6 Telecommuting

1 telecommute

2 gallery

Mr. Tobin,

I'm writing to you today on behalf of several employees with a request to start a **telecommuting** program here at Zone Solutions. To do so will require changes, but they would ultimately benefit our company.

I suggest that we invest in **Basecamp®**. It's a **web-based** software package. Regardless of where we're working, it will increase productivity. Basically, we would **centralize** all projects, communication and updates.

Basecamp® opens in any browser, so employees can use it from home or the office. And it's easy to navigate, so there's no training required. **Color-coding** identifies different projects. The **dashboard** displays recently accessed files, so we can all see what is being worked on. The project **gallery** allows everyone to **toggle** quickly between files. And a **message board** is updated in **real time** to facilitate rapid exchanges.

In addition to Basecamp®, free **Skype™** software can be downloaded for any communications that require speaking person to person. We can have conference calls with clients around the world without even needing a phone. Should you require specific details, I would be happy to discuss the issue with you. Additionally, both Backpack® and Skype™ offer **tours** with detailed information about their products.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Erica Robin

Erica Robin

6 message board

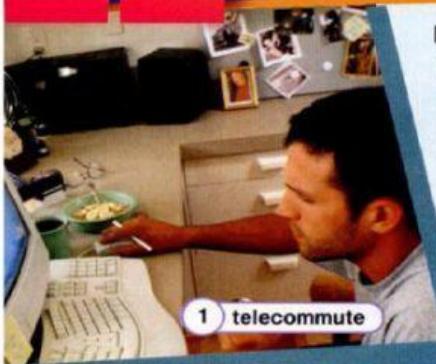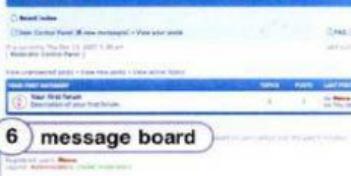3 Skype™
4 Basecamp®

Project 1
Project 2
Project 3
5 color coding

Get ready!

1 Before you read the passage, talk about these questions.

1 What are the benefits of telecommuting?

2 What are the challenges of telecommuting, for workers and management?

Reading

2 Read the letter from an employee to a business owner. Then, choose the right answers.

1 What is the employee doing in the letter?

A requesting that the company reorganize projects

B proposing an expansion of the telecommuting program

C suggesting that the company create web-based software

D explaining how employees could work from home

2 According to the letter, the dashboard...

A identifies projects by color.

B helps users toggle between files.

C shows what is being worked on.

D allows communication without a phone.

3 What can be inferred about Skype™?

A It is a part of the Basecamp® software package.

B It requires users to pay a monthly subscription.

C It provides better sound quality than phones.

D It allows users talk to each other on computers.

Vocabulary

③ Match the words (1-6) with the definitions (A-F).

1 __ toggle
2 __ dashboard
3 __ real time

4 __ web-based
5 __ telecommute
6 __ message board

A being updated as new information arrives
B to switch from one file to another
C a display that shows recently used files
D available on the Internet
E a series of pages that offer information about a product
F to work away from an office using technology

④ Place the words from the word bank under the correct heading.

WOrd BANK

Basecamp®   centralize   tour   gallery
Skype™   color-code

Programs	Actions	Website Features
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

⑤ 🎧 Listen and read the letter from an employee to a business owner again. How will employees be able to check on which files are being accessed?

Listening

⑥ 🎧 Listen to a conversation between an employee and manager. Mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).

1 __ Basecamp® allows users to monitor production.
2 __ The message board must be updated by users.
3 __ Employees who telecommute will need high speed connections.

⑦ 🎧 Listen again and complete the conversation.

O: Well, I can understand the employees' 1 _____ _____ _____ . However, I have some questions.

E: I would expect so. Is there 2 _____ _____ _____?

O: Let's start with production. I'd need a way to check that people are getting work done at home.

E: Absolutely. The Basecamp® program would take care of that.

O: Really? I 3 _____ _____ the tour, but I didn't see anything about monitoring production.

E: It's on the dashboard. It shows all the files being worked on, and who's working on them.

O: Okay, 4 _____ _____ _____ . Now, what about communication?

E: Well, there's the 5 _____ _____ .

Speaking

⑧ With a partner, act out the roles below based on Task 7. Then, switch roles.

USE LANGUAGE SUCH AS:

I'm glad you're considering my proposal.
The Basecamp® program would take care of that.
What about communication?

Student A: You are talking to an employee. Ask Student B about:
● monitoring production   ● communication

Student B: You are talking to an owner. Answer student A's questions.

Writing

⑨ You are a manager and you are starting a telecommuting program. Use the letter and the conversation from Task 8 to explain the program in a memo to members of staff. (120-150 words). Talk about:

● *What programs you will use*
● *How projects will be organized*
● *Ways you will communicate*