Lesson 1: Essential Job Vocabulary

Welcome to Lesson 1 of the Business English Course - Essential Job Vocabulary.

Where do you work?

Let's begin by answering the question, "Where do you work?" This seems like a simple question, but there are many ways to answer it:

- I work at...
- I work in...
- I work for...
- I work with...

You're going to learn when to use each preposition.

I work at/for... (name of company)

For example, "I work at Espresso English" or "I work for Nike." You can also use "for" if you work directly for a famous person: "I work for Tom Cruise. I'm his public relations manager."

I work in...

a place:

- I work in an office.
- I work in a school.
- I work in a factory.

a city/country:

- I work in Paris.
- I work in France.
a department:

- I work in the marketing department.
- I work in human resources.
- I work in sales.

a general area/industry:

- I work in finance.
- I work in medical research.
- I work in consulting.

I work with... (things / people that are the objects of your day-to-day work)

- I work with computers.
- I'm a teacher. I work with special-needs children.

If you want to add more details about your work, you can say "I'm responsible for..." or "I'm in charge of..." or “My job involves…”

- I'm responsible for updating the company website.
- I'm in charge of interviewing candidates for jobs.
- My job involves giving tours of the museum.

After these phrases, use the -ING form of the verb.

Let's review:

- I work at (a company).
- I work for (a company / a person)
- I work in (a place, city, country, department, or general area/industry)
- I work with (people / things)

In conversational English, the question "Where do you work?" is commonly phrased as "What do you do?" or "What do you do for a living?"
You can answer with one of the "I work..." phrases we just learned, or you can say "I'm a/an... (your job title)."

- I'm a teacher.
- I'm an accountant.

How do you answer this question if you don't have a job? You can say:

- I'm unemployed.
- I'm between jobs at the moment.

Here are some other reasons you might not have a job:

- I'm a student.
- I'm a stay-at-home mom/dad.

If you work for yourself, you can say "I'm self-employed." If you have your own company, you can say, "I own a small business," or more specifically, "I own a restaurant" or "I own a graphic design company."

**Describing your job**

Do you like your job? Here are some different ways to talk about how you feel about your work:

- My job is interesting / exciting.
- I find my work very rewarding.  
  *(this means it satisfies you and makes you feel good)*
- The work is quite challenging.  
  *("challenging" can be a way to say it's difficult, but with a positive connotation; you enjoy the difficulty)*
- My job is tough / tiring / demanding.
- The work is rather dull / boring / repetitive.  
  *("dull" is another way to say "boring," and "repetitive" means you do the same type of task multiple times; there's not much variation)*
Essential Employment Vocabulary

When you are officially accepted into a new job at a company, you are **hired** by the company. For example, "I was hired by an insurance company just two weeks after graduating from college."

When you're hired, you become an **employee** of the company. The company becomes your **employer**. The other employees in the company are your **colleagues** or **coworkers**. The person above you who is responsible for your work is your **boss** or **supervisor**.

You can work **full-time** (usually about 40 hours per week) or **part-time** (usually 15-25 hours per week). A small number of companies offer **flex-time**, meaning the employee can set his/her own schedule.

In some jobs, you work **shifts** – meaning the hours aren’t the same every day; instead, you work a specific block of hours that the manager schedules. If you work **overtime**, it means you work extra hours in addition to your normal schedule.

We typically use the expression **go to work** for arriving at work, and **get off work** for leaving work. For example, “I go to work at 8:30, and I get off work at 5.”

Your **commute** is how long it takes you to arrive at work by car or public transportation. For example, “I have a 20-minute commute.” Some jobs allow you to **work remotely** – that means you can work from home or another place with an internet connection, and you communicate with your coworkers by phone, e-mail, and video conferencing.

As an employee of the company, you **earn a salary** - money you receive regularly for your work. Don't make the mistake of saying "win a salary" - the correct verb is "earn."

If you're good at your job, you might get a **pay raise** (or a **raise**) - an increase in your salary. You could also get a **promotion** - an increase in importance.
and authority. At the end of the year, some companies give their employees a **bonus** - extra money for work well done.

The opposite of "hire" is **fire** - when your company forces you to leave your job. For example, "Peter was **fired** because he never came to work on time." Usually if someone is fired, it's because they did something bad.

If an employee loses his or her job because of a neutral reason, like the company reducing its size, then we say the employee was **laid off**. For example, "Donna was **laid off** when her company started having financial problems."

If you decide to leave your job, there are three verbs you can use:

- I'm going to **quit my job**.
- I'm going to **leave my job**.
- I'm going to **resign**.

"Quit" is informal, "resign" is formal, and "leave" can be formal or informal.

When an old person decides to stop working, the verb for this is **retire**. In most countries, people retire around age 65. If you’re older than that and you’ve stopped working, you can describe your current situation by saying, “I’m retired.”

Now you can take the vocabulary quiz to practice using these words in sentences. There's also a bonus quiz with extra vocabulary related to professions.

That's it for Lesson 1 of the Business English Course! Come back tomorrow for **Lesson 2: Interview English**.
Quiz: Lesson 1

1) We threw a big party for my father when he ______ after 35 years in the company.
   A. hired an employee
   B. laid off
   C. retired

2) "Good news - I ______!"
   "Congratulations!"
   A. got a raise
   B. was fired
   C. got demoted

3) The employee with the best work will ______.
   A. get laid off
   B. get a boss
   C. get a bonus

4) A lot of people ______ during the global financial crisis.
   A. got promotions
   B. were laid off
   C. earned a salary

5) After six months looking for a job, she was finally ______ by the country's biggest TV station.
   A. hired
   B. fired
   C. retired
6) I _______ because I didn't like working such long hours.

   A. got a raise  
   B. quit my job  
   C. fired my colleague

7) I get along well with all of my _______. They're great to work with.

   A. employers  
   B. colleagues  
   C. retires

8) You need to get approval from the _______ before signing that contract.

   A. resign  
   B. pay raise  
   C. supervisor

9) I'm _____-employed; I do freelance web design.

   A. auto  
   B. owner  
   C. self

10) Helping kids learn to read is very _______ because it's a skill they'll use for the rest of their lives.

    A. demanding  
    B. rewarding  
    C. repetitive

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Bonus Quiz: Identify The Job

1) "I'm responsible for taking care of patients and giving them their medicine."
   A. dentist
   B. nurse
   C. surgeon

2) "I'm responsible for creating artwork for our company publications."
   A. graphic designer
   B. editor
   C. writer

3) "I'm responsible for designing buildings and bridges."
   A. civil engineer
   B. chemical engineer
   C. software engineer

4) "I'm responsible for giving clients legal assistance."
   A. guard
   B. judge
   C. lawyer

5) "I'm responsible for keeping track of the company's money."
   A. telemarketer
   B. accountant
   C. CEO
6) "I'm responsible for answering phone calls and welcoming visitors."

A. manager  
B. journalist  
C. receptionist

7) "I'm responsible for supervising a department with 20 employees."

A. director  
B. intern  
C. president

8) "I'm responsible for preparing food for customers."

A. bartender  
B. chef  
C. waiter

9) "I'm responsible for selling houses, buildings, and land."

A. real estate agent  
B. construction worker  
C. janitor

10) "I'm responsible for helping clients resolve emotional problems."

A. scientist  
B. doctor  
C. psychologist
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Quiz Answers: Lesson 1


Bonus Quiz Answers: Lesson 1