



925English – Lesson 14: Talking about your Career

Hi, Tim here with another 925 English Lesson! In today's lesson, we're going to have a look at how to talk about your career.

In your working life, you'll have lots of chances to talk about your career. It's not only a topic in job interviews, but pretty much any time we meet someone new. Everyone wants to know what you do for a living, and what you've done in the past.

And that's basically what a career is: all of the things you *have* done and *now* do in a particular field of work. And when you meet someone new, what's one bit of information that you're always curious about? Well, if you're like me, you want to know about the companies they've worked for.

Because this is such an interesting point of conversation, you need to know how to talk about your past employers, or where you have worked. One easy way is to say you *were at* a company. You can also say you *were with* a company. It doesn't matter if you use "at" or "with," since they have the same meaning here. Another common and simple expression is just to say you worked *for* a company.

Now another bit of interesting information we often mention is how *long* we worked for a company. You can do that just by adding a time expression, like "for five years." Or you can say you "spent" a certain amount of time "with" a company.

How about practicing some of this language? We're going to give you some examples. After you hear each example, try repeating it yourself. Ready? Let's give it a go!

- Before coming to HP, I was at IBM for five years.
- I used to work in sales for Massey Ferguson.
- I spent ten years with Bosch, in Frankfurt.
- For most of my career I was with Rogers Cable.

All right. Talking about your past employers is an important part of talking about your career. But people also want to know what *type* of work you've done.

When I say *type* of work, I mean two things. First, I mean the actual kind of work you do, like graphic design or sales. So you might say I "do" graphic design, or I "work in" sales. That's important information about a person, isn't it?

But the type of work you do might also mean what *field* or area you work in. So, that might be finance, manufacturing, retail, government, or engineering, just to give a few examples. And when you talk about your field, you can say you "have worked in" an area, or just you "have *been* in" an area. Of course, you can imagine

how topics like this can open the door to lots more conversation. And if you're talking to someone new, that's really important. Early in the conversation you want to find interesting topics to explore further.

Now it's your turn to try using these expressions. Just like before, you'll hear some examples. After each example you can repeat what you hear. Let's begin.

- I've worked mainly in government.
- I've been in sales my whole career.
- I work in IT, particularly in finance and related fields.
- I do a lot of graphic and web design work.

As you heard, to talk about your type of work you can say you "have worked in" or "have been in" a certain field, like engineering. Or you can talk about the present by saying you "work in" or "do" a kind of job. In any case, that little word "in" is pretty useful when you talk about your type of work.

Now that we've done some practice with these useful expressions, let's hear how this all sounds in an actual conversation. Let's listen to Todd asking Steve about his career. Steve mentions his past employers and the type of work he does.

Todd: So you said you worked in London?

Steve: Yeah, that's right. I spent five years with Lloyds.

Todd: Lloyds, huh? So you're in finance?

Steve: No actually, I mainly do communications and PR work.

How did that sound? As you heard, Todd asks about where Steve used to work, and he mentions he "spent" five years "with" Lloyds, which is an insurance company. And when Todd asks about type of work, Steve says he "does" communications and PR work.

Now it's your turn to practice. We'll repeat the dialog, but this time we're going to beep out Steve's words. You will have to say those parts yourself. Remember, first you'll say you spent five years with Lloyds, then you'll say you do communications and PR work. Here we go:

Todd: So you said you worked in London?

Steve: Yeah, that's right. I spent five years with Lloyds.

Todd: Lloyds, huh? So you're in finance?

Steve: No actually, I mainly do communications and PR work.

All right, so today we learned how to talk about our career. That includes talking about your past employers and about the type of work you do. In our next lesson, we'll learn how to talk about your family.

Until then, so long and happy learning!

Language Review

A. Matching

Match the first part of the sentence with the correct ending.

- A. For the first half of my career,
- B. I mostly do
- C. I spent 15 years
- D. I've been in sales

1)		... web design.
2)		... at Siemens.
3)		... for 10 years.
4)		... I was at Garmin.

B. Review Quiz

1. Which of the following are possible answers to the question? [choose 2]

A: So, what type of work do you do?
B: _____.

- a) I used to be an engineer.
- b) I've been in marketing for the past 10 years.
- c) I mostly do website design.
- d) I'm with Johnson & Johnson.

2. Fill in the blanks with the correct prepositions.

_____ the past five years, I've worked _____ Tri-Link, _____ Chicago.

- a) At ... in ... for
- b) Over ... at ... with
- c) Since ... with ... at
- d) For ... at ... in

3. Which of the following is a "type" of work that you might be "do?" [choose 2]
- a) engineer
 - b) graphic design
 - c) government
 - d) public relations
4. When you mention what company you worked for in the past, you might also mention...
- a) how difficult it was.
 - b) how much money you earned.
 - c) how you felt there.
 - d) how long you worked there.
5. Complete the following dialog:
- A: I hear you used to work in the U.S.?
B: That's right. I _____ Boeing for five years.
A: I see. And what type of work do you do?
B: I _____ mechanical engineering.
- a) am at ... do
 - b) was with ... work in
 - c) have been for ... work
 - d) do ... work at

Language Review Answers

A. Matching

1. B; 2. C; 3. D; 4. A

B. Review Quiz

1. b, c; 2. d; 3. b, d; 4. d; 5. b