

English Skill: “Use appropriate vocabulary to meet customers’ expectations”

Used in the workplace at Cheltenham Science Group:
an interactive science centre in Cheltenham



Dave Watson, Director
Cheltenham Science Group

“The role of our science centre is to communicate science to an audience that has no previous scientific knowledge. We have 15 exhibits currently and each one has a written explanation next to it – these need to be carefully written, using clear, succinct vocabulary that primary school age children (KS2) can understand. We also explain science principles through large poster boards on the walls. As well as being eye catching, they need to very quickly explain and bring to life a science concept.

Our volunteers help customers by showing them around, using the exhibits with them and answering any questions. It's most important that they can use clear vocabulary that is age appropriate. Both verbal and written communication are key to our business – if we fail to do this, our customers won't return.”

About Cheltenham Science Group

Cheltenham Science Group (CSG) is a non-profit interactive science centre. It has had a permanent exhibition base in Cheltenham since last April. CSG also offer and run science outreach events for groups such as primary schools, Guides and Scouts, throughout Gloucestershire and beyond. Events they run can be anything related to Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM), which they set up on site. They also attend and exhibit at science fairs and exhibitions throughout the region.

Who do Cheltenham Science Group Employ?

Currently Dave is the only permanent full-time member of staff, supported by a full-time placement student this year. A network of 10 volunteers support CSG, mostly at the science centre.

Range of Salaries: CSG, being a non-profit company, does not pay high salaries. However, it is a very good place to learn the art of communicating complex science to a non-scientific audience. This may be useful for future careers such as education, journalism and marketing.

Skills Shortages: CSG are fortunate to have a loyal team of volunteers. People that haven't communicated science before can find it hard at first, but Dave trains people from within. In the STEM sector, there is a shortage of people working at technician level.

Useful Links

www.cheltenhamsciencegroup.co.uk

www.stem.org.uk

www.theiet.org



See the accompanying film production for more on the use of this skill.

Video summary: staff need to use appropriate vocabulary at Cheltenham Science Group so that...

- Customers have clear written instructions that help them to use the exhibits and understand the scientific principles behind them
- Staff can verbally communicate accurately and appropriately to customers about the interactive exhibits
- Posters can bring complex scientific information to life, in an age-appropriate way for customers.