

LESSON 14

Making Contact With a Workplace Organisation

60 minutes

Strand 2.2: Engaging with the Workplace

Applying

Outcome LCW.M2.S2.ENG.3

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Students examine different methods for contacting organisations about work experience placements. They evaluate sample emails to identify effective elements before drafting their own professional first contact message with a clear rationale for their chosen organisation.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
LCW.M2.S2.ENG.3	outline different methods for making contact with a workplace organisation justifying the most appropriate method.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Compare phone, email, in-person, social DM and careers-fair contact methods
- Choose the most appropriate method with a clear rationale for your target organisation
- Draft a strong first-contact email for your work-experience target

KEY TERMS

Term	What it means here	For example
First contact	The first message you send or conversation you start with a workplace organisation when asking about work experience, shadowing or a role.	An email to a clinic manager asking whether three placement days in March are possible
Professional email	A short, clear message with a named recipient where possible, a specific ask, relevant evidence about you, and easy ways to reply.	Subject line, named manager, three days in a March window and a mobile reply path, sent to a local pharmacy
Method choice	Picking how you make contact (phone, email, in person, social DM or careers fair) based on what that organisation actually uses and expects.	Walking into a local café with a CV, but emailing a hospital HR team

BEFORE THE BELL

- Ensure students have the name of their target organisation and any placement notes they already have, or use the 60-second recovery (pick one real local option and draft to a role title).
- Prepare a school letter-of-introduction template if available.
- On screen this lesson: document annotator.

Making Contact With a Workplace Organisation

HOW THE LESSON RUNS		
5 min	introduction	Getting Started
5 min	content	Key Terms
35 min	activity	Annotate, Then Draft Your Email
10 min	content	Think About It
5 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

5 min Getting Started

Quick show of hands: who already knows the name of the person or team they should contact at their target organisation? Note who still needs a name, general enquiries address, or phone number before they can send anything real.

Remind students their target organisation and any placement notes they already have should be open beside them.

60-second recovery: if a student only has a sector or a blank page, they name one real local workplace now and draft to a role title (Practice Manager, HR, Owner). Drafting is never blocked for a missing contact name.

5 min Key Terms

Spend no more than five minutes here. The methods list is orientation only; the annotation and the student's own draft carry the outcome.

If anyone insists a DM is always fine, push gently: public social accounts often filter messages, and many employers never check them for placement requests.

35 min Annotate, Then Draft Your Email On screen: document annotator

SUGGESTED TIMING (LOCK THE DRAFT IN CLASS)

- 12 minutes fixed: document annotator in challenge mode on the IWB and devices, then whole-class model reveal
- 3 minutes: class share one disagreement with the model
- 18 minutes protected: silent independent draft of the real first-contact email and the three method lines

Do not set the draft as homework; Step 4 paired talk depends on an existing draft and method rationale in the room.

TEACHING TIPS

Walk the weak email first only long enough for students to feel the vagueness, then move on. The strong email is the pattern they copy into their own voice, not a script to clone.

Look-fors in the student draft: named organisation; specific days or window; one real reason; reply path; method chosen plus one rejected method, with a rationale that matches the organisation (not “email because it is easier for me”).

DIFFERENTIATION

If a student still has no named contact, they address a role title (Practice Manager, HR, Owner) and note in the three lines how they will find a name before sending. Do not block drafting for missing contacts.

Placement logistics: remind the room that first contact is part of workplace preparation, not the placement itself. Garda Vetting, hours and dress code land in the next conditions lesson if not already covered for their target. Garda Vetting is required for placements involving children or vulnerable adults (see citizensinformation.ie); students should mention prior clearance only when it is relevant to the target role, as evidence of responsibility, not as a blanket claim.

10 min Think About It

Paired talk for four to five minutes, then two quick shares to the room. Push method fit, not preference: a hospital HR inbox and a local garage are different worlds.

If someone has already sent a weak message, treat that as usable material: what they would change in a follow-up, not as a failure.

If time is short, fold these prompts into the three method lines under the draft and free five minutes; the mini-table already captures method choice and rejection.

5 min What you covered

Exit check: every student should leave with First Contact Email saved in Strand 2.2. Spot-check three drafts for a specific ask, a reply path, and a method rejected line before the bell.

Log who still lacks a contact name so you can support that before they send anything live.

Garda Vetting reminder for next conditions lesson: required where the placement involves children or vulnerable adults (citizensinformation.ie); not automatic for every workplace.

ANSWERS AND LOOK-FORS

- "Subject: Work Experience Request" - Fails: weak or vague - Generic subject. A busy inbox cannot tell who this is for or what is being asked.
- "work experience at your place sometime" - Fails: weak or vague - No organisation name, no dates, no length. The reader has nothing concrete to approve.
- "I'm free most weeks" - Fails: weak or vague - Sounds flexible, but forces the employer to invent the plan. Specific windows are easier to say yes to.
- "Thanks Jamie" - Missing: reader still needs this - No full name, school, mobile or email. If this sat in a shared inbox, nobody could reply with confidence.
- "Dear Ms Byrne" - Works: keep this move - A named person beats Hi. If you cannot find a name, use a role title rather than nothing.
- "three days of work experience between 10 and 21 March" - Works: keep this move - Length and window in one line. The reader can check the diary without writing back for basics.
- "volunteered at a local dog shelter on Saturday mornings for the past..." - Works: keep this move - One concrete reason this field, not a vague claim about loving animals.
- "letter from my school confirming the placement requirements" - Works: keep this move - Shows the school is behind the request and that paperwork will not be the employer's problem alone.
- "My mobile number is 087 555 0192 if it is easier to call" - Works: keep this move - Gives a second reply path. Many small workplaces prefer a quick call to a long email chain.

TEACHING MOVES

- Model the annotation process with the whole class on the IWB before students work independently.
- Circulate during the drafting activity to support students with their specific organisations.
- Facilitate paired discussions in the Think About It section to encourage sharing of method choices.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Students may use overly casual language in emails; remind them to maintain a professional tone throughout.
- Emails might lack a specific ask; encourage including exact details like dates or number of days.
- Choosing the wrong contact method; discuss why email suits some organisations but not others.
- Treating Garda Vetting as required for every placement; it applies where there is regular contact with children or vulnerable adults.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Provide sentence starters for the email draft and a checklist of key elements.
- Extension: Ask students to prepare a follow-up message or consider responses to potential replies.
- Support: Pair students who need help identifying contact details with those who have them.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEFT WITH

- First Contact Email draft for chosen work-experience target