

## A

## Colleagues



Philip is my **opposite number**<sup>1</sup> in the company's New York office. We have a good **working relationship**<sup>2</sup> and there's a lot of day-to-day **collaboration**<sup>3</sup>. Having a **counterpart**<sup>4</sup> like Philip in another branch is a great support. Last month we got a new boss, who quickly established a good **rapport**<sup>5</sup> with everyone. She likes us to **take the initiative**<sup>6</sup>. The company is very **hierarchical**<sup>7</sup>; there's a **pecking order**<sup>8</sup> for everything. I do a **job-share**<sup>9</sup> with a woman called Rose, which suits us as we each have childcare responsibilities. My office uses a **hot-desking**<sup>10</sup> system, so I sit in a different place every day. I socialise with my **workmates**<sup>11</sup> outside of work, but we try not to **talk shop**<sup>12</sup> on those occasions.

- <sup>1</sup> has the same position / does the same job as me  
<sup>2</sup> way of communicating and working together  
<sup>3</sup> working together to achieve shared goals  
<sup>4</sup> more formal equivalent of *opposite number*  
<sup>5</sup> /ræ'pɔː/ communication/relationship  
<sup>6</sup> make decisions without being told what to do  
<sup>7</sup> /,haɪə'rɑːkɪkəl/ has a structure with important and less important people  
<sup>8</sup> a system where some people have the right to get benefits/promotions before others  
<sup>9</sup> an agreement where two people each share the same job  
<sup>10</sup> a policy of sharing desks in an office, so people sit at whichever desk is free on a particular day  
<sup>11</sup> colleagues you are friendly with (especially in non-professional occupations); *informal*  
<sup>12</sup> talk about work; *informal*

## B

## During the day (different work patterns)



I do fairly **mundane**<sup>1</sup> tasks. Occasionally I have to **meet a deadline**<sup>2</sup> or they need someone to **volunteer**<sup>3</sup> for something. Then the job is more **rewarding**<sup>4</sup> and **stimulating**<sup>5</sup>. Sometimes I have a heavy **workload**<sup>6</sup> but at other times it can be quite light.

- <sup>1</sup> ordinary, not interesting    <sup>2</sup> have something finished by a fixed day or time    <sup>3</sup> offer to do something without being asked or told to do it    <sup>4</sup> making you feel satisfied that you have done something important or useful, or done something well    <sup>5</sup> encouraging new ideas or new thinking    <sup>6</sup> amount of work I have to do



I start work at my machine at seven o'clock when I'm on the **day shift**. The job's **mechanical**<sup>1</sup> and **repetitive**<sup>2</sup>. All I ever think about is **knocking off**<sup>3</sup> at three o'clock. The shift I hate most is the **night shift**. I start at ten and work till six in the morning. It's a bit **monotonous**<sup>4</sup>. It's not a **satisfying**<sup>5</sup> job – I feel I need something a bit more **challenging**<sup>6</sup>.

- <sup>1</sup> you don't have to think about what you are doing    <sup>2</sup> the same thing is repeated every day  
<sup>3</sup> finishing work; *informal*    <sup>4</sup> boring because it never changes    <sup>5</sup> (does not) make me feel pleased by providing what I need or want    <sup>6</sup> that tests my ability or determination



I have a pretty **glamorous**<sup>1</sup> job. I'm a pilot. But the hours are **irregular** and **anti-social**<sup>2</sup>. I'm not **stuck behind a desk**<sup>3</sup>, but long-haul flights can be a bit **mind-numbing**<sup>4</sup>; most of the time the plane just flies itself. We work to very **tight schedules**<sup>5</sup>. But I shouldn't complain. I feel sorry for people who are **stuck in a rut**<sup>6</sup> or who are in **dead-end**<sup>7</sup> jobs.

- <sup>1</sup> very exciting, which everyone admires    <sup>2</sup> do not enable one to have a normal social life    <sup>3</sup> sitting at a desk all day; *informal*    <sup>4</sup> extremely boring    <sup>5</sup> very strict or severely limited timetables  
<sup>6</sup> stuck/trapped in a job they can't escape from    <sup>7</sup> with no prospects of promotion



I started off as a **technician**<sup>1</sup>. After retraining, I worked for a software company, and later I **went in with**<sup>2</sup> a friend and we formed our own software company as a **start-up**<sup>3</sup> in 2009, so now I'm **self-employed**. My husband is **freelance**<sup>4</sup>: he works for several different companies as and when they need work done – he's a computer **programmer**<sup>5</sup>.

- <sup>1</sup> person whose job involves practical work with scientific or electrical equipment    <sup>2</sup> formed a business partnership with    <sup>3</sup> a small business that has just started    <sup>4</sup> or works freelance    <sup>5</sup> someone who writes computer programs

# Exercises

## 5.1 Correct seven mistakes in this paragraph.

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I'm a technician in a factory. I think I have a good work relationship with my colleagues. I tried to establish a good report with them from the very beginning. The person I like most is my opposite member in our office in Paris. My boss likes me to make the initiative. Generally, when I socialise with my jobmates outside of work, we try not to talk about shop, but it's not easy and sometimes we have a good gossip about colleagues and events at work.



## 5.2 Match the left and right-hand columns to make pairs of sentences.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 We often work together.                    | <input type="checkbox"/> a There are several levels of management.        |
| 2 The firm's rather hierarchical.            | <input type="checkbox"/> b Deadlines have to be met.                      |
| 3 Peter's my counterpart.                    | <input type="checkbox"/> c It's a job-share.                              |
| 4 We work to a tight schedule.               | <input type="checkbox"/> d Collaboration is a good thing.                 |
| 5 I don't think I'll be promoted before her. | <input type="checkbox"/> e We do the same job but he's based in Rome.     |
| 6 Jess and I work half-and-half.             | <input type="checkbox"/> f There's a strict pecking order in the company. |

## 5.3 Use words and phrases from the opposite page to complete these sentences.

- 1 A good friend suggested we set up a small company together, so I ..... her and we formed a ..... in 2012.
- 2 I'm really tired; I've had a very heavy ..... recently.
- 3 I don't want an office job. I don't want to spend all day stuck .....
- 4 I'd hate to feel trapped in my job and to be stuck in .....
- 5 I work for different companies at different times as it suits me. I'm .....
- 6 I used to work for someone else, but now I'm my own boss; I'm .....
- 7 I stopped working in the hamburger restaurant. It was such a dead .....
- 8 When I was working in the factory, all I could think of all day was the moment when I could knock .....
- 9 Being a hospital nurse is a good job, but you can't go out much with friends. The hours are a bit ..... (two possible answers)
- 10 I find ..... annoying, because it means I don't have my own desk where I can keep things at work.

## 5.4 Choose adjectives from the box to describe the jobs below. You can use more than one for each job. Add other adjectives of your own.

glamorous    stimulating    repetitive    stressful    monotonous    varied    mechanical  
mundane    challenging    mind-numbing    rewarding

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 assembly-line worker in a car factory               | 6 lifeguard on a beach        |
| 2 supermarket shelf stacker                           | 7 receptionist at a dentist's |
| 3 public relations officer in a multinational company | 8 private detective           |
| 4 bodyguard to a celebrity                            | 9 refuse collector in a city  |
| 5 surgeon   | 10 night-security guard       |

## 5.5 Over to you

Write down words from this unit that relate to your job, or to a job you would like to do in the future.