

UNIT 1. SOCIALISING AT WORK

Lesson 1 Introducing yourself/ others

Lesson 2. Socializing at work

Lesson 3. Talking about your job/ your company

Lesson 4 Grammar: Present tenses

Lesson 1. Introducing yourself/ others

Most people attend a conference/ have business meeting at some point in their careers and this is an opportunity to meet new people. What people say and do when they first meet someone at work is extremely important. An introduction is a polite method of starting a conversation, a way to establish a connection between yourself and someone who you do not know, or between people you know but they do not know each other.¹

Introductions are important because they help people feel comfortable around each other, can help them start a conversation with someone they have not met before. Thus, they can expand their professional network and also create a positive first impression.²

1.1 Introducing yourself

There are various ways in which people greet each other when they meet for the first time in business situations, such as: shake hands, bow, exchange business cards, use first names or surnames, etc.

It is advisable that one should be aware of the importance of properly introducing oneself in business situations. There are several expressions that can be used to introduce yourself, see Table 1. In formal situations full names are used: first name, surname (e.g. Mary Stevens).

Remember: when you introduce yourself you usually leave out the titles

¹ <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/how-to-do-introductions>

² <https://www.rightattitudes.com/2007/11/03/etiquette-protocol-introducing-people/>

Table 1

Introducing yourself

After meeting someone else you can say

<i>I don't believe we have met before, I'm ...</i>	<i>Nice to meet you.</i>
<i>I just wanted to introduce myself, I'm.....</i>	<i>It's very nice to meet you.</i>
<i>My name is.... from...</i>	<i>It's a pleasure to meet you.</i>
<i>I work for ... I am Peter James</i>	<i>Pleased to meet you</i>
<i>May I introduce myself? My name is ... I am in charge of...</i>	<i>How do you do?</i>
<i>Hello, my name is I've got an appointment with.....</i>	

Practice 1. Use the expressions in Table 1 to introduce yourself to:

1. to a foreign visitor in your department
2. another participant at a conference.
3. to Mr. James, the production Manager
4. one of your colleagues

e.g. *"Hello, Mrs. Lewis, my name is Peter Johnson. I am interning as an account executive in the recruiting department. It is a pleasure to meet you.*

"Hi James, my name is Anthony. I've heard a lot of good things about you from our mutual friend, Catherine. It is a pleasure to finally meet you."

1. 2. Introducing others

When introducing people, it is advisable to follow the **lesser-ranking to the higher-ranking** protocol (in social or professionally situations).

Steps:

- state the name of the person being introduced to; at formal encounters you usually address someone else with Mr/Mrs/Ms;Miss miz
- state the name of the person being introduced;
- you can add relevant information, such as: nationality, name of the company or department, position in the company, your relation to each party, common interests you share, how long you have known each person for, etc.

Tips

- use each person's title before stating their name, such as "Mr.", "Ms", "Mrs.", "Miss" or "Dr, in formal or professional settings;
- make eye contact with the person you speak to first, then turn and make eye contact with the other person as you finish the introduction;
- speak slowly and clearly;
- pronounce each person's name correctly.

The lesser-ranking to the higher-ranking protocol.

- **In the professional environment**

- ❖ **a junior professional is introduced to a senior professional person**, but when you people of equal status, you may introduce either person to the other

e.g. "Ms. Director, I would like to introduce Mr. Johnson, the Chief Product Architect for our software division."

"Mr. Roberts, I would like you to meet Ms. Catherine Lee. Ms. Lee is joining our organization as an administrative assistant."

Note:

Gender Distinction. Many people introduce a man to a woman out of respect, regardless of the guidelines presented above. However, at work you should consider their positions and seniorities alone. Outside work, it may be more appropriate to introduce a man to a woman.

- ❖ **a team of employees to a customer**

e.g. "Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce you to the Founder and CEO of Tasty Sweets, Mrs. Rachel Malloy."

- ❖ **an employee to a customer**

e.g. "Mr. Ross, I would like to introduce our plastics engineering team. This is Mark Smith, Jessica Ramos and Carmen Sandoz. All three participated in last week's webinar regarding product definition"

❖ **your colleague(s) to your visitor**

e.g. *“Charlie, this is Henry. Henry is my colleague from work. Henry, Charlie is visiting me from New York. We shared an apartment when we lived in Columbia.”*

❖ **a peer from your company to a peer from another company**

e.g. *“Melissa, I would like you to meet Steve, our Systems Engineer. Steve, Melissa Hoffmann is from Marketing, she is our Account Manager for Nokia.”*

• **Socially**

❖ **a person younger person to an older person**, but when people are of equal seniority, you may introduce either person to the other.

One person

e.g. *“Grandpa, I would like you to meet my friend, Heather.”*

A group of people

e.g. *“Emily, Luis and Trent, I would like to introduce you to my grandmother, Mrs. Joan O'Malley.”*

❖ **Host to a guest**

e.g. *“Elaine, I don’t think you have met my daughter, Anna. Anna arranged for all the food at this festival party. Anna, Elaine is my Project Manager.”*

Table 3. Introducing others

I would like to introduce...	It's a pleasure to introduce...
I would like to present...	May I introduce...
May I present...	This is...
My name is...	I'd like to introduce to you...
Can I introduce Nicholas Bell, he's from the Nokia company.	Let me introduce my colleague....to you
Mr.....I'd like you to meet my colleague...	I'd like you to meet my colleague, Mr...
Mr.....have you met Mr, my colleague?	Mr, please, meet
"I would like you to meet..."	

Practice 2. James Robinson has recently joined your company. How would you introduce him to the following people?

- Your secretary
- Marketing manager
- Supplier of a Japanese company
- Production team
- Your boss

Lesson 2. Social Skills: Socializing in a professional environment

It is generally agreed that the opening words of any conversation cast a first and lasting impression. *"Words, poorly and unconsciously chosen, can indeed hurt not only first impressions, but also your credibility, relationships, and opportunities for career advancement"* (Price, 2014)³. Unawareness of proper social and business etiquette can lead to awkward and embarrassing situations.⁴

Sometimes the first minutes of a conversation with people you have not met before are rather difficult. Usually people start by asking questions. However, attention has to be paid to the type of questions asked and also to be aware of the things shared during these first meetings.

Speaking

When people meet in a business situation in Romania how do they greet each other?

Socializing in a professional setting

There is a certain number of topics which should not be discussed at the workplace, because touching upon certain subjects can not only damage your professional reputation, but it also can put under threat your successful collaboration with the company.⁵

A general rule of etiquette is that there are certain topics that should be avoided at the first meetings. The list⁶ contains 10 things you should never say or talk about when you first meet someone in a professional setting:

1. **Negative things;**
2. **Financial problems;**
3. **Political views** (how you voted, where you stand on immigration, abortion, healthcare, politics, etc.);
4. **Religious views** (According to the common etiquette, discussing religion at the workplace is not a good idea. No forms of religion discussions are appropriate, from sharing your own religious views to asking about those of your colleague

³ Price, D. 2014, Well Said! Presentations and Conversations That Get Results, <http://www.businessinsider.com/avoid-these-topics-when-meeting-someone-new-2014-9>

⁴ B Momir, I Petroman, EC Constantin, A Mirea, *The Importance of Cross-Cultural Knowledge*, Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, Volume 197, 25 July, 2015, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042815040719

⁵ <https://resumeperk.com/blog/top-taboo-topics-you-should-never-discuss-with-colleagues>

⁶ <https://eu.hollandsentinel.com/story/special/2014/09/26/10-things-professionals-should-never/36307450007/>

and giving your opinion on their belief. Religion is personal that expressing your own beliefs can quickly lead to arguments);

5. **Sexual life;**
6. **People's physical appearance;**
7. **Health problems** (speaking about healthy living, fitness and diets is totally okay, but not health issues. If you have some medical issue, you can simply mention that you are going to see a doctor or avoid this subject at all.);
8. **Family issues**
9. **Your expectations**
10. **You being self-centred.**

2.2. Socializing at your place of work

The conversations people have at work are not always about work, people socialize⁷ and talk to other people about non-work-related things.

Socializing means talking about topics that are more personal, or things happening in everyday life outside of work. Socializing with co-workers helps strengthen the quality of workplace relationships. Strong relationships enable the team to work better together. Co-workers who communicate well about non-work matters are more likely to collaborate on work effectively

However, socializing⁸ at the wrong times can leave a bad impression. There are situations when it is okay to socialize at work, such as: during breaks, waiting for a meeting to start, passing someone in the hall, while helping a customer, etc.

Tips

When socializing, remember to:

- ❖ be friendly and polite to the person you are socializing with, but not too/inappropriately friendly;
- ❖ pay attention at the conversation and respond to appropriately;
- ❖ say hello, smile, wish people luck/ a good day;
- ❖ Respect and be tolerant with people who have opinions that differ from yours.

⁷ <https://www.conovercompany.com/social-skills-socializing-work/>

⁸ <https://www.feedough.com/socializing-at-work/>

Why are some topics taboo at work?

There is a saying: *speech is silver and silence is gold*. Not every topic of conversation belongs to the workplace, so it would be better to discuss safe things such as music, movies, cuisine and hobbies with your colleagues. Taboo topics⁹ in the workplace mostly exist purely for reasons of professionalism. Respect and sensitivity are important that is why learning to avoid taboo topics is, then, a must. There's a difference between a work friend and a real friend, after all, and it pays professionally to keep this in mind.

Besides the topics to be avoided at the first meeting we can add:

- ❖ You are interviewing for another job/position;
- ❖ Your negative feelings about your boss, co-workers, clients and company;
- ❖ The size of your pay check and the pay checks of others, but, asking your co-workers about the financial benefits of different positions is not taboo.

Practice 1. Identify in the table below the topics that are not safe to use when you meet some business people for the first time.

Holiday plans	Weather
This company sucks, I can't wait to leave it.	Are you pregnant?
Do you believe in God?	Have you lost weight?
I am a liberal	You look better than in the company photo
What is your country's most important public holiday?	I hate my company.
Your hobbies	Politics
Food	Marital status family
Are you religious?	What do you get paid?
My boss is a jerk.	Religion
I am getting a divorce.	Your company promotion policy
Sport	Health problems
How much money do you make?	When do you have public holidays in your country?

⁹ Top 10 taboo topics you should never share at work

http://www.cleveland.com/business/index.ssf/2015/02/top_10_taboo_topics_you_should.html)

Money and personal finance	The opposite sex
Fashion	Local attractions
He is stupid, I wonder how he is still working here.	Music
"Ugh, I'm so glad I have an interview tomorrow. I hate this place."	"This place sucks so much

Practice 2. Write 10 questions that you can ask your colleagues at work and which are not taboo.

Lesson 3. Talking about your job/ company

- What do you do?

I'm a(n) _____

I work in _____ is used with a field, a place or a department of a company; you do not use an article (a /the).

I work for _____ is used with a company

* I run my own business, so I work for myself.

2. Describing Your Company

Types of companies

I work for a _____ company which _____ (big, small, local, multinational, etc.)

What does your company do? E.g.: it makes things, sell things, organise things/ provides products, services, or both, does market research

* if you do not work for a company: I'm a freelancer.

I work independently, for different people and companies.

I'm self-employed.

I work for myself.

I have my own business.

I'm a business owner.

*If you do not work:

I'm between jobs at the moment (sounds nicer than saying, "I'm unemployed.")

I'm taking some time out to travel/spend time with my kids/write a book/recover from an illness/etc.

I'm retired.

How to Describe Your Job in More Detail

I have to _____

I'm responsible for _____

Most of my time is spent _____

e.g. I have to design websites to the client's specifications. I'm responsible for the whole design process, so I have to take the client's ideas and turn them into a finished product. Most of my time is spent experimenting with different designs and ideas and seeing what looks good, because attention to detail is important in this kind of work.

How You Feel about Your Job

Some specific adjectives you could use if you like your job

- Stimulating > exciting and gives you energy
- Satisfying > gives you a sense of achievement.
- Creative > you use your imagination when you work.
- Rewarding > gives you very positive feelings.
- Challenging > Challenging can be positive or negative, but if you use it to talk about your job, it would have a positive meaning. It means that your job is difficult, but in an interesting way which makes you think and learn.

Some specific adjectives you could use if you do not like your job

- Exhausting > work which makes you feel very tired, either physically or mentally.
- Thankless > no one notices or appreciates what you do.
- Mind-numbing > Extremely boring.
- Dead-end > no prospects for the future, never get promoted and the job will always be the same.
- Soul-destroying > extremely unpleasant and boring, and which you really hate.

Practice 1

a) What do you do? Do you work for a company? What can you say about it? What's your role in the company? Do you like your job?

b) If you don't work for a company, how would you describe your work situation?

Practice2. Use the vocabulary in the **word bank** to speak about your job and your responsibilities.

Word bank

<p><i>types of activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ attend meetings/ go to meetings ▪ check emails ▪ phone the sales manager ▪ visit the company branches ▪ do market research ▪ help customers do lab tests ▪ use a computer ▪ repair things ▪ operate office equipment ▪ deliver materials ▪ inspect goods ▪ manufacture goods ▪ design/develop a strategy ▪ Opportunities 	<p><i>types of jobs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ freelancer ▪ full time work ▪ a temporary work ▪ permanent job ▪ contract work
<p><i>work vocabulary</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ time consuming activity ▪ salary ▪ promotion opportunities ▪ working conditions ▪ punctual ▪ leadership skills ▪ project ▪ communication skills ▪ equipment ▪ job advertisement 	<p><i>work ethics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ revealing company secrets ▪ inappropriate dressing ▪ inappropriate conduct ▪ dishonesty ▪ disrespect to colleagues ▪ achieving results ▪ team player ▪ respectful ▪ considerate ▪ polite ▪ business etiquette ▪ company identity

Practice 3. Time management. Use the adverbs of frequency and answer the following questions:

1. How long do you spend? How often do you?

- talking to people
- on the phone
- working on your own
- in front of the computer
- surfing the internet
- work overtime
- use English at work
- travel abroad on business
- meet new people at work
- deal with customer complaints
- work at the week ends

<i>always</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>once a week</i>
<i>usually</i>	<i>twice a year</i>	<i>twice a week</i>
<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>once a month</i>	<i>three times a month</i>
<i>often</i>	<i>not often</i>	<i>an hour a day</i>
<i>everyday</i>	<i>hardly ever</i>	<i>more than two hours</i>
<i>every week</i>	<i>never</i>	<i>less than</i>

Practice 3. Advantages and disadvantages at the place of work.

Read the work factors bellow, think about your job and write 5 advantages and 5 disadvantages of your job.

challenging work	opportunity for promotion
pleasant working environment	travelling abroad
salary	regular staff bonuses
benefits/ incentives	good pension
level of stress	prestigious company
job security	friendly colleagues
job satisfaction	meal tickets
relationship with colleagues	team building activities
flexible time/ work schedule	

Practice 5. Talking about your company

Write the profile of your company by answering the questions below (150 words).

1. Where is the headquarters?
2. What types of activities does the company have?
3. Who founded the company?
4. When was the company founded?
5. Who was the first president of the company?
6. What is the main activity of the company?

Grammar: PRESENT SIMPLE, PRESENT CONTINUOUS

Basic uses of present simple and present continuous¹⁰:

- **Use present simple for facts, or things that always happen.**
Water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit and 0 degrees Celsius.
- **Use present simple for routines and habits.**
The birds return to the island every spring.
- **Use present continuous for actions happening at the moment of speaking, and not finished.**
Sorry, I'm busy at the moment. I'm doing my homework.
- **Present continuous is also used for actions happening generally around the time of speaking, rather than exactly at the same time.**
I'm reading a really interesting book.

STATE AND ACTION VERBS

State verbs are either only used in simple form or have a different meaning when used in continuous form.

state verbs normally in present simple

belong, consist of, contain, cost, depend on, deserve, matter, own, possess, resemble

Does this belong to you?

Fresh fruit contains a range of vitamins.

believe, imagine, know, prefer, realize, understand, mean

Some people still believe that the Earth is flat.

¹⁰<https://is.muni.cz/el/1411/podzim2016/BFAJ0121/um/59230063/59230074/59427425/65490849/>

seem

This seems to be what we're looking for.

cost is sometimes used in continuous to describe a process that is still going on.

We're having a house built, and it's costing a fortune!

realize, regret, understand

can be used in continuous to show a changing situation, usually with an adverbial which shows that change is happening.

Some people don't realize how dangerous cars can be.

People are slowly realizing the cost of global warming.

We're understanding more and more about the universe.

verbs with state and action meanings

State	action
do What do you do? (what's your job)	What are you doing? (explain your actions)
be, have This house is over 100 years old. Do you have a car?	He is being very silly! I'm having a great time here.
imagine, suppose, think, expect I suppose this is Jim. I imagine you feel the same. What do you think? (an opinion) I don't expect him to understand.	You're supposing he is guilty. (make an assumption) Ghosts! No, you're imagining things! What are you thinking? I'm thinking of changing jobs. (considering) Are you expecting someone?

hope, wonder

I hope you haven't been waiting long.

We're hoping to continue the talks next week. (less definite)

enjoy, like, love

- used in continuous for actions going on at the moment

I enjoy / love going for long walks.

Are you enjoying the party?

I'm loving every minute of my new job!

appear

Your visa appears to be out of date.

Tom is appearing in Hamlet at the Grand Theatre.

look

With the state meaning of 'seem', look can be used in present simple only.

This book looks interesting.

In descriptions of appearance, look can be used in both simple and continuous.

Jim looks ill. Helen is looking well.

see, hear

I see / hear you've had your hair cut.

Jane is seeing Harry. (= spending time with)

I didn't hear any noises. You're hearing things! (= imagining)

feel, see, smell, taste

The room smells awful!

I'm smelling the flowers! (an active choice)

ache, feel, hurt

Verbs that describe how the body feels can use either simple or continuous forms with little change in meaning.

My foot hurts. My foot is hurting.

I feel sick. I'm feeling sick.

weigh, measure

This bag weighs more than 25 kilos.

I'm weighing the parcel before I post it.

PRACTICE

1. Underline the correct form.

1. Some kinds of fish contain / *are containing* high levels of dangerous metals.
2. Scientists nowadays *slowly begin to understand* / *are slowly beginning to understand* more about how the brain works.
3. What *do you think* / *are you thinking* of Kate's new hairstyle? It's unusual, isn't it?
4. Loud music can be really annoying. Some people *don't realize* / *aren't realizing* what a nuisance it can be.
5. You can't really have seen a UFO! You *imagine* / *are imagining* things!
6. Technicians report that they *have* / *are having* difficulty installing the new computer system.
7. No wine for me! I *take* / *I'm taking* antibiotics for an ear infection.
8. In career terms, having a good degree *appears* / *is appearing* to make little difference.
9. The National Theatre *considers* / *is considering* putting on a new production of Hamlet.

2. Underline the correct verb form. Tick the sentence if both forms are possible.

- a. I can't walk any more. My knee *is really hurting* / *really hurts*.
- b. This cheese *is smelling* / *smells* terrible!
- c. Thanks for your e-mail. *I'm hoping* / *I hope* to get back to you very soon.
- d. 'What *are you doing* / *do you do*?' 'I'm a musician.'
- e. We're having our house completely redecorated. *It's costing* / *It costs* a lot.
- f. In this country, more than a million people *are living* / *live* in poverty.
- g. Can you stop the car? *I'm feeling* / *I feel* a bit sick.
- h. 'What's the answer?' 'Wait a moment, *I'm thinking* / *I think*.'
- i. I think *we're beginning* / *we begin* to understand this problem.
- j. Nice to see you again! *You're looking* / *you look* really great!

3. Put the verb in brackets into present simple or present continuous.

- a. Somebody (knock) is knocking at the door. Can you see who it is?
- b. First you (cook) _____ the onions in a little oil until they are golden brown.
- c. Carlos (forever lose) _____ his temper with people! He must learn to calm down.
- d. Here (come) _____ the bus! You'd better hurry!
- e. 'Where's Jack? 'He (read) _____ the paper in the kitchen.'
- f. Whenever I put up my hand, Harry (kick) _____ me under the desk.

- g. I'm sorry, but I (not understand) _____ you.
- h. Maria (leave) _____ now, so could you get her coat?
- i. Come and eat your dinner. It (get) _____ cold.
- j. I (hear) _____ you did really well in your exams. Well done!

4. Complete the text with the present simple or present continuous form of the verb in brackets.

European traffic accident rates fail to meet targets

Although the number of deaths **caused** in traffic accidents in the EU **a** (go down) *is going down*, experts **b** (still try) _____ to find ways of reducing the number throughout the EU to around 25,000 **fatalities** per year by 2010. Traffic safety **c** (improve) _____ but experts **d** (believe) _____ that **achieving** the 2010 goal will prove difficult. **Recent** statistics **e** (show) _____ that in 2005 in the EU 41,600 people were killed in road accidents. Although progress has been made, most experts **f** (agree) _____ that this figure will have fallen to only around 32,000 by 2010, which **g** (means) _____ that the EU **target** will be missed by about 7,000. On the other hand, as the amount of traffic **h** (increase), _____ it is possible **to argue that** the situation is not really as bad as it **i** (look) _____. However one **j** (interpret) _____ the statistics, it **k** (remain) _____ true that as time goes on, it **l** (become) _____ harder and harder to reduce the figures, especially since accident-reduction schemes **m** (cost) _____ a lot of money. Many countries have tried and failed to reduce the number of accidents, and in the EU as a whole, only Sweden **n** (pursue) _____ the goal of zero accidents. Accident reduction is more difficult for newer EU members who **o** (currently face) _____ very rapid growth in traffic and **p** (have) _____ difficulty in building new roads and in introducing safety **measures** at a fast enough rate. To complicate matters, most new members **q** (have) _____ very little experience in dealing with the demands of heavy traffic. Experts **r** (suggest) _____ that any safety programme must also set about changing the way drivers **s** (behave) _____. Despite what people often **t** (say) _____ it **u** (seem) _____ to be the younger generation that **v** (cause) _____ most accidents. **In line with** this research, many countries **w** (introduce) _____ **tougher** driving tests, and **x** (concentrate) _____ on the main causes of accidents: speed, **reckless overtaking**, alcohol, and **over-confidence**.