

# How to be an intermediary

In this lesson you will learn useful phrases for passing on information to other people.

## Starter

- 1 What information do you need to convey between people at work? How easy is it?
- 2 What strategies do you have to pass on difficult news or instructions tactfully?



## Expressions

- 1 Victor Simon is the executive director of Ensemble Sans Frontières, an international touring orchestra. He is on business in Montreal, Canada, and emails his PA, Lisa, with a number of requests. Read his email. What does he want Lisa to do?

A screenshot of an email interface. The email is addressed to Lisa and contains several paragraphs of text. The text discusses budget issues for a summer series of concerts, asks for information about an orchestra's arrival in Hong Kong, and requests a meeting with Radio Klassik. The email is signed by Victor.

Dear Lisa,  
There are a few things to be sorted out.  
The budget for the summer series of concerts is now very late – I was expecting it two weeks ago. This is totally unacceptable. Could you ask Alex in marketing when she can deliver it?  
I also need to know when the orchestra will be arriving in Hong Kong. Can you ask Sabine to get in touch with the concert promoter directly? She says they'll need a bus from the airport.  
And we need a meeting with Radio Klassik for next week, or the first week of May. Please get Dominik to arrange it. It's important.  
Thanks,  
Victor

- 2 Read the email exchange on page 17. Then listen to two phone conversations. What information can Lisa give Howard?

## Speaking

- 1 Role-play the following situation. Try to use language from **Expressions** and the **Language box**.
  - 1 Your boss, the marketing manager, has some designs for some new promotional leaflets. He is pleased with them, and asks you to get feedback from the managing director, who leaves you his comments below. Report them back to your boss (your teacher).
    - Disappointing – I don't like them.
    - The layout on the leaflets is totally different from what we discussed.
    - The colours are also different – need bright, strong colours. These pale colours are unattractive.

## Language box

Passive verbs are formed with *be* + the past participle of a transitive verb.

We can use the passive to focus on what is done, and who or what is affected:

Kurt **has been sent** to head office.

The halls **will be renovated** at the end of next year.

We can also use the passive to be less personal, and distance ourselves from the action. This can sometimes be used to avoid blaming someone:

It **is needed** urgently.

The leaflets **weren't sent out** in time.

## Hint

Using the person's name or a pronoun when dealing with others can deflect the blame, make a request less direct, and also add authority to a message:

**Victor's asking if a meeting can be set up.**

(= please set up a meeting)

**She needs to know when the package will arrive.**

(= please tell them when they can expect it)

## Writing

- 1 The assistant accountant has recently received a copy of his new contract. Unfortunately, there seem to be a number of discrepancies between what was discussed and the final contract. You spoke to the assistant accountant on the phone and made the notes below. Write an email to your boss, explaining the differences.

Salary - €5,000 increase p.a., not €4,000

Hours - not 9.30-17.30, but 8.30-16.30

(because of young children - school)

Missing info:

Pension contributions?? Agreed on €300 pcm,  
but not in contract.

Need to take holiday at any time - not just in

Aug and Dec

Needs revised contract asap

Dear Lisa,

I'd have done this last week, but the details were only sent through yesterday, and anyway, Victor said it wasn't needed until next week. There's clearly a discrepancy about deadlines on this. Anyway, please tell him it'll be done by Friday.

Alex

----- Original Message -----

Dear Alex,

Victor wants to know when you can send him the budget for the summer series of concerts. Actually, he was expecting it two weeks ago and he's not very happy. I'm afraid he says it's now needed urgently. Could it be forwarded to him this afternoon? Please could you also let me know once you have sent it?

Thanks!

Lisa

- 3 Look again at the emails in 2. What phrases are used to be more tactful?

- 4 Listen again to Lisa. What phrases does she use to be more tactful?

To use the passive with reporting verbs, an empty subject, *it*, is used:

It was said that the delivery would be here by the weekend.

It's been suggested that we change our working hours.

## Look

Look at listening script 7.1 on page 124. Find more examples of the passive. In each case, decide why the passive is used.

## Lesson record

3 new words from this lesson

3 useful phrases from this lesson

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| 1 ..... | 1 ..... |
| 2 ..... | 2 ..... |
| 3 ..... | 3 ..... |

Things to remember

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