

Lesson 1: Essential Job Vocabulary

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...

I work in... (a place):

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

I work in... (a city/country):

- I work in Paris.
- I work in France.

I work in... (a department):

- I work in the marketing department.

- I work in human resources.
- I work in sales.

I work in... (a general area):

- 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..."**

- I'm responsible for updating the company website.
- I'm responsible for interviewing candidates for jobs.

After "I'm responsible for..." 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)
- 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?"

How do you answer this question if you don't have a job?

You can say “**I’m unemployed**” - or, more indirectly, “**I’m between jobs at the moment.**”

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.**”

Now let’s learn some 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**.

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” or “get 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.

Let's review the vocabulary you learned in this lesson.

Listen and repeat to practice your pronunciation:

- hire
- employee
- employer
- colleague
- co-worker
- boss
- supervisor
- fire
- laid off
- earn a salary
- get a pay raise
- get a promotion
- get a bonus
- quit your job
- leave your job
- resign from your job
- retire

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.

Quiz: Lesson 1

Question 1

After six months looking for a job, she was finally _____ by the country's biggest TV station.

- A. fired
- B. hired
- C. retired

Question 2

I get along well with all of my _____. They're great to work with.

- A. colleagues
- B. employers
- C. retirees

Question 3

You need to get approval from the _____ before signing that contract.

- A. employee
- B. pay raise
- C. supervisor

Question 4

A lot of people _____ during the global financial crisis.

- A. were laid off
- B. got promotions
- C. earned a salary

Question 5

"Good news - I _____!"

"Congratulations!"

- A. got demoted
- B. was fired
- C. got a raise

Question 6

I _____ because I didn't like working such long hours.

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

Question 7

We threw a big party for my father when he _____ after 35 years in the company.

- A. laid off
- B. hired an employee
- C. retired

Question 8

The employee with the best work will _____.

- A. get a bonus
- B. get laid off
- C. get a boss

Bonus Quiz: Identify the Job

Question 1

"I'm responsible for taking care of patients and giving them their medicine."

- A. surgeon
- B. dentist
- C. nurse

Question 2

"I'm responsible for creating artwork for our company publications."

- A. editor
- B. graphic designer
- C. writer

Question 3

"I'm responsible for designing buildings and bridges."

- A. civil engineer
- B. chemical engineer
- C. software engineer

Question 4

"I'm responsible for giving clients legal assistance."

- A. judge
- B. lawyer
- C. guard

Question 5

"I'm responsible for keeping track of the company's money."

- A. accountant
- B. telemarketer
- C. CEO

Question 6

"I'm responsible for answering phone calls and welcoming visitors."

- A. manager
- B. journalist
- C. receptionist

Question 7

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

- A. intern
- B. president
- C. director

Question 8

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

- A. chef
- B. waiter

C. bartender

Question 9

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

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

Question 10

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

- A. scientist
- B. doctor
- C. psychologist

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Answers - Quiz 1

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

Answers - Bonus Quiz

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