

Making a Verbal Report

Introduction

If you have listened to the STORY CARDS ACTIVITY recording, you know that I really like to share stories and hear about other people's experiences. Sometimes, we speak about things that have happened with other people in very informal settings. For example, we might talk to our families and friends about our days at work or about other things that have happened in our lives. Other times, we need to speak about things that have happened in more formal settings -- we have to make a verbal report. An example of this might happen when we go to the doctor's office. A physician might ask us to make a report on how we have been doing after an injury, or how we have been feeling after starting a new medication. When we speak to the doctor, we have to think about questions like:

- *What does the doctor want to know?*
- *What are the important things that happened that we want the doctor to know?*
- *In what order or when did these things (events) happen? In what order do I need to describe these events?*

Of course, it's important to know that we do not always have to make a formal verbal report when we go to the doctor's office. Sometimes, we can speak to the doctor more casually about how we have been feeling and how our health has been.

An Example: The Apple Orchard

Let's talk about an example of when we definitely need to make a formal verbal report and how we might make that report. In the fall, I love going to orchards to pick apples and pumpkins. Let's pretend that I'm working at one of my favorite orchards. It is September, and my boss has hired me to work with a team to pick (or harvest) apples and load them onto a truck so that my colleagues can use them to make apple cider to sell to orchard guests. It has been a busy day at the orchard, and a lot has happened today. Specifically,

- This morning, my boss asked my team and me to harvest 40 bushels of apples. By the end of the day, we had harvested 50 bushels of apples.
- Unfortunately, one of the people on my team got a scratch on his arm from the branches of an apple tree. Our team had him wash the scratch and put a bandage on his arm. He was able to return to work safely after this.
- My grandmother made me a salami and cheese sandwich for lunch, and it was delicious.
- Our team talked about planting some new apple trees next spring to make sure we can pick lots of apples.

At the end of the day, my boss asks me to make a verbal report about my team's work today. What information do I need to tell her? In what order should I tell her this information? You can pause this recording and write down some of your thoughts on the lines below. **We will discuss a solution (answer) to this problem on the next page.**

A Solution (Answer)

To think about how I might make a verbal report to my boss, let's think about the questions from our doctor's office example and apply them to this situation.

What does my boss want to know?

My boss said that she wants to know how my team's work went today. She will want to know how many bushels of apples we harvested and if any of my team members got hurt. She will also want to know if my team has any ideas for next year's harvest. This means that, although what I ate for lunch is important to me, this information might not be necessary to tell my boss right now.

What are the important things that happened that I want my boss to know?

I want my boss to know that my team worked hard today and exceeded our goal of picking 40 bushels of apples. I also want her to know that we helped our team member that got hurt, and that we would like to plant some new apple trees next spring to help make sure that we can harvest lots of apples next year.

In what order or when did these things (events) happen? In what order do I need to describe these events?

Three things happened today: my team harvested 50 bushels of apples, we helped our team member who was injured, and our team decided that we would like to plant some new apple trees next spring. My boss asked me to make a verbal report about how work went today, so the first thing I tell her could be that we exceeded the goal that she gave us this morning to pick 40 bushels of apples. Next, I can tell her about how we helped our team member when he got a scratch from the apple trees. Since we are in the month of September and we have some time before next spring, telling my boss that we would like to plant more apple trees next spring could be the last thing that I say in my verbal report.

Here is what I could say to my boss in my formal report:

“My team and I worked hard today, and we were able to harvest 50 bushels of apples. Unfortunately, one of our team members got a scratch on his arm from the branches of the apple trees today. Our team had him wash this scratch and put a bandage on his arm, and he felt well enough to return to work and continue harvesting apples. Our team also talked about planting some new apple trees next spring to make sure that we can pick lots of apples next year, and we would like to talk with you about this more in the future.”

“Is there anything else that you would like to know about our work today?”