

Do You Want to Sound Professional in English?



Cuaderno del Estudiante



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1. INTRODUCTION

In this guide you will find information about the Cooperative Project you are about to participate in. The project's purpose is to help you answer this question affirmatively:

Do you sound professional in English?

Your objective is to work collaboratively to do the following:

- Learn the tenets of good writing
- Learn the tenets of effective speaking
- Detect grammar and style errors in written texts and oral presentations
- Write professional reports that propose improvements to written texts
- Present those reports to your workmates and individual clients
- Suggest techniques to improve the effectiveness of a presentation

The project follows the *Project Based Learning* (PBL) methodology: You will work in a group on a real-life problem in the form of a project. Each of you is part of a group of 3.

Each group will establish its own work schedule while keeping in mind the tasks it must complete in each project phase. Working as a group is fundamental to your success. As a group member you have to make sure that:

- **You are helping to create a positive working relationship**
- **You are contributing responsibly to the productivity of the group as a whole**
- **You are doing your best to develop your group project**
- **The group is functioning cooperatively**
- **The group addresses problems within the group**

2. WHAT IS THIS PROJECT ABOUT?

This is the project context:

Aurki Itzulpenak is a local translation firm that has specialised in Basque language services for the past 20 years. Due to the increasing internationalisation of many industries, they have decided to expand and provide extensive English language services.

The job of a language professional is to work with specialists from other fields, often non-natives, and help them improve their language skills on a professional level. In addition to translation, services that language professionals provide include preparing texts for publication or oral presentation, and teaching specific written and oral skills.

You have been hired for a three-month trial period as an English professional for this newly created team within the firm. The team will offer these services to local specialists and companies that require high-level English in order to compete globally.

Since *Aurki Itzulpenak* has traditionally specialised in Basque translation, offering a full range of professional English services is a new endeavour. They will rely on your expertise. But since this is a new project, the firm wants to be kept informed as to the organisation of the team and the specific criteria it applies when working with clients.

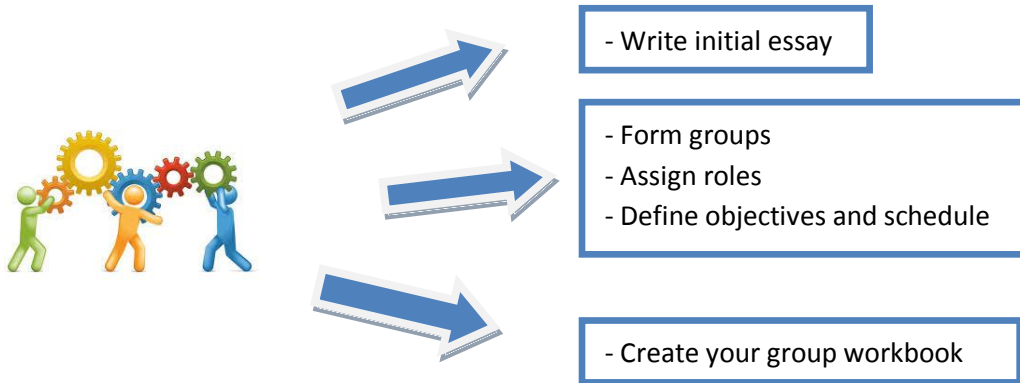
One of the first tasks the team faces is to develop a style manual that the team will use to guarantee the quality of the services offered. You will need the style manual in order to organise your work and evaluate how your clients' English can improve.

Aurki Itzulpenak recognises that the English language market will be very important in the future and they are looking to create the best team possible. You have a three-month trial contract and they have stressed to you that they expect the team to be organised and operational within that timeframe.

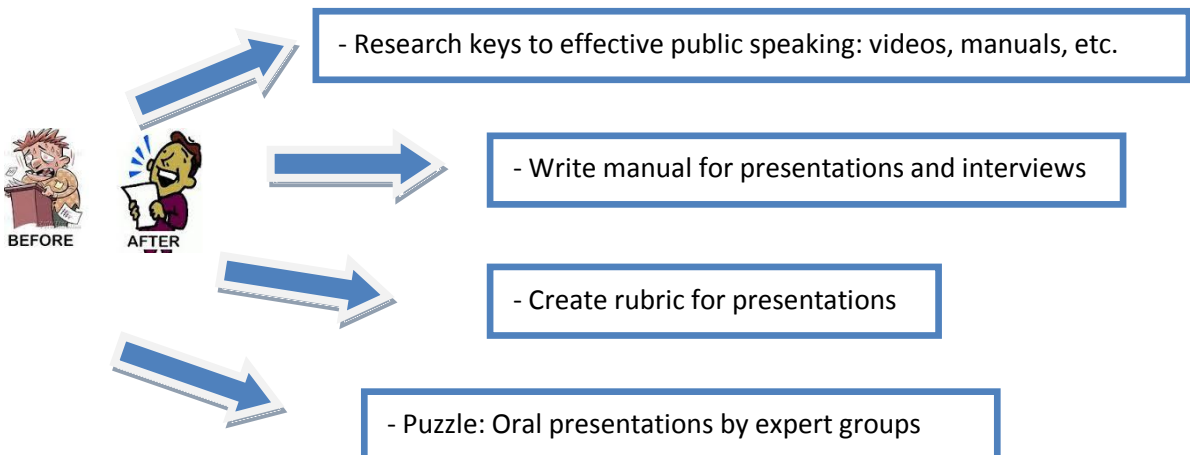
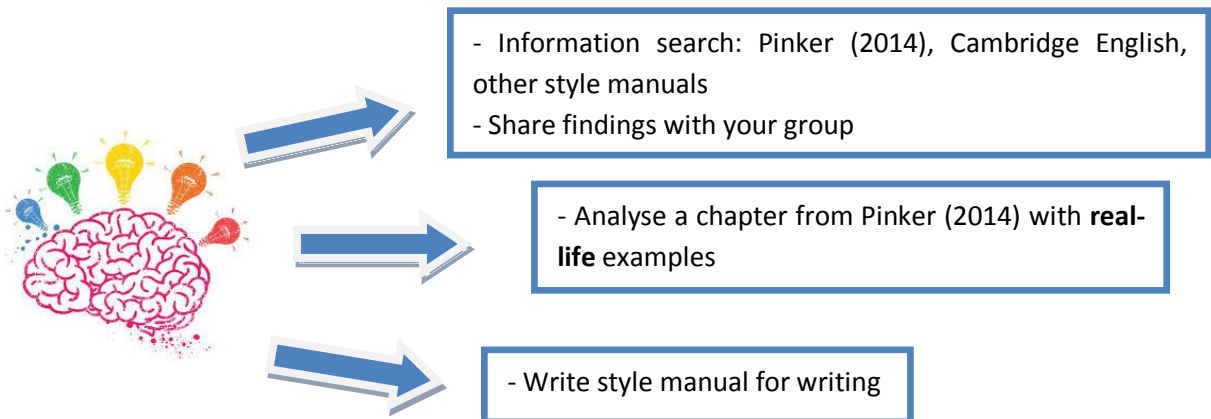
3. STEPS TO FOLLOW

The project has 4 phases. Each phase has tasks to complete.

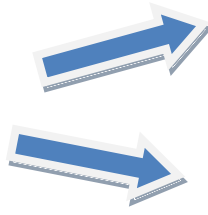
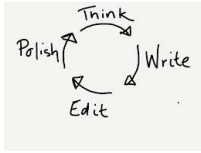
PHASE 1:



PHASE 2:



PHASE 3:



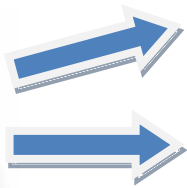
- Create rubric for evaluation of essays

- Evaluate original essays
- Write report on each essay for its original author



- Client/expert interview

PHASE 4:



- Rewrite your own initial essay

- Write a report explaining the improvements you made



- Base group analyses the improved versions
- Chooses the most improved essay



- Class chooses the two most improved essays of all!

The project has 14 tasks of two types: **group** and **individual**.

#	Assignment	Type
1	Initial essay (800-1000 words)	Individual
2	Create group workbook	Base Group
3	Style manual for effective writing	Base Group
4	Style manual for effective speaking	Base Group
5	Puzzle: Oral presentation on chapter of Pinker and Cambridge C2 characteristics	Expert Group
6	Phase 2 self-evaluation	Individual
7	Improvement reports	Base Group
8	Expert interview with client	Individual (+ client)
9	Client interview with expert	Individual (+ expert)
10	Phase 3 self-evaluation	Individual
11	Improved essay	Individual
12	Report on improvements	Individual
13	Complete group workbook	Base group
14	Phase 4 self-evaluation	Individual

Table 1: Project tasks

Each week you will have class time to work with your group. Each Monday is dedicated exclusively to the project, and if necessary, some Wednesday classes can be added.

Each time the group meets, the details of the meeting will be recorded in the workbook.

Each group will meet with the instructor once at each project phase for a check-up meeting. In these meetings, you have the opportunity to explain your work schedule and any problems you are having, and to receive feedback.

In between check-up meetings it is fundamental that your group organise itself. One of the main motivations of *Project Based Learning* is that you learn to organise yourself and to resolve problems as independent learners. PBLs reflect real-life situations. You have to approach this project as if you were a professional interested in doing a good job. You have to be creative.

The due date for each of the major assignments will be decided by each group, relative to the following dates:

1. The oral presentations by the expert groups (Oct. 5 & 7)
2. The deadline to hand in your improved essay (Dec. 7)
3. The deadline to hand in the complete project (Dec. 9)

Time management is important. This project is worth 60% of the course, and final exam 40%. This means that the project is worth 3.6 credits out of 6, i.e. 90 hours from 150 for each individual student.

Table 2 shows you how you should be dividing your time between the project and the other course work. Keep in mind that how well you manage the project will depend on how well your group coordinates the work load.

Course credits	Total weekly class time	Total weekly hours outside of class	Total time dedicated to project	Weekly individual dedication to project
6 ECTS (150 hours)	4 hours	6 hours	90 hours (per student)	6 hours weekly (2 in class + 4 out)

Table 2: Course time dedicated to the project

4. ADVICE FOR GROUP WORK

When you get together with your group for the first time, get each other's contact information and decide on how you will communicate as a group.

You also want to figure out a time and place that the whole group can meet outside of class. As a group, you will decide on your role and divide the work load (Appendix 3).

Each group will create a workbook where it will record specific information about its work schedule, division of labour, the results of its meetings (Appendix 4), and a group pledge to work cooperatively and professionally (Appendix 2).

In the case of group tension, you will want to establish a conflict resolution procedure. For example: What will happen if a group member constantly arrives late for your meetings? What if a member does not complete their portion of the work on time? Appendix 1 provides some suggestions.

5. ASSIGNMENT WEIGHTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Remember that the project is worth 60% of the course, and the final exam is worth 40%.

The project has both individual and group tasks. The group tasks are worth 20% of the whole course, and the individual project tasks are worth 40%.

There are four different ways that the various tasks are graded:

1. You receive full marks automatically for on-time submission
2. You evaluate yourself
3. You evaluate your peers
4. The instructor evaluates you individually/your group

The diagram below shows each project task's percentage.



You will **not** be able to hand in a task more than once because:

1. The whole project is directed towards the improvement of the initial essay, which you will continue to work on and improve throughout the term.
2. Since the interviews have to be recorded outside of class time, you have the opportunity to repeat them until you are satisfied **before** handing them in.
3. For the other assignments, weekly class time and the check-up meetings offer plenty of time for you to resolve doubts **before** any task is submitted.

In order to evaluate the major tasks, the class will design two rubrics: one for writing and another for speaking activities.

After studying the characteristics of effective writing and speaking, each group will design its own rubrics. Then, the class as a whole will agree on how to amalgamate the best aspects of each.

The fundamental aspects that these rubrics will evaluate are:

1. Professionalism
2. Grammatical correctness
3. Content quality
4. Creativity
5. Student development

Everyone will use the same two rubrics in the evaluation of the writing and speaking tasks.

6. STYLE MANUALS

The style manual for writing will cover:

- The material in Pinker (2014)
- The characteristics of C2 level language
- An additional, useful topic on effective writing not covered in Pinker to be chosen by each group

The style manual for oral communication will be researched independently by each group.

The content of each manual should be between 7000-9000 words (28-33 pages). Each group will decide on their own format and design.

Keep in mind that the purpose of these manuals is **NOT** to summarise your sources. The purpose is to create reference tools that you will use to guide your editing criteria when analysing the initial essays and presentations you work on.

7. ORAL TASKS

Once your base group has divided up the material in Pinker (2014) and the characteristics of C2 level language, you will search out your counterparts in the other groups (**Puzzle**). Together you will form a **group of experts** on one of the items in the material you are responsible for.

Your job as the expert group is to prepare a 20-minute presentation on your material (Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3 etc. of Pinker (2014), and the characteristics of C2 language).

In addition, each group of experts will prepare a five-minute quiz for the audience to answer in order to measure the effectiveness of your presentation. After the presentation and the quiz, there will be a 5-minute question period.

IMPORTANT: Remember that your presentations are **NOT** summaries of your sources. They are meant to teach your classmates the crucial elements that they contain. In order to do this you will have to be creative with the material and find **real-life examples** that illustrate your message that are not in your sources – you will search for your own examples.

For the second oral task – the client/expert interview – you will record it professionally, as if it were a real interview (professional register, adequate clothing, etc). Note that the technical quality and the style of your interview will also be taken into consideration in the final grade you will obtain for the interview.

In the interview, the professional will present the suggestions to improve the client's original essay. After this presentation, there will be a question period where the client will ask for further clarifications and suggestions. The interview should not exceed 30 minutes.

8. PROJECT COMPLETION

Once each client has returned to their editing group the improved version of their initial essay and **a report** on the improvements they made to it, each base group will re-read the essays and compare the reports. They will then pick the one essay they think **improved the most**. This essay becomes the group's candidate for the most improved essay in the whole class.

Once each group has proposed a candidate essay, each student will then compare all the candidate essays and the improvement reports, and **vote for the two most improved essays – not the best essays**. Each student gets 1 vote. **No student/group can vote for themselves** – if you do, your vote will be disqualified.

The prize for the two essays voted most improved is a 10/10 on the project for the essay's author and the base group that worked on it.

IMPORTANT: This means that the winners automatically pass the course!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

9. CHECK-UP MEETINGS AND TIME DISTRIBUTION

Table 3 contains the dates for the four check-up meetings.

Check-up meetings	Date and Place
Phase 1	September 28 In class
Phase 2	October 26 In class
Phase 3	November 9 In class
Phase 4	November 30 In class

Table 3: Check-up meeting dates

Table 4 provides estimates of how much time each student should dedicate to each task.

Task #	Task	Task Type	Estimated Time
PHASE 1			
1	Initial essay <i>a) information search</i> <i>b) writing</i>	Individual	10 hours
2	Create group workbook	Base group	1 hour
Check-up meeting <i>a) 1.5 preparation</i> <i>b) 0.5 meeting</i>			2 hours
PHASE 2			
3	Style manual: Writing <i>a) reading</i> <i>b) info search</i> <i>c) composition</i> <i>d) Update group workbook</i>	Base group	16 hours
4	Style manual: Speaking <i>a) Info search</i> <i>b) composition</i> <i>c) Update group workbook</i>	Base group	8 hours
5	Expert presentation <i>a) 4.5 composition</i> <i>b) 0.5 presentation</i>	Expert group	5 hours
6	Self-evaluation	Individual	30 min.
Check-up meeting			2 hours

PHASE 3			
7	Group report on each essay <i>a) Create rubric</i> <i>b) Apply criteria in manual</i> <i>c) Composition</i> <i>d) Editing</i> <i>e) Update group workbook</i>	Base group	25 hours
8	Expert interview <i>a) 2.5 hours preparation</i> <i>b) 0.5 presentation</i>	Individual (+ client)	3 hours
9	Client interview	Individual (+ expert)	30 min.
10	Self-evaluation	Individual	30 min.
Check-up meeting			2 hours
PHASE 4			
11	Improved initial essay <i>a) Information search</i> <i>b) Correct errors</i>	Individual	10 hours
Check-up meeting			2 hours
12	Report on improvements made on initial essay	Individual	2 hours
13	Final group workbook	Base group	2 hours
14	Self-evaluation	Individual	30 min.

Table 4: Estimation of time needed for each activity per student

10. MATERIALS

Table 5 details the materials needed to develop the project.

Phase	Materials
1	Group workbook
	Designation of roles
	Work calendar
2	Videos on how to speak in public and have a successful presentation
	Pinker, Steven. (2014). <i>The Sense of Style</i> . Allen Lane.
	Hewings, Martin. (2009). <i>Grammar for CAE and Proficiency</i> . University of Cambridge Press.
	<i>Cambridge English Proficiency Handbook for Teachers</i> . University of Cambridge Press.
	Additional materials that you find in your own searches
3	Writing and Speaking rubrics
	A program to develop the rubrics (e.g. <i>eRubric Assistant, Rubrics4Teachers</i>)
	Video editing program
	Video recording device

Table 5: Material needed for each project phase

Appendix 1

COPING WITH HITCHHIKERS AND COUCH POTATOES ON TEAMS

by Oakley, Felder, Brent and Elhajj (2004)

Journal of Student Centered Learning vol 2, n° 1.

You will usually find your university teammates as interested in learning as you are. Occasionally, however, you may encounter a person who creates difficulties. This handout is meant to give you practical advice for this type of situation.

To begin with, let's imagine you have been assigned to a combined homework and lab group this semester with three others: Mary, Henry, and Jack. Mary is okay-she's not good at solving problems, but she tries hard, and she willingly does things like get extra help from the professor. Henry is irritating. He's a nice guy, but he just doesn't put in the effort to do a good job. He'll sheepishly hand over partially worked homework problems and confess to spending the weekend watching TV. Jack, on the other hand, has been nothing but a problem. Here are a few of the things Jack has done:

- * When you tried to set up meetings at the beginning of the semester, Jack just couldn't meet, because he was too busy.
- * Jack infrequently turns in his part of the homework. When he does, it's almost always wrong-he obviously spent just enough time to scribble something down that looks like work.
- * Jack has never answered phone messages. When you confront him, he denies getting any messages. You e-mail him, but he's "too busy to answer."
- * Jack misses every meeting-he always promises he'll be there, but never shows up.
- * His writing skills are okay, but he can't seem to do anything right for lab reports. He loses the drafts, doesn't reread his work, leaves out tables, or does something sloppy like write equations by hand. You've stopped assigning him work because you don't want to miss your professor's strict deadlines.

* Jack constantly complains about his fifty-hour work weeks, heavy school load, bad textbooks, and terrible teachers. At first you felt sorry for him-but recently you've begun to wonder if Jack is using you.

* Jack speaks loudly and self-confidently when you try to discuss his problems-he thinks the problems are everyone else's fault. He is so self-assured that you can't help wondering sometimes if he's right.

* Your group finally was so upset they went to discuss the situation with Professor Distracted. He in turn talked, along with the group, to Jack, who in sincere and convincing fashion said he hadn't really understood what everyone wanted him to do. Dr. Distracted said the problem must be the group was not communicating effectively. He noticed you, Mary, and Henry looked angry and agitated, while Jack simply looked bewildered, a little hurt, and not at all guilty. It was easy for Dr. Distracted to conclude this was a dysfunctional group, and everyone was at fault-probably Jack least of all.

The bottom line: You and your teammates are left holding the bag. Jack is getting the same good grades as everyone else without doing any work. Oh yes-he managed to make you all look bad while he was at it.

What this group did wrong: Absorbing

This was an 'absorber' group. From the very beginning they absorbed the problem when Jack did something wrong, and took pride in getting the job done whatever the cost. Hitchhikers count on you to act in a self-sacrificing manner. However, the nicer you are (or the nicer you think you are being), the more the hitchhiker will be able to hitchhike their way through the university-and through life.

What this group should have done: Mirroring

It's important to reflect back the dysfunctional behavior of the hitchhiker, so the hitchhiker pays the price-not you. Never accept accusations, blame, or criticism from a hitchhiker. Maintain your own sense of reality despite what the hitchhiker says, (easier said than done). Show you have a bottom line: there are limits to the behavior you will accept. Clearly communicate these limits and act consistently on them. For example, here is what the group could have done:

* When Jack couldn't find time to meet in his busy schedule, even when alternatives were suggested, you needed to decide whether Jack was a hitchhiker. Was Jack brusque, self-important, and in a hurry to get away? Those are suspicious signs. Someone needed to tell Jack up front to either find time to meet, or talk to the professor.

* If Jack turns nothing in, his name does not go on the finished work. (Note: if you know your teammate is generally a contributor, it is appropriate to help if something unexpected arises.) Many professors allow a team to fire a student, so the would-be freeloader has to work alone the rest of the semester. Discuss this option with your instructor if the student has not contributed over the course of an assignment or two.

* If Jack turns in poorly prepared homework or lab reports, you must tell him he has not contributed meaningfully, so his name will not go on the submitted work. No matter what Jack says, stick to your guns! If Jack gets abusive, show the professor his work. Do this the first time the junk is submitted, before Jack has taken much advantage-not after a month, when you are really getting frustrated.

* Set your limits early and high, because hitchhikers have an uncanny ability to detect just how much they can get away with.

* If Jack doesn't respond to e-mails, answer phone messages, or show up for meetings, don't waste more time trying to contact him.

* Keep in mind the only one who can handle Jack's problems is Jack. You can't change him-you can only change your own attitude so he no longer takes advantage of you. Only Jack can change Jack-and he will have no incentive to change if you do all his work for him.

People like Jack can be skilled manipulators. By the time you find out his problems are never-ending, and he himself is their cause, the semester has ended and he is off to repeat his manipulations on a new, unsuspecting group. Stop allowing these dysfunctional patterns early in the game-before the hitchhiker takes advantage of you and the rest of your team!

Henry, the Couch Potato

But we haven't discussed Henry yet. Although Henry stood up with the rest of the group to try to battle against Jack's irrational behavior, he hasn't really been pulling his weight. You will find

the best way to deal with a couch potato like Henry is the way you deal with a hitchhiker: set firm, explicit expectations-then stick to your guns. Although couch potatoes are not as manipulative as hitchhikers, they will definitely test your limits. If your limits are weak, you then share the blame if you have Henry's work to do as well as your own. But I've Never Liked Telling People What to Do!

If you are a nice person who has always avoided confrontation, working with a couch potato or a hitchhiker can help you grow as a person and learn the important character trait of firmness. Just be patient with yourself as you learn. The first few times you try to be firm, you may find yourself thinking-'but now he/she won't like me-it's not worth the pain!' But many people just like you have had exactly the same troubled reaction the first few (or even many) times they tried to be firm. Just keep trying-and stick to your guns! Someday it will seem more natural and you won't feel so guilty about having reasonable expectations for others. In the meantime, you will find you have more time to spend with your family, friends, or schoolwork, because you aren't doing someone else's job along with your own.

Common Characteristics that Allow a Hitchhiker or Couch Potato to Take Advantage

- * Unwillingness to allow a slacker to fail and subsequently learn from their own mistakes.
- * Devotion to the ideal of 'the good of the team'-without common-sense realization of how this can allow others to take advantage of you. Sometimes you show (and are secretly proud of) irrational loyalty to others.
- * You like to make others happy even at your own expense.
- * You always feel you have to do better-your best is never enough.
- * Your willingness to interpret the slightest contribution by a slacker as 'progress.'
- * You are willing to make personal sacrifices so as to not abandon a hitchhiker-without realizing you are devaluing yourself in this process.
- * Long-suffering martyrdom-nobody but you could stand this.
- * The ability to cooperate but not delegate.
- * Excessive conscientiousness.
- * The tendency to feel responsible for others at the expense of being responsible for yourself.

A related circumstance: you're doing all the work

As soon as you become aware everyone is leaving the work to you-or doing such poor work that you are left doing it all, you need to take action. Many professors allow you the leeway to request a move to another team. (You cannot move to another group on your own.) Your professor will probably ask some questions before taking the appropriate action.

Later on-out on the job and in your personal life

You will meet couch potatoes and hitchhikers throughout the course of your professional career. Couch potatoes are relatively benign, can often be firmly guided to do reasonably good work, and can even become your friends. However, hitchhikers are completely different people-ones who can work their way into your confidence and then destroy it. Occasionally, a colleague, subordinate, supervisor, friend, or acquaintance could be a hitchhiker. If this is the case, and your personal or professional life is being affected, it will help if you keep in mind the techniques suggested above.



Appendix 2: Group Contract

Members:

1.
2.
3.

Forward: This contract is a binding legal document and governs the group until the assigned project deadline. If the group separates, or a member is fired, the basic contract laws remain intact for both parties. However, being fired may cause work responsibilities to shift.

Article I: Absence Policy

- a. If a group member will be absent on a day in which work is due, they must tell another group member a day in advance and have all work that they are responsible for turned in. All group members must stick to the provided agenda to have the assignments completed on time. If there will be an unexpected absence, the group member is to complete the work from home and email another group member to let them know they are gone for the day.
- b. Group members will contact one another if they are absent for any amount of period during the time allotted for working on the projects.

Article II: Work Policy

- a. Each group member will work to the best of their ability, making sure the complete the work is up to standards, and that they completed it with punctuality.
- b. If a group member commits plagiarism, they are solely responsible and incur the punishment on their own.
- c. Should any of the members not be able to meet on the appointed days...

Article III: Work Ethics

- a. If a group member does not complete work they were assigned, the punishment for the infringement will be of detriment to the entire group. The group should constantly take measures to avoid this situation.



Article IV: Member Dismissal

- a. The following conducts will result in a group member being able to be dismissed:
 - i. Regularly producing incomplete assignments or missing group work
 - ii. Plagiarism or any form of cheating
 - iii. If a group member decides to leave under his or her own will.

- b. If a group member is fired for breaking any of the conducts specified above will have their work taken from their possession to be used at the discretion of the original group, but not for the individual being fired. In addition, any fired member may not use any work completed by other group members.

- c. Any group member leaving the group under their own will must submit a letter to the group and teacher explaining their reasons for leaving. If the departure is allowed, the student can only take their work with them. In addition, their group will not be able to use the work done by the individual leaving the group.

- d. Dismissal/Firing Procedure:
 - i. The teacher must be informed before each warning.
 - I. 1st warning – verbal group discussion with student
 - II. 2nd warning – written warning to the student
 - III. 3rd warning – meeting with the entire group and teacher.

Article V: Signature

By signing this contract the following group members abide to the articles above. If any member fails to abide by the articles of this contract, they may be fired from the group given at least a 50% vote in favour of firing the individual.

Signatures

NAME:

NAME:

NAME:

Appendix 3: Guidelines for Working in the Base Group and the Expert Group

1) BASE GROUP

The first time you meet with your base group, choose a

(i) **Coordinator** who will:

- a) Organize group meetings
- b) Create and enforce a group agenda to govern group progress
- c) Provide communication between group members in order to help individuals work towards the project goal as well as communicating the teacher any difficulties, problems etc.
- d) Be in charge of checking the final versions of tasks

(ii) **Time Keeper and Fact checker** who will:

- a) Keep time of the interventions in the meetings of the group, making sure that each member of the group intervenes in the meetings equally
- b) Set deadlines for the parts of their projects
- c) Be responsible for making sure all the information is **accurate**

(iii) **Secretary and Tech Supporter** who will:

- a) Write down the details of every meeting, writing down the arguments, discussions and problems encountered in the process of developing the project in the workbook
- b) Be the go to person for issues with technology: will be in charge of **bringing a computer every day**
- c) Be in charge of handing in final versions of tasks

All the members of the group will have to read and become familiar with the book on which the project is based. However, Pinker (2014) is not by any means the only source you will have to consult in order for you to develop the project successfully. Thus, each of the members of the group will be assigned specifically to become an expert in one of the three following subtasks:

- a) Pinker's chapters 1 & 2 + characteristics of level C2 as specified by Cambridge Proficiency
- b) Pinker's chapters 3 & 4
- c) Pinker's chapter 5 + alternative style guides to complete and individualize each project

Each member of the group will be responsible for sharing their expertise with the rest of the members of the group.

Additionally, a group of experts will be created for each of Pinker's chapters. These groups of experts will be in charge of presenting the content of each chapter orally to the rest of the class.

The group as a whole is responsible for the completion of all group tasks.

Appendix 4: Partial Model Group Workbook

Part 1: *To be filled out each meeting:*

1. Who is the secretary of this meeting?
2. When did we meet? (Date; duration)
3. Who is present? Is anyone missing?
4. Did each member complete their tasks for this meeting?
5. The content of this meeting was:
6. The next meeting will be: (Date)
7. Identification of tasks for next meeting:
8. Who will do what?
9. Have we distributed the work evenly?
10. Identification of current organizational problems:

Part 2: *To be revised when appropriate:*

1. Our list of objectives for the current project phase is:
2. Completed objectives for this phase:
3. In preparation for the next phase we have done/agreed that:

Part 3: *To be completed at the end of each phase:*

1. Are all group members respectful of each other?
2. Do we listen to each other when we speak?
3. Does each meeting leave a clear list of objectives for the next meeting?
4. How does the group settle the problems that have arisen?
5. Has each group member completed their tasks appropriately?
6. Does each group member explain the results of their work clearly to the whole group?
7. Do all group members actively participate in the meetings and in the organisation of the project?
8. List three positive aspects of the development of your group's project:
9. List two areas that need improvement:
10. How will the group improve them?
11. From 0-10, what rating does each group member give the organisation and results of the group?
12. Additional comments