Chapter 5

In the Office

Outline

1. Office equipment

2. Job descriptions

3. Reading: e-mails

Main Ideas

1. Office equipment such as personal computers (PCs), copiers, fax machines, and other products help ease office and information handling in modern workplaces.

2. Job descriptions inform employees of their job titles, classification, work area location, supervisor's title, and their responsibilities.

3. Reading and understanding a passage on "e-mails" will enhance your reading skills.

Objectives

Students will be able to

1. identify equipment used in the office,

2. discriminate job titles and their responsibities, and

3. use business vocabulary in appropriate context.

Modern workplaces nowadays are well furnished with novel and hi-tech equipment. Personal computers, copiers, fax machines, and other products enable office personnel to work faster, more efficiently and more effectively. It is useful, therefore, to orientate and familiarize yourself with various types of equipment used in the office.

1. Office equipment

Various types of office equipment can be found in any modern office. The following is some useful equipment one needs to be familiar with.

Computers

To deal with information in an efficient manner, personal computers or PCs are used. There are three types of computers: the mainframe, the minicomputer, and the microcomputer.

Mainframe computers were developed in the late 1940s. They are used to manipulate large databases and for payroll, inventory, and other large volume applications in business and science.

Minicomputers were developed in the 1960s. They are used at the department level to perform functions such as accounting or word processing.

Microcomputers are known as personal computers (PCs). They were developed in the mid-1970s. These computers are for a single user and generally have a smaller CPU than the minicomputer.

Personal computers are available in portable versions. Portables are classified into two categories: transportables and laptops. Transportables come in a case called a "suitcase," "lunch box," or "sewing machine." Laptop computers come in a case called a "clamshell" or "briefcase." The smaller, lighter laptops are called "notebooks."

Printers

The equipment used with computers is a printer. There are two categories of printers: impact and nonimpact. Impact printers strike a ribbon, similar to typewriters, whereas nonimpact printers create characters through the use of heat or light or by spraying ink on a page.

There are two types of impact printers: letter–quality printers and dot matrix printers.

Letter–quality printers produce a document that has the same quality as an original typed on an electric typewriter.

Dot matrix printers strike a series of tiny dots to form a character. They are inexpensive and emphasize on the information not on the visual quality of the output.

There are four types of nonimpact printers: ink jet printers, thermal-transfer printers, laser printers, and plotters.

Ink jet printers spray ink onto the paper in the shape of the character intended.

Thermal-transfer printers create characters and images by melting a wax–based ink off the printer ribbon and onto the paper.

Laser printers use a laser beam to form images on a light–sensitive drum.

Plotters are used for printing computer graphics and are used in computer-aided design.

Photocopiers

Photocopiers are the most commonly used office machines for reproducing documents. Two imaging technologies are used: analog and digital. There are three categories of copier, based on their speed: high-volume units (at a speed of 50 to 100 copies per minute, medium-volume units (at a speed of 20 to 50 copies per minute, and low-medium units (at a speed of 15 to 20 copies per minute).

Fax machines

A fax machine (a facsimile machine) instantaneously transmits a copy of a document from one location to another. There are two types of fax technology available: thermal-paper, which uses specially coated paper, and plain paper.

Dictation equipment

Dictation equipment records spoken dictation so that the office personnel may type the material later while listening to the playback. Dictating systems use analog recording, the same as magnetic audiotaps, or digital recording.

Scanners

An optical character reader (OCR) is a computer device combined with software that can copy graphics or read text in a variety of typefaces and styles. There are two types of scanners: a handheld scanner, which can be held in the hand and manually swept across the document or image, and a page or desktop scanner, which can handle a full page at a time.

Telephones

A variety of telephone equipment is available to be used in an office. The following are the examples.

- The conventional rotary dial telephone with a 10-hole dial

- A touch-tone phone with a 12-button keypad arrangement

- A touch-a-matic telephone (a touch-tone phone equipped with an
  automatic telephone dialer that can store from 15 to 31 numbers)

- A call director (a desktop switchboard allowing a receptionist to come in)

- A speakerphone set consisting of a microphone and londspeaker and
  permitting the user to carry on a telephone conversation from anywhere in an
  office without lifting the receiver from its rest

- Cordless portable telephones and cellular phones available for use in cars or airplanes

The following is a list of other office supplies and materials.

paper clips

punch

stapler (stapling machine)

anvil

spring-loaded magazine

felt tip pen

correcting fluid

pencil sharpener

adhesive tape dispenser

adhesive tape holder (roller-type adhesive tape dispenser)

roll of adhesive tape

tear-off edge

moistener

desk diary

date sheet (calendar sheet)

memo sheet

spine label (spine tag)

finger hole

arch board file

release lever (locking lever/ release/ lock lever)

compressor

bank statement

partition wall

partition screen

filing drawer

Activity 1A

Study the part of speech of the following vocabulary and supply the correct form of the word in the sentences below.

Verb	Noun	Adjective
continue	continuation	continuous
standardize	standardization	standard
assemble	assembly	
extract	extraction	
produce	product	productive
synthesize	synthesis	synthetic
analyze	analysis	analytic
manufacture	manufacturer	manufactured
proceed	process	
specify	specification	specific

1. In _____ production labor and equipment work nonstop, producing a high volume of standard products.

2. The _____ line was first used by Henry Ford for _____ automobiles.

3. _____ parts are produced by the manufacturer because he believes that someone will buy them. The _____ of parts enabled manufacturers to produce in a continuous process.

4. The _____ of oil from underneath the ocean floor requires expensive equipment.

5. The continuous process is a much more _____ method of manufacturing certain goods than the intermittent process.

6. Many _____ products are made from oil.

7. By means of _____ many important fuels can be produced from crude oil.

8. These items were _____ in Switzerland.

9. We shall use the new _____ developed by our research staff.

10. The customer _____ how he wanted the product designed. We must build it to his _____.

Activity 1B

Write a correct word from the scrambled letters in each item.

1. o n e d m r   = _____

2. p k e d s o t   = _____

3. e b o t l r p a   = _____

4. s c o l s e r d   = _____

5. n p o h e   = _____

6. l a c f e m i s i   = _____

7. a d i n o t c t i   = _____

8. e c s n r n a   = _____

9. r n t p i r e   = _____

10. o r c e t u p m   = _____

2. Job descriptions

There is a variety of jobs that people have. The following is a list of them. Write down the meaning of these jobs in Thai.

accountant

account executive

astronaut

auditor

banker

beautician

boxer

broker

cartoonist

computer programmer

disc jockey

editor

electrician

electronics expert

environmental scientist

executive secretary

factory worker

fashion designer

firefighter

flight attendant

graphic designer

hotel clerk

hotel manager

illustrator

industrial psychologist

insurance agent

interior designer

librarian

photographer

police officer

painter

performer

printer

128

promoter

real estate agent

sales representative

singer

speech writer

software designer

teller

tourist agent

trade union leader

Activity 2A

Look at the examples of job descriptions below and describe some of the jobs above.

- A sales manager is responsible for developing business volume of 80 – 100 million baht turnover covering all sections of the company's animal health market in Thailand.

- A personnel officer is responsible for operating and reporting activities related to payroll, income tax, and social security for approximately 800 employees.

- A contracts consultant is responsible for reporting directly to the Director of Finance and Administration and liasing with the EC in fundraising and grant reporting process.

- A finance assistant is responsible for assisting the Finance Manager and providing full administrative support as well as following up and processing all invoices.

Activity 2B

List the jobs you would like to do and explain the reasons.

3. Reading: e-mails

Pre-Reading Activities

1. Do you use e-mail? How often?

2. Do you use pictures/ drawings in your e-mail? Do you use abbreviations? Explain

3. In what ways are e-mail messages different from a letter?

E-mails

The very structure of e-mails encourages behavior that's nasty, brutish and short. The blank subject line is a signal to state your business and get on with it, and almost precludes a warm message. All in all, it's the ideal breeding ground for rudeness.

What's more, the things so many people like about e-mail – the speed, the informality, the brevity, the disengagement – give words a sharp edge. Clipped, telegraphed messages seem brusque and curt. Small slights are magnified. And attempts at subtlety, irony or sarcasm often fall flat. As for the quality, perhaps some things are better left unsaid.

So what's the answer? According to a recent poll, most people thought an e-mail message fell somewhere between a letter and a phone call .Not surprisingly, those

who thought e-mail was closer to writing were pickier about the niceties – manners as well as spelling, punctuation and such. Those who thought e-mail was closer to speech were more likely to ignore the pleasantries along with their spell checkers.

Why do good people send bad e-mail? Maybe they forget what they are doing at the computer is writing. And the purpose of writing is to communicate with others. When people write well, they connect. When they write badly, they don't.

With that in mind, we've tried to imagine the kind of virtual message we'd like to get, an ideal of e-mail perfection. Here's what our dream e-mail looks like:

* It's written in good English: clear, plain and, above all, understandable.

* It's polite, asking instead of demanding, and using such quaint terms as "Please," "Thank you," and "Sorry."

* It gets to the point in the first screenful.

* It has a helpful subject line; the reader knows at a glance what it's about and how urgent it is.

* It's discreet and protects the privacy of everyone involved.

* It mentions what it's replying to.

* It capitalizes correctly.

* It uses shorthand sparingly.

* It has obviously been re-read, just like "real" writing.

Fortunately the Age of E-mail is still young. It's still not too late to put the virtue back into the virtual.

Glossary

1. nasty
= very unpleasant (to see, hear, smell, taste, touch or experience)

e.g. She had a nasty accident last week.

e.g. There's a nasty smell coming from the canal.

2. brutish
= simple and harsh

e.g. Their language has a brutish sound.

3. get on with it
= to continue doing s.t. (esp. after an interruption)

e.g. After the divorce, she did her best to get on with her life.

4. preclude
= prevent s.t. from happening /make s.t. impossible

e.g. Their refusal to meet with the government precludes any chance of a peaceful outcome to the problem.

5. all in all
= overall/ when everything is considered

e.g. All in all, the project was a success.

6. breeding ground
= a place where something (good or bad) can develop

e.g. The border area between Pakistan and Afghanistan is a breeding ground for terrorism.

7. rudeness
= impoliteness/ lack of respect or consideration

e.g. In Thailand, rudeness is usually avoided.

8. brevity
= the quality of being brief and exact in speaking or writing

e.g. Fidel Castro is not known for the brevity of his speeches; they sometimes last for hours.

9. clipped = omitting parts of words etc. when speaking or
writing

e.g. "Going now. Appointment with bank manger. . . ,"
he said in his peculiarly clipped way of speaking.

10. brusque = using few words in a rude or abrupt way

e.g. "Lazy girl. Get the letter typed – and be quick
about it," her boss said in his usual brusque
manner.

11. curt = rudely brief

e.g. "How about having dinner with me this evening?"
"I'm busy tonight," was her curt reply.

12. slight = an act or remark that offends someone

e.g. The Prime Minister was upset with the news
report for what he thought was a slight on his
character.

13. magnify = exaggerate/ make s.t. seem greater, more serious
etc. than it really is

e.g. A small misunderstanding was magnified by the
press out of all proportion.

14. subtlety = clever and complex organization

e.g. People often miss the subtlety in the artist's
composition.

15. irony = an amusing remark (achieved by saying the direct
opposite of what one means)

e.g. Her son broke her favorite vase. "Wow, that's really smart. Nice to see you're thinking," she said with her usual irony.

16. sarcasm = (usually intended to mock or insult someone) meaning the opposite of what it means to say

e.g. She had only written one line of her classroom assignment. "Nice to see you know you're full of ideas as usual," the teacher said, his voice heavy with sarcasm.

17. fall flat = if an event or attempt falls flat, it is unsuccessful

e.g. He was really late and tried making a joke to cheer her up, but it fell flat.

18. better left unsaid = if something is left unsaid, it is not said, although you may have expected it to be

e.g. In the 1980s, America supported Saddam Hussein and helped him to build up a huge store of modern weapons, but that's often left unsaid.

19. poll = a survey (in which people are asked their opinions about something)

e.g. The polls show that the majority of people are against a war.

20. picky = difficult to please (and only likes a small range of things)

e.g. She's a strict vegetarian and very picky about what she will eat.

21. niceties = the details of a situation (esp. with regard to good manner and appropriate behaviour)

e.g. He made sure all his ambassadors followed the usual diplomatic niceties.

22. pleasantries = remarks you make in order to be polite

e.g. They exchanged the usual pleasantries ("Good morning. How are you today? How are the wife and children?) before getting down to business.

23. connect = if a person or their ideas connect, you feel a sense of familiarity or agreement because you have similar ideas

e.g. They met, had dinner, connected with one another and are now engaged to be married.

24. virtual = created by a computer (but seems very real to the person experiencing it)

e.g. The virtual reality created by the flight simulator was extremely realistic.

25. quaint = attractive because unusual and old- fashioned

e.g. They spent their holiday in a quaint little old English village.

26. at a glance = if you se something at a glance, you see or recognize it immediately without having to think about it or look at it carefully

e.g. With the new timetable, you can see at a glance where you are supposed to be studying.

27. sparingly   = using something in very small quantities

e.g. She likes to use garlic in her cooking, but only
      sparingly.

28. virtue   = a good quality or way of behaving

e.g. Patience is a key virtue.

Activity 3A

Vocabulary Quiz: Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with words from the list below. Make any grammatical changes that might be necessary.

precluded	get on with	brevity	fall flat
poll	picky	glance	virtues
sparingly	all in all	pleasantries	nasty

1. Don't put too much pepper in the food; you need to use it _____ .

2. She's a very _____ eater; she eats only organic foods, and free range eggs.

3. After her husband died, she felt really depressed but had to _____ her life for her children's sake.

4. After the two statesmen had exchanged the usual _____ , they got straight down to business.

5. You can log on to the website and see the stock market at a _____ .

6. He believed in _____ , so he kept his letters as short as possible.

7. Apart from one or two bad experiences,_____ she had a great time in the U.S.

8. According to a recent _____ conducted by a leading U.S.

9. She had a _____ accident at work and had to be hospitalized for two months.

10. His lack of English _____ him from applying for the job.

11. He has many _____ and very few weaknesses.

12. Her attempts at humor _____; the audience was not amused.

Activity 3B

Choose the best answer.

1. The main idea of paragraph one is that _____.

    1. e-mails are badly structured and not very encouraging

    2. e-mails are, by their very nature, far too short

    3. the blank subject line is where you state your objective

    4. the very nature of e-mail often results in short, rude messages

2. Which of the following is NOT one of the negative characteristics of e-mail

    mentioned in paragraph two?

    1. E-mails are all too often of poor quality

    2. The telegrammmatic style can often seem rude

    3. They succeed in being subtle, ironic or sarcastic

    4. They are speedy, informal and to the point

3. The word "disengagement" most probably means the state of being _____.

    1. impersonal   2. uninterested

    3. disconnected   4. short and sharp

4. The main inference to be drawn from paragraph three is that _____.

    1. there is no answer to the various problems posed by e-mail

    2. those who compared e-mail with a phone call wrote more colloquial e-mails

    3. those who saw e-mail as a form of letter wrote more formal e-mails

    4. people view e-mail differently, which affects the style of their e-mails

5. Which of the following is NOT true of those who view e-mail as a form of letter?

    1. They usually follow the etiquette of letter writing.

    2. They are careful with regard to punctuation.

    3. They probably use a proper salutation and close.

    4. They often pay no attention to their spelling checkers.

6. Paragraph four implies that _____.

    1. Bad people send bad e-mail that fails to communicate their intentions effectively

    2. People forget about everything else when they are writing e-mail

    3. People often forget that the main aim of any written message is to communicate

    4. Computers are not really efficient tools for sending written communications

7. Look at the following summary of what constitutes a good, effective e-mail. Put a tick against those items that are correct and an X against those that are incorrect.

    a) It is written in a well-mannered fashion

    b) It has been reviewed and if necessary edited

    c) The subject line should always read "urgent"

    d) It should use shorthand and symbols as much as possible

    e) It can easily ignore the rules of capitalization

    f) It should be written in a clear, succinct style

    g) It makes reference to any previous e-mail from the sender

    h) It should not fill more than one screen with writing

8. Which of the following best reflects the meaning of the final sentence?

    1. There's still a lot wrong with e-mail

    2. Efforts are being made to streamline e-mail

    3. There's still time to make e-mail more acceptable

    4. E-mail has absolutely no virtues at all

9. Which of the following would make the best title?

    1. The Wonderful World of E-mail

    2. Putting Virtue Back into E-mail

    3. E-mail and Virtual Reality

    4. Why Good People Send Bad E-mail

Activity 3C

List the jobs you don't want to do and explain the reasons.