

English at Work
Episode 40: The Appraisal
Language to use in an appraisal



- Paul:** Could I have a word Anna, in my office?
- Narrator:** Hello again. I wonder what Paul wants to say to Anna? Could it have something to do with Rachel, the pen thief or is it just to do with biscuits?! Let's find out.
- Paul:** Have a seat...so well done for speaking to her. Stealing all those pens from the office was the final straw.
- Anna:** She was stealing straws?
- Paul:** No, no. It was the final thing that she did wrong – and it meant disciplinary action. I've had to 'let her go' – in other words, sack her.
- Anna:** Oh, so she's gone. But what is Mr Socrates going to say? She was his best employee.
- Paul:** Leave it with me. I'm sure he'll understand...I hope. Now, I wanted to speak to you about your appraisal.
- Anna:** My appraisal?
- Paul:** Yes, we do it every year. It's a chance to talk about you, talk about the highs and lows of the past year and look forward.
- Anna:** Highs and lows? But I haven't been walking up any hills.
- Narrator:** No Anna! He means your appraisal is about reviewing your performance and setting objectives for the year ahead.
- Anna:** I see. But what are objectives?
- Narrator:** These are tasks for you to do, to try and improve your performance and skills and help the business. Here are the questions you're likely to hear in an appraisal: *What's gone well for you this year?*
What didn't go so well?
What should you do more of?
Let's look ahead and set some objectives.
- Anna:** Right. Thanks. So Paul, when shall we have this, err, appraisal?
- Paul:** If you've time, we could make a start now?
- Anna:** Oh OK. So I need to think about my performance first?
- Paul:** Exactly. What has gone well for you this year?

Anna: Well I guess I've just done my job.

Narrator: Anna! This is your chance to sell yourself. Think about the deals you've made, the people you've managed, that sort of thing.

Anna: Right. Well, I did complete two big contracts for the Imperial Lemon...

Paul: You've had plenty of compliments for that. You seem to have a zest for selling!

Anna: Err, right...and then there was dealing with Mr Ingle in the warehouse.

Paul: Yes, that's a good example of dealing with difficult staff. And what didn't go so well?

Anna: Well...erm...working with Rachel...and cold calling I suppose. That wasn't easy.

Paul: Ah yes. But you soon warmed up! And what should you do more of?

Anna: Err, erm...

Narrator: It's a tricky question Anna – but don't be ashamed about admitting things that you feel you could improve on. Nobody's perfect! Think about skills you'd like to improve.

Anna: Oh OK. Well Paul, I guess I could....develop some ideas for new products? Continue to work on the European marketing strategy..sell more Imperial Lemons...err...

Paul: That's enough Anna! If you do all that, you'll put me out of a job!

Anna: Oh, I don't want to do that!

Paul: Now let's look ahead and set some objectives. Biscuit?

Anna: Biscuits as an objective? Oh I see...no thanks.

Paul: We've all got to improve our sales targets so I'm asking all the team to make an extra ten sales deals this year.

Anna: Oh, ten, that's a lot.

Paul: It is but I know you can do it. And you mentioned developing new products, well I'd like you to do just that – but not plastic fruit, I'd like you to develop a plastic vegetable. Potato, carrot, that sort of thing.

Anna: Gosh. Well, ok.

Paul: Oh and one more thing. Could you help Denise sort out the stationery cupboard? It's a right mess.

Anna: Err.

Narrator: That's a lot of objectives for Anna. She's got her work cut out for the next year. Appraisals are a good time to review your work and plan what you going to do next. Here's a reminder of the kind of questions your manager may ask you:

What has gone well for you this year? Give me some examples.

What didn't go so well?

What should you do more of?

Let's look ahead and set some objectives.

Paul: So if you could write up your appraisal and have it back to me by Friday?

Anna: Of course Paul. Thanks. See you later.

Tom: Oh hi Anna. Are you still on for dinner on Friday?

Anna: Yes Tom!

Anna: What's going on?!

Denise: A mouse...a mouse! I've just seen a mouse running out of the stationary office.

Tom: Was he stealing the pens?!

Denise: It's no joke. Quick...there he goes!

Tom: Leave him to me! Oh...oww!

Anna: Tom...Tom? Are you ok?

Narrator: Uh oh! What's happened to Tom? Has he broken something? Join us next time to find out. Bye!

Listening Challenge

In Anna's objectives, what has she been asked to develop?

(Answer: Plastic vegetables)