

UNIT 1: PRESENTING INFORMATION (INTERMEDIATE)

Intermediate GNVQ Information and Communication Technology

This unit helps you to:

- write original documents in styles that suit your readers
- improve the accuracy and readability of the documents you create
- improve the quality of presentation in documents you create
- choose and apply standard document layouts
- understand and develop good practice in your use of ICT.

You will create and compose a variety of documents using layouts and styles that suit their different purposes. You will compare the style and layout of documents you create yourself with similar documents produced by organisations.

This unit links closely with Unit 2: Handling information (Intermediate). Together, they form the basis for all other units.

This unit provides broad knowledge, skills and understanding for Unit 202: Produce documents using word processing software, and Unit 203: Produce spreadsheet documents, in Level 2 NVQ IT, Using IT.

This unit will be assessed only through an external assessment. The grade you achieve in this assessment will be your grade for the unit.

The topics are:

- styles of writing and presentation
- types of information
- document layout
- presentation techniques
- standard ways of working

You need to understand how the following purposes affect writing style and the style of the presentation:

- meeting the needs of your reader
- attracting attention
- setting out facts clearly
- explaining details
- summarising information

You know what you want to communicate. How will you express it? There are two things to remember when you are presenting information. You must learn how to:

- use language to suit the reader. For example, when writing for a young child you would use simple words in short sentences; when writing for an adult you could use longer words and more complicated language
- select a writing style that suits the occasion. For example, the words and sentence length you would use in a letter of complaint would be different to those used in a glossy advertisement

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You meet the needs of your reader by using the right kind of language.

Unusual words might impress the reader of a job application. They might irritate a reader of directions to find your house.

You meet the needs of the occasion by thinking about style. Styles of writing and presentation vary for different types of document. You need to think about and understand the reasons for the variety of writing styles.

Thinking about some of the following examples may help:

- a formal letter responding to a job advertisement
- an agenda for a meeting for a sports and social club
- minutes of a meeting for a sports and social club
- an advertisement trying to sell something second-hand
- a note to the milkman ordering milk
- a formal invitation to a social event
- a glossy advertisement for some new cosmetics
- a letter to a newspaper
- a table of results for a sporting activity
- a form on which the user enters information, for example a fax header page
- a report of a local council planning meeting
- a form for ordering products
- an invoice
- an E-mail to a company asking for information on a product.

You must learn that there are tools to help with style. Different styles of document layout can be created by selecting a suitable template. Most software provides templates for a wide variety of different types of document. There are also tools to assess the reading age of a piece of text. If the reading level seems too high, you can try shorter sentences and simpler words. The advice you get for editing the text matches the style of writing you choose from the options provided.

Other tools such as a thesaurus help you to replace particular words with more appropriate ones.

Different types and forms of information are often combined in documents to make the documents easier to read and understand. The most common forms of information are:

- text
- numbers
- tables
- charts and graphs
- graphics

You must originate, use and combine a variety of different types of information in your documents.

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You must show you understand different forms of document layout. For example, each of the following types of document uses a different layout:

- memos
- publicity flyers
- screen displays
- agendas
- business cards
- business letters
- newsletters
- minutes
- fax header pages
- E-mails
- itineraries
- reports

There are common standard layouts for most documents. The different features of layout include:

- page size and orientation
- paragraph format
- margins
- headers and footers
- line spacing
- fonts

The position on the page of important items in the document is also part of layout, including:

- logos
- headings
- references
- dates
- addressee names
- signatures

You will need to think about why commercial organisations use a standard layout for business documents. You will look at how different organisations use different layouts for the same type of document, including the following commonly used documents:

- invoices
- orders
- delivery notes
- letters
- memos
- advertisements
- newspapers
- agendas
- minutes

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It is important to present information clearly. Poorly presented information may annoy or confuse readers. A common error is not keeping to a consistent style for headings in a document. You should also think about what you want to achieve with your document and what will appeal to your readers.

There are many features that you can use to help create effective documents. They include:

- layout grids
- templates
- use of white space
- titles and headings
- fonts and sizes
- bold and italic text
- hanging indents
- tables and tabs
- upper and lower case
- subscript and superscript
- graphics

- colour
- borders and shading
- dividing lines (rules)
- bulleted lists
- justification
- columns
- special symbols
- headers and footers
- charts and graphs
- contents and indexes

You will need to know how and when to use these techniques in a document. You may need to create a number of documents before you can use them well. You will also need to learn to:

- use existing information
- create original information
- blend existing and original information
- combine different types of information
- maintain a consistent style of writing and presentation.

Many organisations have rules and guidelines to help people work effectively and avoid problems. These are known as 'standard ways of working'. They are very important for people working with Information and Communication Technology.

Note: What you need to know and how to use standard ways of working are described in the next paragraph. These techniques must be applied to all of your ICT GNVQ work. In the other units the requirements are stated more briefly to avoid repetition of detail.

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There are many reasons for having standard ways of working in ICT. The most important is that information in ICT systems can easily be lost or misused. For example:

- unauthorised people may gain access to confidential information
- people may copy original work and present it as their own
- data files may be lost, corrupted by a virus or damaged in other ways
- computers may be damaged so that data stored in them cannot be recovered
- inaccurate or poorly written information may confuse or annoy readers
- information presented professionally may be believed, even though it may be inaccurate
- poorly laid-out workplaces may cause physical stress or be hazardous to ICT operators

• use of ICT systems may result in less attention to the planning and managing of work. Standard ways of working help you to overcome these problems. In your work with ICT you must ensure that you:

- manage your work effectively
- keep information secure
- ensure that information you produce is accurate and readable
- work to standards commonly accepted by organisations.
- work safely.

Managing your work

The way you manage your ICT work is important. You must be able to:

- plan your work to produce what is required to given deadlines
- use tabs and indent settings correctly so that you can easily make changes to data
- use file names that are sensible and which help to remind you of the contents
- store files where you can easily find them in the directory/folder structure
- keep a log of any ICT problems you meet and how you solve them
- check and evaluate your work and suggest how it might be improved.

Keeping information secure

Protecting information from loss or misuse is essential in ICT. You must learn the particular importance of:

- keeping information secure, for example from theft, loss, viruses, fire
- protecting confidentiality, for example preventing illegal access to medical or criminal records
- respecting copyright, for example not using or presenting the work of others without permission.

If work stored on an ICT system is lost it is important that there is another file that can be used in its place. There are two ways to make this possible:

- by saving work regularly, and using different filenames
- by keeping dated backup copies of files on another disk and in another location.

People or companies may wish to keep information confidential so that others do not know about it. In such cases you must learn to keep the information secure and not pass it on to others.

A computer program, words, pictures and graphic images may belong to other people. The people who created or own this material have copyright. This means that you must not use their work without their permission. If you do you are breaking the law.

You must understand what copyright means and respect copyright law. Where you are able to use other people's work it is important that you include an acknowledgement.

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Intermediate GNVQ Information and Communication Technology Accuracy and readability

Inaccuracy can mislead and annoy readers. There are some checks you can learn to use with formal written work such as business letters. Spell-checkers help you to correct spelling and some other mistakes. They can also help you to improve your spelling. You must be able to use spell-checkers to detect:

- words spelt incorrectly
- repeated words (for example, 'and and').

Sometimes a spell-checker will suggest that a word is incorrect when you know it is correct.

This often happens with proper names, for example 'GNVQ', or 'Peter'. You may be able to add these words to a computer's dictionary to fix the problem.

Using a spell-checker will not find all errors. It will not correct 'capitol' for 'capital' or 'there' for 'their' or 'to' for 'too'.

You should also learn when and how to use grammar-checkers. They can help you to:

- make sure your sentences have a subject and a verb that agree
- find out the level of reading difficulty of your work
- write mostly in a certain style, for example in the active voice
- detect sentences ending with two full-stops
- detect missing capital letters at the beginning of sentences.

It is important that you use print preview on the computer to review the layout of your documents before printing them. You must proof-read your documents for errors, both on screen and the printed copy. You also need to check that your document makes sense and meets your purpose.

Organisations and standard formats

Organisations often have their own standards for document layout. They will certainly have rules about confidentiality and security of information.

You must learn the importance, to organisations and to your own work, of being able to:

- use common standards of document layout, for example letters and memos
- write sample minutes and agendas and present them in a specified layout
- proof-read documents, using some standard symbols for omissions and corrections.

Working safely

The ICT working environment is relatively safe. However you must avoid:

- bad posture and physical stress
- eye strain
- hazards resulting from equipment or workplace layout.

You should be aware that a comfortable working position is important to avoid physical stress, eye strain or safety hazards. This may include:

- comfortable seating
- suitable desk and VDU position
- suitable keyboard position
- brief rest periods
- avoiding long periods of continuous VDU work
- surrounding area that includes near and distant objects upon which your eyes may focus
- layout of cables and equipment (to avoid tripping)
- insulation of cables (from electrical supplies)

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In the external assessment you need to produce evidence showing your understanding of documents for different purposes. These must include:

- a range of writing styles and layouts
- text created by you and acquired from other sources
- structured information in tables
- graphics, such as pictures, drawings or clip arts.

Pass

To achieve a pass your work must show:

P1 your ability to chose and use appropriate writing styles and layouts so that your documents work as intended

P2 appropriate use of page orientation, paragraph formats, line spacing, headings, margins, headers/footers, tabs, bullets, fonts, borders and shading to enhance your documents

P3 your ability to originate suitable information and combine it appropriately with different types of material selected from other sources to create combinations of text, pictures, drawings, charts and tables

P4 your ability to check the accuracy of your work and keep backup copies of all files

P5 a clear description and comparison of different layouts used by organisations with your own layouts, identifying similarities and differences.

Merit

To achieve a merit your work must show:

M1 imaginative use of document layouts and presentation techniques to achieve good quality and an appropriate impact in your documents

M2 your ability to proof-read your work and correct obvious errors

M3 relevant explanations for the differences between each of the documents used by different organisations and your own documents

M4 your ability to work independently to produce your work to agreed deadlines

M5 your ability to save and annotate draft work to show clearly the development process for two of your documents.

Distinction

To achieve a distinction your work must show:

D1 different types of information is organised into a convincing and coherent presentation

D2 information that is accurate and concise and is presented in ways that make it easy to understand

D3 your ability to use technical language fluently and produce clear, coherent and comprehensive explanations and annotations

D4 a constructive evaluation of your documents that identifies good and less good features, suggests possible improvements to them and compares them with standards used by organisations.