

Skills Checks for Personal Assistants

4. Helping to Write a Letter

Employer's pack

Contents

- Skills Check activity sheet
- Skills Check answer sheet
- Feedback form
- Personal development form

Summary	
Suitable for	Personal assistant
Skill checked	Writing
Covers	Writing a letter based on the employer's instructions
Learning for employer	What writing skills does the personal assistant bring to the task of drafting an email on behalf of the employer?
Learning for personal assistant	Ways in which writing skills may be used
Approx time needed	Total: 30 minutes (20 minutes for Skills Check and 10 minutes for feedback)
How it works	Offers information on written communication then asks the person to use writing skills to write a letter based on a set of instructions. Discuss the person's response to gauge their writing and spoken communication skills.
Notes	Let the person read the activity sheet to themselves then complete the task. If they do not understand, explain it to them. A model answer is provided on a separate sheet.

We welcome suggestions to improve this Skills Check. Please use the contact form on our website at www.scie.org.uk/careskillsbase

Being a personal assistant: Helping to write a letter

Effective personal assistance depends on good communication. This sheet looks at what that can mean in practice.

1. Communicating in writing

Personal assistance may include help with correspondence, including letters and emails. Sometimes this may be straightforward and informal, e.g. the employer's correspondence with family and friends. At other times the correspondence may be more formal, e.g. letters and emails to social services.

In any kind of writing, it is good to express ourselves clearly in a way that others understand quickly, easily and accurately. It's particularly important to do this with official or work-related writing.

2. Helping to write a letter

Imagine you provide personal assistance to a person.
One day, the person you work for receives this letter.

Chris Jones
14 Appletree Rd
Newton
NT4 3PP

5 October 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

Your vehicle was recorded on 09-09-12 parked in breach of the agreed terms and conditions at the address specified above. The penalty for this contravention is £85.00. Please remit this sum or lodge an appeal within 7 days of the date of this letter. Always quote our reference number **7743198** in correspondence regarding this matter.

Control-Parking Ltd

web: www.c-pltd.co.uk
email: info@c-pltd.co.uk
tel: 0844 156 0075

Our ref: 7743198

Parking charge notice no. 3198

Vehicle registration number: OU61 GRD

Parking charge date: 09/09/2012

Contravention type: Misuse of disabled parking bay
Site of contravention: Orchard Retail Centre Newton

Your employer says, "There must be some mistake! They want to fine me because we parked in a disabled bay, but we've got a disabled badge permanently mounted on the windscreen. I'm definitely going to appeal this. The physiotherapist is coming in just a minute. Could you draft an email while they're here?"

You say, "Certainly. I'll draft something then you can see if you're happy to send it."

Draft an email for your employer on the next page. In it

- say what the email is about
- explain why your employer is appealing
- say what action the company should take.

Being a personal assistant: Helping to write a letter (continued)

Draft the email here:

Being a personal assistant: Helping to write a letter

Answers

Model answer

Please note: there are many different ways to draft this email. The model below is intended only as an example.

Dear Sir or Madam

RE your letter dated 5 October 2012, ref: 7743198

I received a letter from you today concerning my alleged misuse of a disabled parking bay at the Orchard Retail Centre in Newton on 9 September 2012.

Your letter states that I was parked in breach of the retail centre's agreed terms and conditions and am therefore liable to pay a fine of £85.00. The letter also states that if I wish to appeal I must do so within seven days of the date of the letter.

I would like to lodge an appeal. The grounds for my appeal are as follows.

My vehicle was parked in the disabled bay because I am a wheelchair user, registered disabled. My disabled parking permit was clearly visible, since it is permanently mounted on my windscreen in a prominent position. On the day in question, I was accompanied (as usual) by my personal assistant who will vouch for me, as will the manager of the retail centre.

I would therefore like you to cancel this parking charge (no. 3198) immediately and confirm to me in writing that you have done so.

In the meantime, please let me know if I can supply any further information.

Yours faithfully

Chris Jones

14 Appletree Rd

Newton

NT4 3PP

Feedback form	Date:		
Personal assistant (PA)			
Employer			
1. Employer's view The PA ...	No	Partly	Yes
a. Read the activity sheet with understanding (reading skills).			
b. Drafted an effective email (writing skills).			
2. Employer's reasons The PA...	No	Partly	Yes
a. Responded to the activity sheet appropriately.			
b. Used handwriting that is clear and legible.			
c. Included appropriate information.			
d. Presented information in a way that is logical and easy to follow.			
e. Used accurate spelling.			
f. Used accurate punctuation (e.g. commas, full stops, apostrophes).			
g. Used standard English appropriately (grammar).			
h. Drafted the email within the time allocated (ability to write quickly).			
3. PA's view (note any comments the PA wishes to make)			
4. Next steps to help develop skills and knowledge for the job	Yes	No	
a. Learning to develop PA's job-related knowledge and skills.			
b. Learning to develop PA's writing skills.			
5. Employer's signature	PA's signature		

Use the other side of this sheet for notes.

Personal development form	Date:	
Personal assistant (PA)		
Employer		
1. Learning aims	Tick (✓) if 'yes'	
a. Job-related knowledge and skills to be developed		
b. Writing skills to be developed		
2. How will the learning happen?		
3. What support and resources will be needed to make the learning successful?		
4. When will the learning happen?		
5. How will we know the learning has been successful?		
6. Progress review date:		
7. Employer's signature	PA's signature	