

2C Well-being Week

WRITING OUTPUT | a written summary

GOAL | summarise an article

MEDIATION SKILL | summarising skills

WARM-UP

- 1 **Work in pairs and discuss the questions.**
 - 1 What are some of the main reasons that people argue with their colleagues or classmates?
 - 2 What's the best way of stopping an argument becoming a big problem?

PREPARE

- 2 **Read the Scenario. What do you think 'Well-being Week' is?**

SCENARIO

You receive this message:

As you all know, it's Well-being Week soon, and I'd like us all to do some research about how to look after our mental health in the team. I'll send you all some links to look at later today. Let's use them to make our 'Top four ways of dealing with anger in a team' blog.

- 3 **Work in pairs. Student A: Read Text A. Student B: Read Text B. Which of the topics in the box are mentioned?**

knowing your own behaviour
pretending things are OK
taking a different point of view
writing something down

Text A

How to deal with anger at work

Because I work in a stressful job, I understand what it's like to feel angry at work. Here's some advice for dealing with it.

1 It's totally normal!

A lot of people want to calm down straight away when they're angry and just forget about what made them angry, but often this is not possible. Sometimes, you just have to accept it, and also remember that anger is a normal emotion – you're not a bad person just because you feel mad at someone or something. Pretending that you're calm when you're not can actually be pretty dangerous – you still have a lot of stress inside you, and it's very easy for you to get angry again, especially if the situation happens a lot. In my first job I often had coffee with colleagues who I was really angry with, pretending everything was OK, but in the end the bad feeling always came out and there were some really ugly situations that I could have avoided.

2 It's not the end of the world

Sometimes when we're really mad, it can feel like the end of the world, and our relationships with people on our team are permanently broken. When you feel like this, try to remember previous problems with people at work. Did you fix the situation? The answer is almost always 'yes', and if this was true before, it's also true now – it will be possible to find a way to make things better. I remember two of my colleagues who used to fight a lot, and they've been happily married for ten years now!

3 Space is good

Sometimes the best thing you can do when you're really angry with someone is walk away. Take a walk outside, take some deep breaths and let some of the stress go. It's better than staying in a bad situation because things can just get worse and worse. In my last job I always wanted to have the last word when I was mad at my colleague (and she did with me, too!), and it always made things worse when we kept arguing. If we spent a little time apart, we were usually just fine.

4 There are warning signs

You know yourself. You know when that feeling of anger is getting stronger and stronger. It's like traffic lights: when your feelings reach yellow, don't wait for them to get to red, do something before it gets really bad. In my last job, I knew my colleagues really well, and I could see the warning signs. That was the time to go for lunch and talk about things in a friendly way or take some time away from each other, before it got really bad.

Text B

Tips for beating anger at work

OK, guys, today's blog is my top four tips for dealing with stress with other people on your team.

1 See it both ways

So, you're getting angry with a colleague for some reason. Imagine a stranger coming in and looking at the situation. What would they think? Would they see a different way of looking at the issue than you? It's a real skill to look at a situation through another person's eyes, and a really good way to help you calm down. Sometimes, we feel that other people are trying to make us angry, but when you think more carefully about the reasons for their actions, you can start to understand why they are doing the things they are doing. Sometimes when I look at my own behaviour from a stranger's point of view, I feel quite embarrassed and I can't stay angry.

2 Take out a pen and paper

If you're the same as me, I find it very hard to explain how I feel when I'm angry. I focus on the emotion and I find it really difficult to explain the details that will help people understand why I'm angry, well, because I'm just too angry! When I write down what the problem is, I start to understand myself better, and I can stop, think and edit what I've written so that I can explain things better. I can also edit the angry language that I write at the beginning and replace it with calmer words. For example, I remember writing: 'Carl is such an idiot. He never listens to anyone because he always thinks he's right.' Later on, I thought about the situation and wrote: 'Carl is very confident about his opinions, but maybe he needs to listen more.'

3 Focus on the answer

Yes, you want to talk about how you're feeling, and that's important. However, you need to do more than that. You need to be part of solving the problem and you need to be open to suggestions from other people. If you only concentrate on why you're angry and you're not interested in talking about solving problems, then it's difficult for the situation to improve.

4 Take care

There are some things you can do to make your general mood better, which makes an argument with a teammate less likely. Some of the key things are: getting enough sleep, doing regular exercise and controlling things like caffeine and alcohol. It's difficult to be in control of all of these things all the time, but you need to do your best for your sake and for your colleagues', too. A few years ago, I promised myself that I would get a minimum of eight hours sleep per night, and it changed my mood a lot. Give it a try!

- 4 Read the Mediation Skill box. What kind of information can we sometimes remove when we write a summary?

MEDIATION SKILL summarising skills



When you write a summary of a text, there are a few useful steps:

First, decide what information you need. Read the text and for each paragraph decide what the most important point is. For example:

I think an important thing to think about is how much sleep you're getting, and it's something that people don't talk about enough, because if you don't sleep well, it's going to be very easy for you to get angry with people around you. I remember when I had a really bad argument with a colleague because I had slept badly. It all happened just because I was tired. I said sorry later, but the argument caused a problem for months.

Then think about what information you don't need, such as long introductions to the topic and examples.

Use bullet points to help keep your summary short.

When you finish writing, check your summary against the article.

We can also use certain helpful phrases to help us summarise:

The article/blog/writer says (that) ...

One of the main points is ...

The writer recommends + -ing

The article says that it's very easy to get angry with other people if you don't sleep well.

- 5 Look at your article (Text A or Text B) again. Find the key information that you would include in a summary.

MEDIATE

- 6A Read the Scenario again. Write a short summary of your article, using the ideas from the Mediation Skill box to help you.
- B Work in pairs. Give your partner your summary and allow them some time to read it. Take turns to ask and answer any questions you have about your partner's summary.
Why is sleep so important?
- C Choose the top five tips you would include in an article about avoiding anger in a team.
- D Work with another pair. Share your top five tips and your reasons for choosing them. Do you agree?