



LITERACY PROFILE:

Catering Assistant

Duties: Trainee catering assistants prepare and assemble, and in some situations sell, food.

This literacy profile lists the tasks that these trainees do that require literacy skills. Literacy skills are a set of skills that include reading, writing, speaking and listening, critical thinking, and numeracy.

Most of the tasks listed will involve the use of technical language including abbreviations relevant to the catering industry.

Reading tasks

Recognise and interpret pictures, symbols, abbreviations and codes

- Meal codes
- Meal photos
- Colour coded labels (eg freezer)
- Colour coded cutting boards and brushes
- Dates e.g. for rosters
- "Use by" and "Best before" dates
- Safety signs
- Exit signs
- Dishwasher and other equipment instructions (pictures)
- Menu slip

Read and understand very short documents

- HACCP record sheet
- Tally reports
- Sandwich making instructions
- Special diet descriptions
- Meal vouchers
- Timetable of menu rotations
- Work roster
- Emergency procedures
- Infection rate charts
- Notices
- Product labels

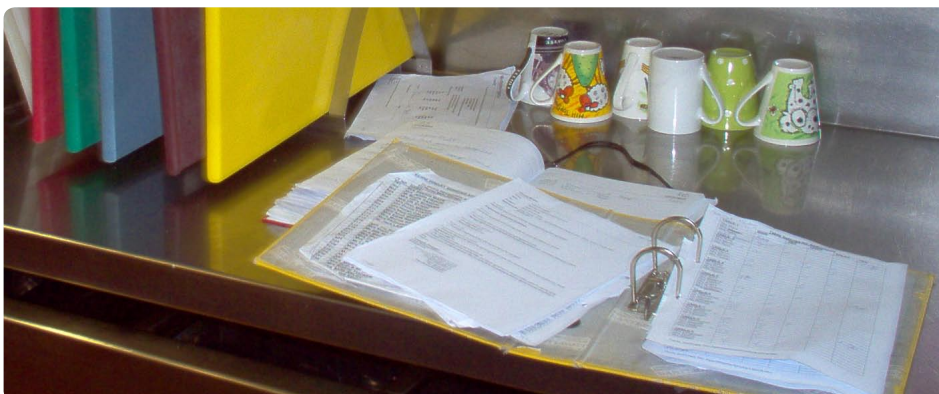
Read and understand short documents

- Induction information
- Duty description sheets
- Food safety rules
- Hand washing instructions
- Meal ingredient sheet
- Equipment operating manuals
- Cleaning instructions
- Dress, hygiene and special catering requirements for patients

Read and understand complex documents

- Food specification information
- In-house training (eg HACCP, host responsibility)
- Policies and procedures
- Employment documents
- Emergency procedures including flowcharts and plans

NB Reading and numeracy are linked in many of these tasks



Reading skills

Interpret graphic symbols.

- Signs
- Colour coding

Recognise the features of a range of texts.

- Signs
- Codes
- Forms
- Procedures

Recognise number formats.

- Dates
- Serial numbers
- Credit card numbers

Understand common and industry vocabulary and abbreviations.

Use a range of strategies to find out the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases.

- Reference source.
 - Dictionary
 - Glossary
- Ask someone
- Make inferences from surrounding text

Follow written instructions (which may include diagrams).

Predict what will be contained in a text.

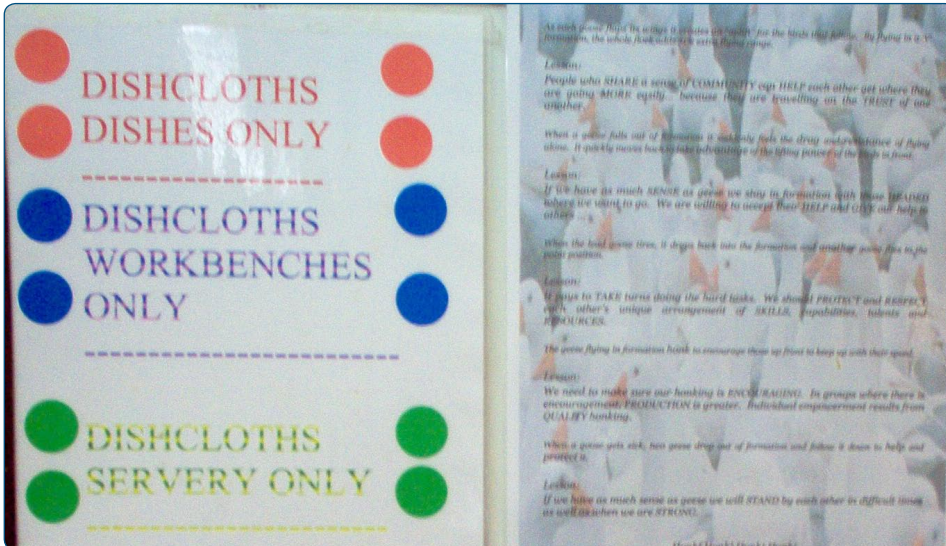
Use a guide to document contents.

- Index
- Table of contents

Identify the main points from a page of text.

Scan text, table or label to find specific piece of information.

Read text thoroughly.



Writing tasks

Complete simple documentation

- HACCP record sheet
- Timesheets
- Leave forms
- Temperature record

Write a brief factual statement

- Incident report
- Accident form



Writing skills

Use the right style for different sorts of writing.

- Note
- List
- Checklist
- Form

Sign name on forms to indicate understanding.

Write simple correct text in appropriate places and in appropriate formats on job sheets and forms.

- Use legible handwriting
- Use recognisable spelling and abbreviations
- Writing should stay on the line

Complete forms using numbers, single words, or short sentences.

- Handwriting must be legible
- Abbreviations can be used
- Spelling must be understandable, but correct spelling is not essential
- Grammar and punctuation must be understandable

Speaking and listening tasks

Listen to procedures and instructions given orally and respond accordingly

- Co-operation with work mates about food preparation
- Supervisor's instructions
- Advice from buddy

Give factual information orally and check for understanding

- Advice to buddy
- Customer request
- Client request
- Explain simple work procedures
- Give directions to customers about where to find items
- Explain food quality basics

Participate in discussions

- Work team
- Regular workplace meetings
- Customers and clients (brief)



Speaking and listening skills

(NB Speaking and Listening includes non-verbal communication)

Speak clearly.

Discuss topics which are appropriate in a work context.

Use words, pronunciation, and tone appropriate to situation and audience.

Open and close conversations appropriately.

Give information in a sensible order.

Understand that communication is a two way process.

Use active listening skills.

- Repeat message back to sender
- Summarise instructions in own words
- Use following techniques e.g. say "aha" or "okay" as they follow what someone is saying

Use negotiation skills.

- Identify issue
- Suggest possible solutions
- Agree on best outcome

Use suitable body language.

Read body language of person speaking, or being spoken to, and respond appropriately.

Understand that there are barriers to communication, especially in a cross-cultural situation.

Numeracy tasks

Recognise and understand alphanumeric codes

- Meal codes

Understand a range of numerical concepts as they apply to specific jobs

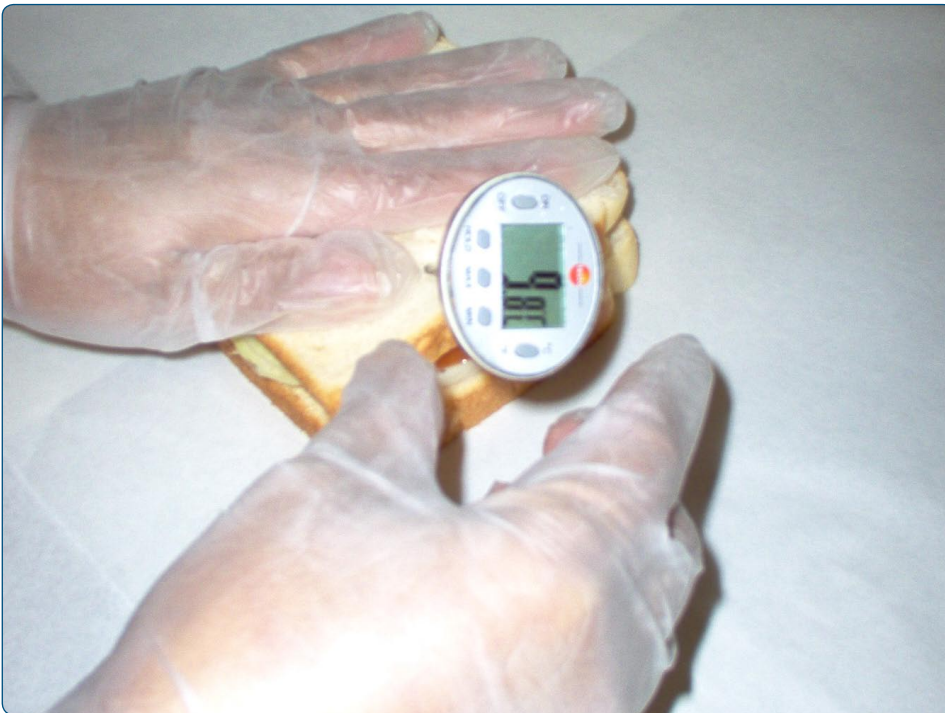
- Units of weight (gm, kg)
- Units of capacity (l, ml, cup, tsp)
- 24 hour clock

Make and record data from workplace observations or measurements

- Time
- Weight
- Capacity
- Temperature
- Food prices
- Prices

Carry out simple calculations for specific work tasks

- Number of meals (by ward, by type, by flight, by villa). Calculated by tally or by percentages.
- Adjustment of meal numbers
- Quantities of cleaning chemicals
- Divide food prepared in bulk into portions
- Estimate weight or quantity of portions
- Estimate total cost of sale
- Calculate cost of sale
- Calculate change required for sale
- Calculate quantities needed for multiples of recipes e.g. doubling or halving



NB Numeracy is linked with reading in many of these tasks

Numeracy skills

Recognise numbers as part of a code.

Use numbers.

- Whole numbers
- Decimals
- Fractions
- Percentages
- Ratios

Do number problems.

- Addition
- Subtraction
- Multiplication
- Division

Understand place value.

Estimate.

- Time
- Number
- Capacity
- Temperature
- Volume
- Money

Measure accurately.

- Time
- Weight
- Number
- Capacity
- Temperature
- Money

Use 12 or 24hr clock.

Understand wastage factor.



Critical thinking tasks

Identify when workplace procedures are not being met and take appropriate action

- HACCP procedures (time, temperature)
- Food items missing
- Food quality not satisfactory
- Production targets not being reached

Recognise significant events not covered by procedures and take appropriate action

- Health and safety

Assess situation and identify appropriate action to take from a pre-determined range of possible responses

- Number of meal types needed
- Variations to meal numbers
- When ill whether to go to work
- Health and safety
- Action to take when food is past its "use by" or "best before" date
- Emergency procedures (particularly in an institutional setting)

Assess situation and decide if assistance is needed

- Behind with food preparation
- Can't understand instructions
- Dealing with difficult customer

Critical thinking skills

Identify **when** action should be taken.

Identify **what** action should be taken.

Identify when action cannot be taken independently and seek assistance.

Apply knowledge of safety requirements and principles to work practice.

Use problem solving methodology.

- Identify issue
- Identify possible solutions
- Determine best outcome
- Decide on plan of action
- Carry out plan
- Review result to see if plan worked

Apply knowledge of efficient work practices to plan the most effective way to complete work activities with minimum time and wastage.

Interpret body language.



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