

Lesson 1 – 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
(this means it satisfies you and makes you feel good)
- The work is quite
(“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

“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.

Business English Quiz 1

Question 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

Question 2

"Good news - I _____!"

"Congratulations!"

A. got a raise

B wasfired

C gotdemoted

Question 3

The employee with the best work will _____.

A get laid off

B get a boss

C. get a bonus

Question

4

A lot of people _____ during the global financial crisis.

A got promotions

B. were laid off

C earned a salary

Question 5

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

A. hired

B fired

C retired

Question 6

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

A got a raise

B. quitmy job

C firedmycolleague

Question 7

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

A employers

B. colleagues

C retires

Question

8

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

A resign

B payraise

C. supervisor

Question 9

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

A auto

B owner

C. self

Question 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