ADJ - Background Context

1 Introduction

The ADJ problems follow a project at a company dealing with the storage and containment of objects.[1] Essentially: a story. For this particular new project, several remote interns have been hired (you, your classmates, and of course Wonderbread). Each problem exists in the same "world", so that each problem occurs in the context of the previous ones. This means that anything you know from a previous problem is fair game for use on subsequent problems. It also means you are not alone: you have colleagues. Note that the problems and your work do not occur in a vacuum, other events may occur between the assignments that are relevant.

In some documents, we use the phrase "in-world": this refers to something within the fictional setting of the company, as opposed to the actual real class. When solving problems, you should take the view that they exist within our fictional company context. This means that, for example, you have different stakeholders to deal with (such as your supervisor), rather than a more static homework setting. The problems are assigned with the perspective of you as an intern at this company.

When solving the problems, you have the ability to ask questions of various characters within the the fictional company. The goal is to mimic slightly more closely a real-world work environment. You may ask anything (although: do not waste your in-world questions!), for example: questions about requirements, questions about practicalities of a certain approach, or even something more far fetched like what's on the menu at the company's cafeteria. (For those familiar with the term, you may/should treat this as role-playing.)

1.1 In-World Questions

As mentioned previously, these ADJ assignments allow use of a "question" mechanic. This enables you to engage with the company setting by communicating with colleagues at it to learn more about the problems/project. You should ask questions in the way that you would ask a real person at a company. This might represent asking your "customer" for more information (e.g., asking your boss for clarification on what needs to be done), or checking with a colleague about company policy. Keep your questions short and to the point. Be aware that your colleagues may (hopefully rarely!) provide incomplete or incorrect answers if a question is not well-formed or they simply don't know. (Or they may not answer if they feel you're trying to make them do your work!) It's recommended to ask the appropriate colleague based on the content of your questions.

Below are listed several contacts at the company you may email. Questions should be emailed to your instructor, with the specific question in double quotes. When sending an email, please indicate the recipient in the email title. Emails should be written as if you are addressing one of the characters listed above. Note each assignment will list a maximum number of in-world questions you may ask. (This just to make the assignment reasonable for us to run.) That said, you may share information you learn about the project on the course Slack (#adj)... hopefully your classmates will do the same!

Note: you start with enough information to solve any assigned problem. However, it may require you to make many many assumptions. Asking good questions (or learning from questions asked by other pairs) is one way that you can make the problem easier to solve (and/or ensure you are efficient using your time).

1.2 Colleagues

The following individuals may be contacted:

[1] An astute reader might observe that the company isn't really discussed. Perhaps that is intentional.

- **The Supervisor:** The lead on the project you've been assigned. Not an expert on anything but can probably answer everything to some degree. Their primary goal is to ensure the project goes smoothly.
- **"MN":** A researcher that is permanently attached to another group with the company, but has been temporarily assigned to your project. May be an expert in many theoretical areas, but probably knows the same as you do about this particular project. Her primary goal is to find and analyze unknowns involved with the project.
- **"CB":** A floating generalist involved with designing and implementing physical devices/tools/systems/rooms. Assigned to multiple projects. Good source of information about the physical aspects of the company (e.g., resources available, room layouts, etc). His primary goal is to design and implement physical system elements as approved by the supervisor.
- **Wonderbread:** Another intern on the same project. It's likely that he doesn't know much about the project or company. All you know by is his screen name and dog avatar, leading you to wonder if he's a dog or a human.