



Communicating digitally in the world of work

Age range: 11-16

 **BARCLAYS** | LifeSkills



Session overview

Time	Key learning outcomes	Resources
120 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise their own use of email, including the features of a well written, work-related email Understand the potential consequences of poorly written work-related emails and explain why certain channels are more appropriate for different types of communication than others Understand how email is used by cybercriminals to target victims at work and in their personal lives, and the potential impact of responding to emails from cybercriminals Understand the importance of digital communication in relation to work Recognise a range of digital communication channels and reflect on how they use them already 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating digitally in the world of work student worksheet Communicating digitally in the world of work presentation slides

Remember that you can refer to the guiding principles for establishing a safe learning environment in the Appendix section of the LifeSkills content guide. This includes suggestions for signposting students to further support. The content guide can be downloaded at [here](#).

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Introduction

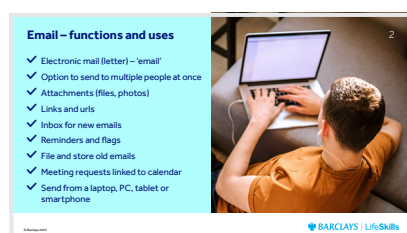
The use of technology is becoming more significant as economic, societal and technological forces are changing the world of work, with many jobs which are currently not digitally reliant expecting to grow and demand these skills. Running alongside this are a set of core transferable skills which are becoming increasingly important to employers such as problem solving, communication and creativity – jobs which require these types of skills will also need a workforce who can apply them in a digital way. Therefore, there is an increasing importance for young people, as they learn skills, to explore how they can apply them digitally.

When it comes to communicating it's a given that we should adapt our style dependent on the situation. In this digital age it is even more essential that we are all able to learn to adapt our tone of language and how we talk to multiple people, often across the globe and with different starting points and competing opinions when using digital platforms. The importance for young people to feel confident and professional has never been greater when it comes to using their digital voice to the maximum benefit of that individual and the organisation that they are representing.

Activity one

Email communication

1. Students review their own use of emails



- Students can discuss in pairs the following questions and then feedback to the rest of the class

Ask the students if they use email as way of communicating. How often do they receive emails, write emails, or respond to emails?

Do they use it at school?

At home?

In a part-time job?

- Use **slide 2** to briefly check the students are familiar with how email works

2. Using email at work

- Explain that email is one of the main forms of communication at work. Most jobs will require some use of email to contact colleagues or customers. Email may also be the first point of contact that students have with a work experience or volunteering placement, and with a prospective employer. In particular, their email address may be the first thing an employer will see
- Show [the film](#) highlighting the importance of using a professional email address

Ask students to reflect for a moment on their own personal email address, if they have one.

Would it make a good first impression with a prospective employer? If not, ask students to come up with ideas of an email address for themselves which is neutral and more professional

Activity one

Email communication (cont'd)

- Next, working in pairs, ask the students to create a set of Do's and Don'ts for writing emails. Prompt them to think about how an employer might expect an email to be written differently to a text, a post on social media or something sent through instant messenger. Allow a few minutes for discussion, then take feedback from the class and write the rules on the whiteboard for everyone to see. For example:

Do's	Don'ts
Start with Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms	Send it without checking spelling and grammar
Use a formal 'sign-off' at the end e.g. Yours faithfully, Best wishes	Write in text speak
Include a relevant subject heading	Use abbreviations or acronyms
Use a formal and professional tone	Use an abrupt or rude tone
Write clearly and accurately, in plain English	Write overlong emails



Activity one

Email communication (cont'd)

3. Email etiquette in the workplace



- Ask students if they can explain what etiquette means in the workplace. Agree a definition as a class collaboratively and display it on the board, then show **slide 3**. Compare this definition with the one agreed by the class
- Explain to students the concept of email etiquette and that there are rules they should follow when writing and sending emails; etiquette for digital communication is as important as it is for face-to-face interactions at work. Emails that are poorly worded, sent to the wrong person or with the incorrect attachments can have serious consequences

4. Students consider potential consequences to damaging emails



- Show **slide 4**. Working in teams, ask the students to decide which of the potential consequences could be the most damaging to a brand/organisation and to an individual. After allowing time for discussion, use a quick straw poll to see if there is a class consensus. Are any of the consequences worse than the others? Can they think of any examples to illustrate their ideas?
- Using **Email: Getting it right student worksheet**, ask the students to work in pairs and to note down the potential consequences of sending the emails as they are currently written. They should then rewrite the emails using a tablet, considering the rules and email etiquette they have learnt about in the lesson. Request students to email/display them on the class board and present their new email with reasoning to its improvements
- Examples of improved emails are detailed below to support discussion:

From email: Make a recommendation that individual chooses a new email address

To: Mr Maginty

Subject: Student Council application

Dear Mr Maginty

I understand that you are the teacher who manages the student council, and that a position might have become available?

I would like to apply for this position if there is an opening. I have recently supported Miss Mitchell to organise the Our School's Got Talent contest and thrived on the event organisation and teamwork skills I got to practice. This event has inspired me to get involved in more school activities such as the council, and therefore I'd like to bring my energy and enthusiasm to the role should I get the opportunity.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Ash Sellers, year 9

Activity one

Email communication (cont'd)

From email: Henley@email.com

To: info@volunteering

Subject: Volunteer application from Henley Jones

Dear whom it may concern,

I'm writing to you to express my interest in any volunteer opportunities you have open. I have attached my CV so that you can see my relevant experience, which includes:

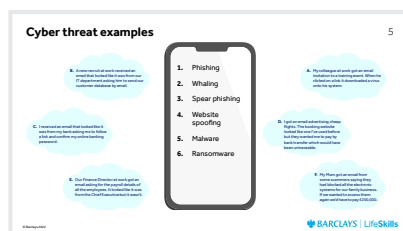
- Working weekends at my local charity shop for 6 months
- Taking part in a local retirement home befriending scheme

I am available to start a volunteering opportunity from 1st June 2019 and am open to discussing a range of volunteering openings that you may have. All contact details are included within my CV.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Henley Jones

5. Types of online threats



- Explain that it is important for students to think about security themselves when responding to emails they receive, in addition to using the correct tone and information in an email, including paying attention to the address of the sender. Is the address what they expected?
- Explain that cybercriminals use technology and sophisticated tactics to gain access to information, personal details, financial information and sensitive data relating to our work and personal lives. Even if we use internet security software, firewalls and anti-malware, we can still fall victim to scams. Email is one of the main channels used by fraudsters to target us at work and home; when it comes to cyber security humans are often the weakest link
- Show **slide 5**. Ask the students to work in pairs to match the cyber threats to their names. After allowing a few minutes for discussion, ask pairs for feedback starting with the phishing scam.

Activity one

Email communication (cont'd)

6. Cyber threat definitions and examples

Use the definitions provided below to check the students understanding of the different threats:

Cyber threat example	Name	Definitions
C	1. Phishing	A broad term for any attempt by cybercriminals to fool victims into sharing confidential information such as passwords, usernames, and financial details for malicious and criminal purposes. Large scale phishing attacks involve emails being sent to multiple victims in the hope that a small percentage will be successful.
E	2. Whaling	Phishing that specifically targets individual or small groups of high ranking executives trying to trick them into divulging sensitive information relating to their business or employer. Cyber criminals make whaling emails look like they are from trusted sources like banks or business partners by using spoofed email addresses, corporate logos and information they know about the victim from their social media profile.
B	3. Spear phishing	Similar to whaling in that cybercriminals targets a specific individual to gain sensitive personal or business information. However, anyone can be the target of a spear phishing attack, not just senior executives. Cybercriminals spend much more time and effort on individual spear phishing attacks than they do on large scale phishing because they need to gather personal details about their victims to make the email seem as legitimate as possible.
D	4. Website spoofing	Forged website that mimic legitimate sites. Fraudsters use a similar design, layout, font and colours to mislead customers into buying things like festival tickets and car insurance that doesn't exist.
A	5. Malware	A broad term to describe 'malicious software' – malware – specifically designed to damage, disrupt or gain unauthorised access to a computer. Types of malware include computer viruses, worms and Trojan horses.
F	6. Ransomwear	A type of malware that can take over a computer and threaten the user until a sum of money is paid. Threats often include blocking the victim's access to the files on the computer or publishing data it contains on the internet.

- Emphasise that cybercriminals also target victims through text messages, phone calls, chat rooms, and social media posts. It is essential that in both our personal and working lives we all have a good understanding of how to protect ourselves and the company we work for. Most businesses will have strict cyber security policies and provide training for their employees. This will reduce the risk of a potential cyber-attack but can't eliminate it entirely; we all have a role to play
- Refer back to the first activity, reminding students that it's important to consider the impact of any email activity, such as the potential impacts of replying to emails from cybercriminals
- If any students need additional support in this area, refer to the LifeSkills content guide which includes signposting to other resources which may help them further. The content guide can be downloaded at: barclayslifeskills.com/educators
- Finally, ask students to reflect on the lesson by asking them suggest a way they might identify whether an email is legitimate or not in the future

Activity one

Email communication (cont'd)

7. Practicing writing professional emails

Even if your students aren't ready to apply for a job, they can practice their email writing skills at other opportunities, like enquiring about volunteering or work experience. Inspire students to get involved in social action and build their skills with the [Social Action Toolkit](#). The toolkit contains insights, tips and practical resources to help build a social action programme that will support students in developing valuable employability skills.

This task provides students with evidence for the Skills Builder Framework: Presenting (Step 8, ages 12-16) I can vary my language and level of detail to make my presentation interesting according to context. The [Skills Builder Framework](#) breaks down eight essential skills into measurable steps. It can be used by students as a self-reflection tool and by teachers to build planned programmes for skills development.



Activity two

Wider ways of communicating

1. Communication channels

- Equip pairs of students with tablets and ask them to use a notetaking app to write a list of all the different ways we communicate, e.g. email, talking, video conference, instant messenger. After allowing time for discussion, ask the students to tick all the digital communication methods on their lists
- Ask for feedback from pairs and write a collaborative class list of digital methods and channels on the (interactive) whiteboard
- Explain that digital communication is very important at work. Most jobs will require some use of digital methods to contact colleagues or customers. Many of the channels can also be used to search for job opportunities and to contact prospective employers
- Use an app such as Slido, Vevox, Hypersay, Meeting Pulse, or Kahoot for the class to vote for which digital channels students use, or discuss as a class and write students' suggestions on the board. You can also share the channels you use at work, or have used during a job search

2. Most suitable communication channels

- Show **slide 6**. Ask pairs to suggest what the most suitable channel is to match the description (for example, WhatsApp, Instagram, Reddit, Pinterest and other popular channels) and then feedback as a class to understand how each one works. As technology moves at a fast pace, each channel could represent multiple answers, ask students if there are any other suggestions which could fit a different description and discuss whether it would be one which employers and businesses would embrace

Most suitable channel	Description
	Users exchange messages. Electronic documents, files and photos can be shared as attachments to emails
	Social networking site used by individuals and businesses to share photos, videos and livestream videos. Users can 'like' and post comments about content posted by other users. Businesses can target users direct to ecommerce platforms to make sales, often through influential users ('influencers')
	Informal, diary-style articles published regularly by an individual on a website. Posts can include photos, images and links. They often include a facility for readers to respond to and comment on the article
	Social networking site largely used to share news, current affairs and opinions. Users post short messages for other users to read or forward. These posts can include photos and links

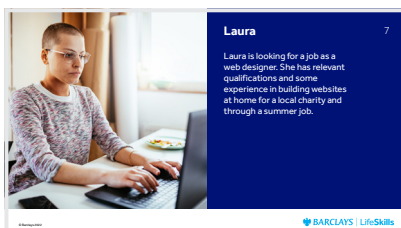
Activity two

Wider ways of communicating (cont'd)

Most suitable channel	Description
	Users can send each other short messages to pick up when they are next online. Instead of having to send and receive each message, users can see when a message is being composed and can view it immediately once it's complete
	Social networking site used to keep in touch with friends and family and by businesses to connect with their customers. Users can share photos and comments, 'like' each other's posts and livestream video
	'Professional' social networking site where users can publish their CV, search for job opportunities and make connections with other professionals and companies. Users can also publish articles to share their thoughts and insights
	Social networking site that allows individuals and businesses to create an online 'pinboard' or bulletin board of images associated with a theme or project. Users can browse each other's pins and click on them to find out more information

Answers (in order): Email client, Instagram, Blogging platform, Twitter, Online forum such as Reddit, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest

3. Choosing digital communication channels



- Show **slide 7**. Ask students to discuss in their groups which communications channels Ash could use to search for a job.

Which are likely to be most useful, and why?

After allowing time for discussion, ask the groups for feedback. Is there a consensus amongst the class?

Could a number of channels be used in coordination to extend reach or would it be better to stick to just one?

- Answers might include:
 - i. Laura could promote her own website through social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter, with direct links from her post to her website
 - ii. Laura should ensure that she uses keywords on her social media platform profiles such as 'web developer' 'UX' 'CMS'
 - iii. Laura could 'launch' her website with a series of coordinated posts across all channels at the same time. She could prime her friends to get them resharing her post at the same time to extend her reach

Activity two

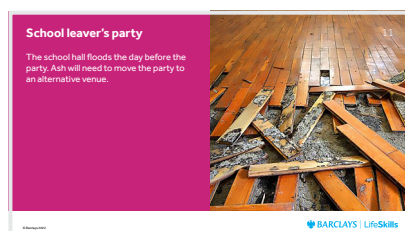
Wider ways of communicating (cont'd)

- Repeat with **slides 8-10**
- Emphasise that building a positive online reputation can help us find employment and to thrive at work, but there are risks involved. Remind the students that the internet is a very public place. Anything posted online is likely to exist forever. They need to think very carefully about what they publish and how it will be perceived by other people
- Ask students to share a new platform or digital communication method they learnt about today
- Use the [Building a positive online reputation 11-16](#) lesson to help students develop a positive approach to publishing information about themselves online

Activity three

Communication challenge

1. Identify the digital communication for the scenario



- Give the groups a mix of **students worksheets Communication challenge: School leaver's party, Communication challenge: Work experience and Communication challenge: Job search**, so responses to all three scenarios can be shared with the whole class at the end. Ask the students to write the digital communication for the scenario they have been given
- Hold a class discussion around the following questions to check students starting point and recap learning from the earlier activities

How can people use digital communication to best advantage in workplace situations?

How can writing be adapted for digital communication?

- After allowing time for the students to complete the task, ask groups to present the communications they have drafted, starting with Ash and the school leavers' party. Once the group(s) have completed their presentation(s), ask the rest of the class to suggest other digital communications Ash could use
- Before moving on to the next scenario, show **slide 11**. Ask the groups to discuss how they think Ash should respond.

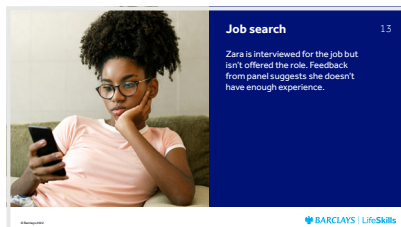
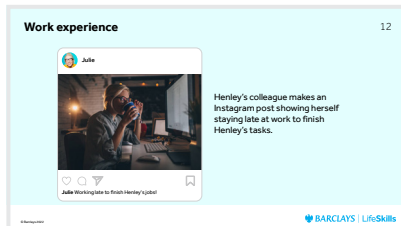
What communications should she send and to whom?

- Take feedback from the class before moving on to the next presentation

Activity three

Communication challenge (cont'd)

2. Communicating in challenging scenarios



- Ask groups to present Henley's work experience and Ash's job search in turn, asking them to respond to **slides 12** and **13** respectively after each one
- Remind the students that we need to find ways of adapting and managing difficult situations. Emails and other communications sent in haste or in anger can damage our online reputation. Following email etiquette and using digital communications responsibility can help us secure job opportunities and progress in the workplace

Try next

Developing self-confidence and resilience can help young people be better prepared for the world of work, and dealing with situations such as those discussed on **slides 12** and **13**. The [Wellbeing Toolkit](#) explains this further and provides practical activities and real-life case studies that can help develop resilience, self-confidence and adaptability. The toolkit is designed to help young people understand the importance of mental wellbeing, and how it can have an impact on their future success and career prospects.

Summary

- Summarise by reiterating that the use of technology and digital platforms are becoming increasingly prevalent at work. Employers now expect their workforce to apply their skills digitally and to adopt new technologies quickly
- Restate the importance of varying tone and language when communicating digitally. Poorly written emails at work, or when looking for a job, can have serious consequences. Email can also present a cyber security threat. Fraudsters often use email to trick us into divulging confidential business and personal information
- Recap some of the other digital communication channels such as LinkedIn and blogging that can be used to search for jobs and that employers may expect you to use in the course of your job role. Reiterate the need to adapt content for different audiences and that communications sent in haste or anger can damage our online reputation. Used well, digital communications can help us secure job opportunities and thrive in the workplace
- During the discussion, ask students to share a strategy they've learnt that would help ensure difficult email communications are handled sensitively

Communicating digitally in the world of work

Email: Getting it right

Use this sheet to note down the potential consequences of sending the emails as they are currently written. Then rewrite the emails using the rules and etiquette you have learnt about in the lesson.

From email: Ashsalwaysright@email.com

To: MrMaginty

Subject:

Hi Mr M I heard ur the teacher who sorts out the student council. There's a position free rite? I should do it. Ask anyone who saw Our Schools Got Talent. I was boss when I helped Miss Mitchell organise that. Someone told me I have to get elected. Really???? A

Potential consequences

Rewrite the email for henley

From email: Henley@email.com

To: info@volunteering

Subject: CV

Dear jobs@volunteering,

I think I'd be an excellent candidate for the volunteering that you need help with. Not the one in the city centre. You'll see from my CV that I've done that sort of this before. I can send it to you if you have time to read it. I can start the week after I get back. Wednesdays are OK but Thursdays I can't get there until later.

Thanks in advance,
Mr H Jones

Potential consequences

Rewrite the email for henley

Communicating digitally in the world of work

Communication challenge: School leaver's party

Use this sheet to write the content for each digital communication. Think about what you have discussed in your lesson.

Ash is helping organise the school leavers' party. She has received an email from the Headteacher who is concerned it will go badly on the night.

1. Reply to the Headteacher by email
2. Write a blog for the school website
3. Find a suitable photo to add to the blog

Communicating digitally in the world of work

Communication challenge: Work experience

Use this sheet to write the content for each digital communication. Think about what you have discussed in your lesson.

Henley has been asked to organise some work experience for school students in the residential care home where he works.

1. Write an email from Henley to the care home employees to ask for mentors ("buddies") for the work experience candidates
2. Write a social media post advertising the work experience opportunities
3. Write two comments from school students in response to the social media post

Communicating digitally in the world of work

Communication challenge: Job search

Use this sheet to write the content for each digital communication. Think about what you have discussed in your lesson.

Zara has just finished a short-term contract as a web designer which she hasn't enjoyed. The company has asked her to stay on for another 6 months but she has decided to look for another role elsewhere.

1. Write an email from Zara to her manager declining the extension to her role
2. Write Zara's LinkedIn profile describing her skills and experience, and why she is looking for a new a role
3. Write a tweet to a prospective employer about a job she wants to apply for