

READING

Going out with colleagues

LEVEL

Upper-Intermediate
(B2)

NUMBER

EN_B2_3114R

LANGUAGE

English

Learning outcomes

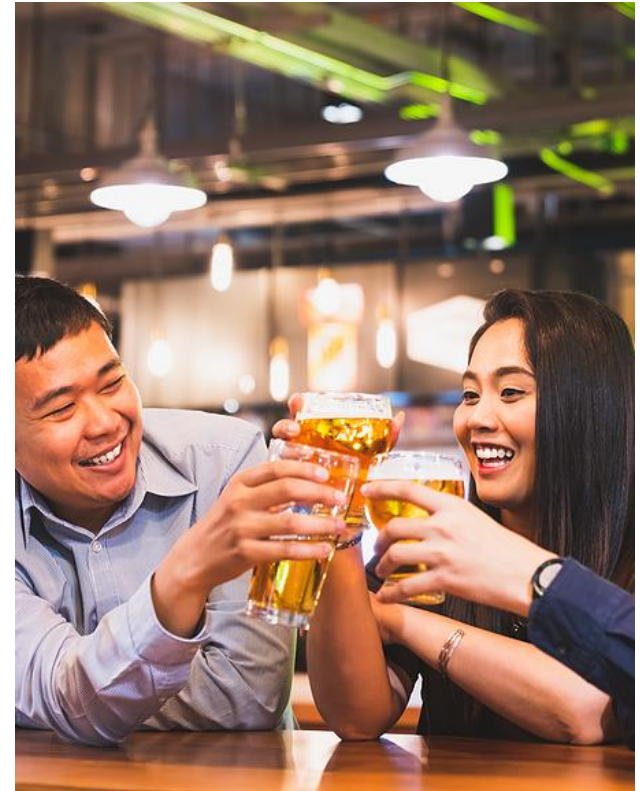
- I can read and understand the main points of a text about socialising with colleagues.
- I can discuss the advantages and disadvantages of socialising with colleagues.



Warm-up

**When was the last
time you hung out
with colleagues
outside work?**

**Is this something you like to
do?**



Reading

Read the text and **answer** the questions.

Do you get along well with your colleagues? Is there a good atmosphere at your place of work? Nowadays, many companies like to encourage colleagues to get to know each other in more than just a professional capacity. It's becoming increasingly common for places of work to organise functions and special team-building events outside of normal working hours where colleagues can relax and spend time with each other.

There are advantages and disadvantages for both the employer and the employees if colleagues become more than just professional acquaintances.



1. What do many companies encourage their employees to do these days?
2. What sort of activities are companies organising outside of normal working hours?



Reading

Read the text and **answer** the questions.

For the employee, a friendly workplace can seem attractive. Getting to know your colleagues on a personal level can make your time at work more fun and relaxed. Also, as you get to know people better, hopefully you will be able to communicate more easily, which can make working together more productive, and the work environment a comfortable place for everyone. Learning about the health or family situation of colleagues may also lead to a more understanding work environment.



1. Identify **adjectives** used to describe workplaces in the text.
2. What are the advantages of socialising with colleagues for an employee?

Vocabulary: in the workplace

Would you use any of the following adjectives to describe where you work?
What creates a positive environment, in your experience?
Can you think of **antonyms** or opposites for the adjectives below?



Vocabulary: working with people

I know her in a purely **professional capacity**.



It was nice to chat **on a personal level** for once.



We're **professional acquaintances**, nothing more.



Does the speaker know the person well?

What kind of chat would this be?

How do you think the speaker feels about this person?



Discuss

Discuss with a partner how things are **similar and/or different** in the places that you work?

**Does your employer
organise social events?
When and where do
they take place?**



**Is the atmosphere in
your workplace typical
of the working culture
where you live?**



Reading

Read the text and **answer** the questions.

Companies often like the idea of colleagues getting along together because it builds team spirit within a company, and this can also help boost company loyalty. For the employer, if employees think of their colleagues and workplace as a sort of second family, this can be a positive thing. Some businesses even go so far as to make their offices resemble mini homes. It's not unheard of for some offices to have shower facilities, fully-equipped kitchens, game rooms, or very comfortable common rooms with soft furnishings. Many companies also organise weekly after work events, such as pub quizzes or table tennis tournaments, to further encourage team building and socialising within the company.



1. Identify some **nouns** and **phrases** used to describe workplaces in the text.
2. What are the advantages to **employers** of encouraging employees to socialise together?

Vocabulary: in the workplace

Does your workplace have any of the facilities below? Would you like to have these things? How important are **team spirit** and **company loyalty** to you as an employee?





Discuss



Some businesses even go so far as to make their offices resemble mini homes.

Have you heard about these kind of offices?

Can you think of some **pros and cons** to this kind of office?

What would your **ideal workspace** look like?





Reading

Read the text and **answer** the questions.

Most people would agree that having a good relationship with people you work with is a positive thing. For the employer, the more content and enthusiastic the employees are to spend time at work, the better the company will do. However, for employees, it can be important to be aware of boundaries, and to keep some aspects of your personal life private. And it's imperative to reserve some time for relaxing away from the world of work. Being too close to colleagues can sometimes lead to uncomfortable situations at work, for example, if two colleagues who have become friends are both competing for the same promotion, or someone has to give negative feedback about the performance of a colleague who is also a friend. It's for reasons like these that some people prefer to keep their relationships with colleagues on a more formal basis.

1. What are some important considerations for employees?
2. Why might some people prefer to keep their relationships with colleagues on a more formal basis, according to the text?



Reading

Read the text and **answer** the questions.

How much time work colleagues spend together often depends on the kind of workplace and working environment. If you have to travel a lot for work, along with colleagues, then you are more likely to get to know them on a more personal basis. In the hospitality industry, it's also often common practice for colleagues to share a drink at the end of a shift. Some cultures also encourage friendly relations between colleagues. In the UK, having an after-work drink on Fridays with your colleagues is usual.

1. In which industry is it common practice for colleagues to have a drink after work?
2. In which country is it usual to have after-work drinks on Fridays?



Can everybody **chip in**
for Max's present?

Have you ever heard the phrase **to chip in**
for something?

What do you think it means?



Different working cultures

Complete the activity below. **Share** your response with your classmates.

In British work culture it's important to **chip in** for presents for birthdays or leaving gifts for colleagues.

Describe how this cultural behaviour is similar to or different from the cultures you have experience of working in. How do you and your colleagues celebrate achievements and milestones?





End of the lesson

Idiom

After hours

Meaning: outside regular working hours

Example: I hate talking about work after hours!



Additional practice



Finding the balance

Read the statement below and **answer** the questions.

You have to say yes to everything, you have to view your colleagues as your family. At the end of the day your career depends on your working relationships. If you have to, say yes to every single after-work drinks invite, even if you don't drink!

You might miss a few after-school events with the kids, but it doesn't matter. In the long run, your kids will thank you for it. Your investment will pay off in terms of your career.

Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

How can the perfect balance be found in terms of working relationships with colleagues?

How important is work-life balance for you?



The downsides

Making friends with your colleagues can have its downsides. What potential disadvantages to making friends with your colleagues were mentioned in the text?

promotion

boundaries

secrets

competition

feedback

time



Summary

Working with people:

- *professional capacity; on a personal level; professional acquaintances*
- *I know her in a **professional capacity**.*
- *They're **professional acquaintances**.*

In the workplace:

- *company loyalty; team spirit; second family; mini home; fully equipped kitchen; soft furnishings; common room; pub quiz*
- *Companies often like the idea of colleagues getting along together because it builds **team spirit** within a company, and this can also help boost **company loyalty**.*



Vocabulary

professional capacity

on a personal level

professional acquaintances

team spirit

to chip in

