Angry Senders Beware

When Marcus Wood hit Send, little did he know that the e-mail he was sending to colleagues would make headlines around the world. In it, Wood used offensive language to accuse his employees of playing games while they should have been at their desks and of not wearing the correct office attire.

He gave his workers an ultimatum: if they didn’t improve their performance they would be fired. His employees got their revenge by putting the e-mail on Twitter. The “worst work e-mail ever”, as some called it, had gone viral. After his e-mail had become famous, a repentant Wood apologised, and said: “I am becoming an online sensation for how not to communicate…”

But Marcus Wood wasn’t the first to have sent such an e-mail. Since e-mails became the communication tool of choice in offices worldwide, workers have been sending messages they later wished they hadn’t. Take Richard Phillips, for instance. In an e-mail, the lawyer demanded five euros from his secretary to pay for dry-cleaning after she had accidentally spilled ketchup on his suit. Four days later, when he still hadn’t received the money, Phillips sent another e-mail asking for the cash.

On her return, she couldn’t believe what she was reading and forwarded the e-mails to her colleagues. Embarrassed, Phillips resigned from his position.

What should furious bosses and angry workers do before they e-mail their colleagues? They should first calm down. “Write your e-mail a couple of hours before you send it,” advises Lily Herman, an expert in e-mail etiquette. She says that this allows you to change your message when you are likely to be less angry. By doing this, you won’t put your hard-earned reputation at risk from a not-so-carefully worded e-mail.

I* COMPREHENSION (4 points)
CHOOSE AND WRITE THE CORRECT OPTION (A, B, C or D). (1p: 0.5 each)

1. Marcus Wood thinks that his workers …
(a) are always ill. (b) use bad language in the office. (c) need to improve their performance. (d) should leave their jobs in three months.

2. What did Richard Phillips do when everyone found out about his e-mails to his secretary?
(a) He got a different position at the firm. (b) He denied writing the e-mails. (c) He quit his job. (d) He got a job at a different law firm.

WRITE TRUE OR FALSE. FIND EVIDENCE IN THE TEXT TO JUSTIFY YOUR ANSWERS (2p: 0.5 each)

4. Employers and employees prefer to use e-mails to communicate with colleagues.
5. Richard Phillips’ secretary wasn’t surprised by his reaction.
6. Experts believe that sending angry e-mails might damage your reputation.

FIND IN THE TEXT: (1p: 0.25 each)

7.1 ONE OPPOSITE FOR “inappropriate” (adjective).
7.2 ONE SYNONYM FOR “unintentionally” (adverb).
8.1 ONE WORD MEANING “to be less tense” (phrasal verb).
8.2 WRITE THE PHRASE WHICH HAS THE FOLLOWING DEFINITION: “in danger”

II* USE OF ENGLISH (6 points)
FILL IN THE GAP WITH THE CORRECT PREPOSITION (0.5p: 0.25 each)

9.1 He apologised ____ his rude behaviour.
9.2 She was very angry ____ all of us.

FILL IN THE GAP WITH A CORRECT FORM OF THE VERB IN BRACKETS (1p: 0.5 each)

10.1 She advised me _________ (calm down) before sending the e-mail.
10.2 I ___________ (work) in the office since early this morning.

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONAL SENTENCE (0.5)

11. If she hadn’t sent the e-mail, … .
12. If she hadn’t sent the e-mail, I wish I …

FIND THE TWO MISTAKES AND REWRITE THE SENTENCE CORRECTLY (0.5)

13. She told to me to not send that e-mail.

JOIN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES USING A RELATIVE PRONOUN (0.5)

14. My sister quit her job. Her boss was always angry.
15. People claim that emails are not the best way to communicate because of possible misunderstanding

TURN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE INTO THE PASSIVE VOICE (Write the 2 options. 1p: 0.5 each)

16. My boss told me that he had to send plenty of emails that weekend
17. It is possible that emails disappear in a few years

REWRI TE THE SENTENCE BEGINNING AS INDICATED (0.5)

18. It was such an interesting speech that I was astonished. The speech ….