

7

At work: colleagues and routines

A Colleagues

Look at this extract of someone talking about their job and their colleagues.

Well, Philip is my **opposite number** [has the same position/does the same job as me] in the company's New York office.

He and I have a good **working relationship** [how we communicate and work together]. Last month we got a new boss, who quickly established a good **rapport** [/'ræp'ɔː/ communication/relationship] with everyone in the office. I do socialise with my **workmates** [informal: colleagues, especially in non-professional jobs] but we try not to **talk shop** [informal: talk about work].

The company is generally very **hierarchical** [/'haɪər'ɑːkɪkəl/ has a structure with powerful and less powerful people]; there's a **pecking-order** [a system where some people have the right to get benefits/promotions before others] for everything. I **do a job-share** [we each have a 50% contract for the same job] with a woman called Rosemary. It suits us both as we each have children to look after.

B Daily work routines

Nancy gets to work at about 8.45. She has to **clock in** and **clock out** [use an electronic card to record the time she arrives and leaves each day]. She works fixed hours; she has a **nine-to-five job**. Brett can come in at any time from eight o'clock till ten in the morning; he **works flexi-time** / he's **on flexi-time**, but his core hours are 10.00 to 12.00 and 2.00 to 4.00. Archie doesn't go to the office at all. He works from home with his computer; he's a **teleworker**. Bert works different times each week; every third week he works nights; he does **shift work** / he's a **shift worker**. Mick has his own company; he's **self-employed** and works from home. His wife works for different companies at different times; she's **freelance** / she **works freelance**.

C During the day (different work-patterns)

Most of the day I do routine tasks, but occasionally there's a crisis or I have to **meet a deadline** [have something finished by a fixed day or time]. At certain times of the year I have a very **heavy workload** [amount of work I have to do] but at other times it can be quite **light**.



I start work at my machine at seven o'clock when I'm on the **day shift**. The job's very **mechanical** [you don't have to think about what you are doing] and **repetitive** [the same thing every day].

All I ever think about is **knocking off** at three [informal: finishing work]. The shift I hate most is the **night shift**. I start at ten and work all night till six in the morning. The job's a bit **monotonous** [boring because it never changes].



I have a **glamorous** job [very exciting, which everyone admires]. I'm a pilot. The hours are **irregular** and **antisocial** [do not enable one to have a normal social life], but

I'm not **stuck behind a desk** [informal: sitting in an office all day] and there's a lot of variety. The **stress levels** can be quite high when you know people's lives depend on you. I feel sorry for people who are **stuck in a rut** [stuck in a job they can't escape from] or working in **dead-end jobs** [jobs with no prospects of promotion].



D Types of work

I have a lot of **paperwork** to do by tomorrow. [letters/reports to write, forms to complete]
My father did **manual** work all his life and was very fit. [hard and physical]
I think I'd like **vocational** work, like being a nurse or a teacher. [which helps people]

Exercises

7.1 Correct the mistakes in this paragraph.

I think I have a good work relationship with most of 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. Generally, when I socialise to my colleagues outside of work, we try not to talk about shop, but it's not easy and sometimes we have a good gossip about people who are not there.

7.2 Give three adjectives which you think describe each of these jobs (for example, *stressful*, *glamorous*, *dead-end*). Think of words you would use in your own language, then try to translate them into English. Use a dictionary if necessary.

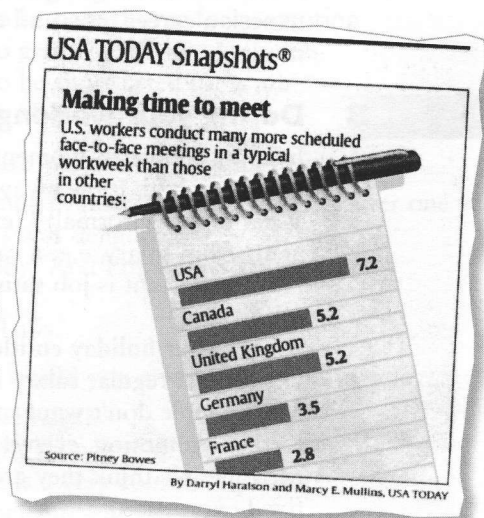
- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 assembly-line worker | 5 lifeguard |
| 2 shop steward | 6 trawlerman |
| 3 PR officer | 7 private eye |
| 4 bodyguard | 8 refuse collector |

7.3 Use words and phrases from B and C on the opposite page to complete these sentences.

- I would get bored if I had a nine
- When I arrive in the morning and leave the office in the evening I use this card to
- I'm very tired; recently I've had a very heavy
- I don't want an office job. I don't want to spend all day stuck
- I can clock in any time between eight and ten and clock out between four and six; I'm on
- I'd hate to feel trapped in my job and to be stuck in
- He's not here this evening, he's working nights; you see, he does
- I work for different companies at different times as it suits me. I'm
- I used to work for someone else, but now I'm my own boss; I'm
- I stopped working in the hamburger restaurant. It was just a dead-.....
- When I was working in the factory, all I could think of all day was the moment when I could knock
- Being a nurse is a good job, but you can't go out much with friends. The hours are a bit

7.4 Using a dictionary if necessary, give one example of ...

- a manual job
- a vocational job
- a job with great variety
- a job with irregular hours
- a job with routine tasks
- a job with regular deadlines
- a job with lots of paperwork



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