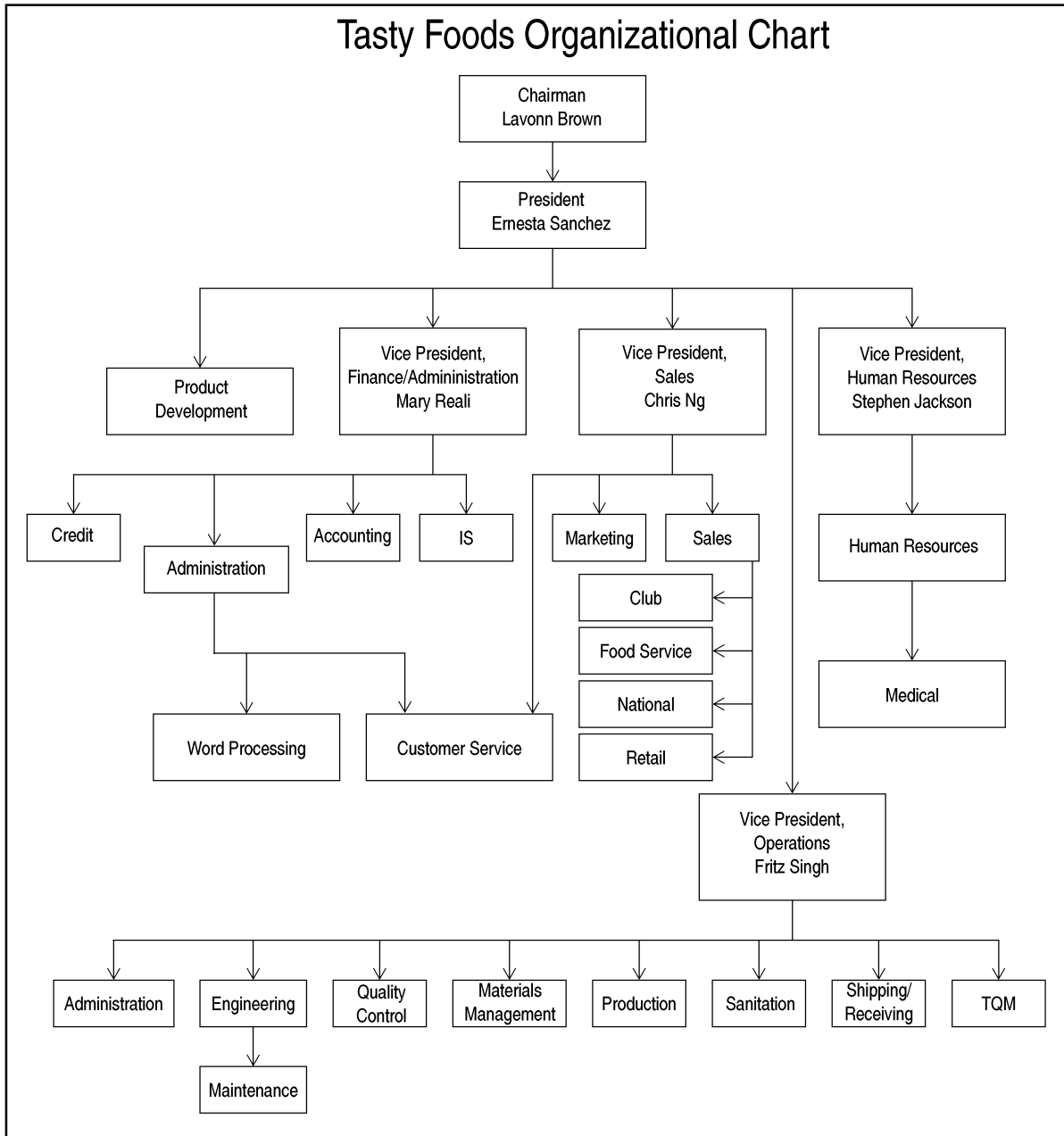
**Vocabulary (continued)***Misconduct and Discipline Policy*

<b>breach</b>	a breaking or violation of a relationship
<b>circumstances</b>	things that happen; conditions
<b>confidential</b>	private; secret; not for public use or knowledge
<b>culpability</b>	responsibility; guilt
<b>disciplinary action</b>	action taken to correct or punish behavior
<b>dismissal</b>	firing, laying off, “letting go”
<b>disregard</b>	lack of respect or right action
<b>disruption</b>	breaking; interrupting or causing disorder
<b>insubordination</b>	failure to show proper respect or behavior; disobeying authority
<b>intentional</b>	purposeful; not by accident or due to ignorance of the correct way
<b>involuntary</b>	not done by choice
<b>misconduct</b>	deliberate wrongdoing; improper behavior; failure to follow rules or procedures
<b>morale</b>	attitude of a group toward the tasks at hand or toward their common purpose
<b>negligence</b>	failure to take care (for example, with safety, quality of work)
<b>obligations</b>	requirements; responsibilities
<b>performance</b>	fulfillment of duties or responsibilities; work done to meet goals
<b>recurrence</b>	state of happening again
<b>severance pay</b>	pay given when an employee is cut (severed) from the company (It may range from one week’s to several months’ pay or more, depending on length of service and reasons for dismissal.)
<b>suspended</b>	removed from the job and/or workplace, either for a given period of time or indefinitely
<b>termination</b>	firing, ending of employment
<b>under the influence</b>	having consumed, and therefore being affected by, alcohol or other drugs
<b>warrant</b>	call for; make necessary



# Organizational Chart

Below is a page from the employee manual of a food company. You would receive the manual when you are hired as an employee. The manual tells you what the company is all about and how you fit in. Imagine you are an employee and read the chart below.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

UNIT 1. YOU AND THE JOB

## Organizational Chart

### Vocabulary

Some words from the organizational chart are listed below. On the back of this sheet or on another piece of paper, write what you think each term means in the context of this reading. Then find each term in a dictionary. Edit your definition to make it more precise.

administration

marketing

credit

quality control

human resources

TQM (Total Quality Management)

IS (information services)

### Finding the Meaning

Answer the following questions based on the organizational chart for Tasty Foods.

1. If you were in charge of Quality Control, to whom would you report?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. If you had a question about the company's health insurance, which department would you consult?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Which department is overseen by more than one vice president?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Imagine you work in retail sales for Tasty Foods. Describe the chain of command from your position up to the top of the company.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Who oversees Product Development? \_\_\_\_\_



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

UNIT 1. YOU AND THE JOB

## Organizational Chart

### *Looking Deeper*

Answer the following questions based on the organizational chart for Tasty Foods.

1. Why might Product Development be set off by itself on the chart?

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2. What would be the function of Sanitation at a food plant?

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3. Look at the eight boxes under Vice President, Operations. Boxes on this chart that are placed side by side or one under the other seem to be of equal importance. Tell whether you think this is true and why.

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4. Look at the placement of Customer Service on the chart. You might say it's at the heart of the company. Can you explain why?

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5. Why would the company include this organizational chart in a manual handed out to all new employees?

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### *Using the Information*

Pretend you are the president of Tasty Foods. The board of directors has told you to cut one vice president from the lineup. Whom will you lay off? And how will you reorganize the chart after that job is gone?



Following are two job descriptions from a company that makes prepared foods. Employees at many different kinds of companies are given job descriptions so that they are clear on their duties. Read the descriptions carefully.

**Tasty Foods**  
**Job Description**  
**JOB TITLE: Production Worker**

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**Exempt (Y/N):** No

**SALARY LEVEL:**

**DEPARTMENT:** Operations

**PREPARED BY:** Human Resources

---

**SUMMARY:** Performs **repetitive** assembly operations to **mass-produce** products.

**ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** include the following. Other duties may be assigned.

Performs routine, repetitive assembly for the production of finished goods.

Responsible for assembling products according to health and safety **regulations**. Ensures product is produced with top quality.

Performs duties that include, but are not limited to, inserting stuffing, arranging pieces, and folding chicken.

**SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES:** None.

**QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:** To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable **accommodations** may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

**EDUCATION and/or EXPERIENCE:** Typically has a basic level knowledge and no prior experience requirement.

**PHYSICAL DEMANDS:** The physical demands described here are representative of those required to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing this job, the employee is regularly required to use hands to finger, handle, and feel objects, tools, or controls and reach with hands and arms. The employee frequently is required to sit, sometimes required to stand.

The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 25 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision and the ability to adjust focus.

**WORK ENVIRONMENT:** The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee regularly works near moving mechanical parts and is regularly exposed to extreme cold. The noise level in the work environment is usually loud.

