

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. retirees
- 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

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

1.C, 2.A, 3.C, 4.B, 5.A, 6.B, 7.B, 8.C, 9.C, 10.B

Bonus Quiz Answers: Lesson 1

1.B, 2.A, 3.A, 4.C, 5.B, 6.C, 7.A, 8.B, 9.A, 10.C