



# SHOW YOU THE ROPES

## VOCABULARY Roles and tasks

- 1 Complete the sentences with these words and phrases.

troubleshoot	draw up	place	schedule
oversee	come up with	process	input
network	liaise		

- I have to \_\_\_\_\_ information into the database.
- We maintain the computers and network and we \_\_\_\_\_ any problems.
- I have to \_\_\_\_\_ and **entertain a lot** to attract new business.
- People **pass on their expense claims** and **invoices** to me and I \_\_\_\_\_ them.
- I \_\_\_\_\_ everything, making sure everyone **meets their deadlines** and **stays on budget**.
- I \_\_\_\_\_ the strategy and **provide leadership** and then **delegate** the work to others.
- I \_\_\_\_\_ closely with designers to **implement our strategy**.
- I have a budget to \_\_\_\_\_ ads in magazines and **put on events** like product launches.
- Shall we \_\_\_\_\_ a meeting for tomorrow?
- I \_\_\_\_\_ all the contracts and **deal with any contractual issues**.

- 2 Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

- Which tasks from Exercise 1 have you done?
- Which tasks would you be good / bad at? Why?

## LISTENING

- 3 ▶ 28 Listen to someone being shown around on their first day in a new job. Take notes on what you find out about the following:

Tasneem	Harry	Bianca
the photocopier	Mary	the company

- 4 Work in pairs. Compare your notes.

- 5 ▶ 28 Listen again and write down four words or phrases that are new for you. Compare what you wrote with your partner. Then look at audio script 28 on page 205 and check your phrases.

- 6 With your partner, discuss the questions.

- Do you like the way Tasneem shows Harry around? Why? / Why not?
- Do you think it's OK to jokingly make negative comments about colleagues? Do you ever do it? What about?
- What was your first day at work / school like?
- Can you remember what you did?

## DEVELOPING CONVERSATIONS

### Making deductions

To indicate we are making a deduction based on what someone has said, we often add *then* at the end. The intonation often sounds like we're asking a question and need a reply.

▶ 29 You were eager to get here, *then*.

I'm not the only one who's being taken on now, *then*.

She's not in the office that much, *then*.

- 7 Look at audio script 28 on page 205. Find the three examples in the box above and underline:

- 1 what prompted the comments / deductions.
- 2 the replies to these deductions.

- 8 Write a deduction based on each of these sentences.

1 You travel a lot, *then*.

You've been working late a lot, *then*.

Oh, you're married, *then*.

- 1 I've hardly seen my wife in the last few weeks.
- 2 I'm really sorry. I'm falling asleep.
- 3 You don't want to get on the wrong side of him.
- 4 I'm going to have to cover for him again.
- 5 Our reps in Russia are a really lovely bunch.
- 6 My boyfriend says I should slow down.

- 9 Work in pairs. Take turns to say the sentences in Exercise 8 and use your deductions to continue each conversation.

## GRAMMAR

### Continuous forms

Continuous forms use the verb *be* and the *-ing* form. They can combine with perfect forms (*have + been doing*), passives (*be + being done*), *is supposed to* and modals (*will / must*, etc. + *be doing / have been doing*). Continuous forms:

- show an activity or event is / was unfinished at a particular point in time or at the time of another action.
- emphasise that we see an activity or situation as temporary rather than permanent.
- focus on the activity happening over a period of time – as opposed to the result.
- talk about arrangements and activities based on a previous decision.

- 10 Complete the sentences from the listening with the correct continuous form of the verbs.

- 1 I \_\_\_\_\_ actually \_\_\_\_\_ in the coffee bar over the road for the last hour. (hang around)
- 2 I should've said – we \_\_\_\_\_ alongside each other. (work)
- 3 I \_\_\_\_\_ just \_\_\_\_\_ one of them to schedule a time for us all to meet when you arrived. (email)
- 4 I'm not the only one who \_\_\_\_\_ now, then. (take on)
- 5 Three or four more \_\_\_\_\_ in the next couple of weeks. (join)
- 6 She \_\_\_\_\_ probably \_\_\_\_\_ all kind and helpful now, but wait till you get started. (be)
- 7 To be honest, you \_\_\_\_\_ that much to do with them in your day-to-day dealings. (not / have)
- 8 I \_\_\_\_\_ about moving out there for a while and I happened to get the house just before I got this job. (think)

- 11 Work in pairs. Discuss why you think the continuous form is used in each sentence above.

**G** Check your ideas on page 175 and do Exercise 1.

- 12 With your partner, discuss the difference in meaning, if any, between the pairs of sentences.

- 1 a The company went bankrupt last year.  
b The company was going bankrupt last year.
- 2 a She's a pain.  
b She's being a pain.
- 3 a You must have been struggling.  
b You must be struggling.
- 4 a They should sort it out.  
b They should be sorting it out.
- 5 a Things are improving a lot.  
b Things have been improving a lot.

- 13 Make five short dialogues by writing sentences before and after 1b, 2b, 3b, 4b and 5b from Exercise 12.

**G** For further practice, see Exercise 2 on page 176.

## CONVERSATION PRACTICE

- 14 Draw a rough plan of the place where you work / study. Then work in pairs and have similar conversations to the one in the listening. Explain about the following:

- who works where and what they do
- what the people are like
- any rules or things workers need to have
- any machines they might need to operate
- anything odd or temperamental

**V** 21 To watch the video and do the activities, see the DVD ROM.





# OUT OF THE OFFICE

## READING

- 1 You are going to read a true story from a book on management called *The Living Dead* by David Bolchover. Before you read, work in pairs and discuss what you think the theme of the book might be given the title.
- 2 Read Part 1 of the story. Then answer the questions with your partner.
  - 1 What has happened to David (the author)?
  - 2 How does his friend feel about it?
  - 3 Why do you think David feels the system (of work) is cheating itself?
  - 4 How do you think the situation came about?
- 3 Read Part 2 of the story and find out:
  - 1 how the situation came about.
  - 2 how it ended.
  - 3 who 'the living dead' are.
- 4 Match 1–10 to a–j to make phrases from the story.

1 my vitality	a new skills
2 acquire	b the question
3 sponsor	c to someone else
4 sparked	d out of its investment
5 get the most	e my interest
6 his mind	f was drifting off
7 set	g me
8 passed this on	h a redundancy payment
9 which begs	i drained away
10 get	j the wheels in motion
- 5 Work in pairs. Retell the story using the phrases from Exercise 4 and your own words.
- 6 With your partner, discuss the questions.
  - 1 Do you think what happened was a freak occurrence?
  - 2 Who was most to blame for the situation? Why?
  - 3 What lessons can you take from the story?

## LISTENING

- 7  30 Listen to a brief summary of the lessons David Bolchover takes from his experience. Answer the questions in Exercise 6.
- 8  30 Listen again. Then work in pairs and answer the questions.
  - 1 What statistics are connected to the numbers below and what point is Bolchover making with them?
    - one in three
    - 8.3 hours a week
    - 24%
  - 2 What is the 'conspiracy of silence'?
  - 3 Why does it happen mainly in big companies?
  - 4 How can breaking up large companies help?

## 9 Work in groups. Discuss the questions.

- Do you agree with David Bolchover's ideas? Why? / Why not?
- What would you have done in his situation?
- Have you heard of any instances of incompetence in the workplace? What happened?
- How do people get to the top at work? Does it depend on the industry? In what way?
- Which person you know has the best work-life balance?

## UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

### Adverb-adjective collocations

Adverbs that go before adjectives usually modify the strength of the adjective (*highly efficient*), but occasionally they may modify the meaning of the adjective (*The job was financially rewarding.*). Some adverbs collocate strongly with only one or two adjectives (*mind-numbingly boring*).

- 10 All the adverbs in *italics* in the sentences below are possible. In each sentence, choose the one you think is most true for you.
  - 1 Most jobs are *mind-numbingly* / *largely* / *pretty* boring.
  - 2 Gardening is *technically* / *physically* / *not terribly* demanding.
  - 3 Nursing is *financially* / *immensely* / *fairly* rewarding.
  - 4 Teaching kids is *emotionally* / *utterly* / *quite* draining.
  - 5 You have to be *fiercely* / *very* / *quite* competitive to get ahead in business.
  - 6 IT is *mildly* / *inherently* / *not even remotely* interesting.
  - 7 The public sector is *highly* / *reasonably* / *not particularly* efficient.
  - 8 I'm *blissfully* / *relatively* / *not entirely* happy with what I'm doing now.
- 11 Work in pairs and compare your choices. Discuss any differences.
- 12 Use each of the eight adjectives from Exercise 10 plus a connected adverb of your choice to tell a partner about things you have done – or something you believe to be true.

*I find golf mind-numbingly boring. Why do people watch it?*

*I like climbing, but I don't do anything which is too technically demanding.*

*Banking is obviously very rewarding financially, but I wouldn't want to do it.*



# THE LIVING DEAD

Extracts adapted from  
*The Living Dead* by David Bolchover

## PART 1

'I'm sitting in a café with my friend Paul. He lives in the States now and I haven't had the chance to chat with him for months.'

'Now let me get this straight,' he leans forward on the edge of his seat. 'Your company has forgotten about you? You're on the payroll, but you've got nothing to do. And how long did you say this has been going on?'

Six months.'

Paul leans further forward. It's clear he's not going to drop the subject.

'They pay you a full salary for sitting on your backside at home, apart from the times when you're not at home, but out and about with your mates or travelling round Europe to watch Man United play in the Champions League?'

'No, you've missed a bit; you've forgotten the rugby and the ...'

'You jammy beggar!'

All the conversations I've had about this period of my life contain those words or similar. There is a depressing inevitability about it, although I always enjoy the sneaking respect I sense I get from people for having cheated the system. Except that I wasn't cheating the system. The system was cheating itself.

## PART 2

I'd joined Giant – a big multinational insurance company – in June of 1997. The job was financially rewarding, but I quickly started to feel restless as some days I did nothing apart from make the occasional call. The Internet still hadn't taken off so I spent hours staring at the wall, drifting off into my own little world, while all my vitality slowly drained away. Every morning, I'd get up full of life, and every evening, I'd return with my shoulders slumped, my head bent and my mind numb. I was joining the terrible world of the living dead.

I decided that if I was going to get ahead, I needed to acquire new skills. It was clear that in my current post I wasn't exactly going to race to the top of the insurance world so I decided to persuade Giant to sponsor me to take a year off to do an MBA in return for me committing to the company afterwards. I presented the idea to my boss. He was about to retire and was looking for an easy life so he quickly agreed and, with his backing, the process was a formality.

The MBA filled me with renewed energy and optimism. After six months, I went back to the office to see my boss in readiness for my return on October 4<sup>th</sup>. I explained how the course had

sparked my interest in management and business strategy. I suggested it was pointless me going back to what I had been doing and that instead Giant might think about a suitable post that would get the most out of its investment. It was a good speech full of common sense, but from the dull look in my boss's eyes I could've been talking to an Italian about cricket. You could tell his mind was drifting off to another place rather than focusing on a job which could benefit both me and the company. As a result, I consulted human resources. The woman I spoke to nodded and sounded interested and said she'd set the wheels in motion.

However, months past and I heard nothing. I was beginning to worry, not to say get angry, at the lack of communication so I arranged an appointment with someone higher up in HR. It didn't go well and on reflection I can imagine what he was thinking. 'I've got this guy who's a pain in the neck. We owe him a job, but he doesn't want to go back to his old post and there's no point in him going there on a temporary basis. It'd be better if I just passed this on to someone else to sort out before he makes me look like a fool.'

The 4<sup>th</sup> of October came. Nothing. A few days later, the guy from HR put me in contact with a guy in Finance, for whom I worked on a project at home but which he quickly dropped. A few weeks went by. Nothing. Well, nothing apart from October 26<sup>th</sup> when a nice big juicy pay cheque dropped through my letterbox.

In mid-November, the finance guy rang and told me to see this guy Nick, who was brilliant at assessing people and placing them in the post which would enthuse them most. It sounded impressive but the results weren't. After scheduling some meetings that didn't go anywhere, he came to the conclusion that basically people with MBAs didn't fit into the insurance sector, which rather begs the question: why on earth did Giant – an insurance company – agree to fund me?!

The months passed and I decided I should find a job elsewhere. Ironically, I was just about to phone my department to let them know I was leaving when HR called, inviting me to a meeting with the big boss. They were going to make me redundant! Of course! It's only fair that after being with the company for over two years and having done nothing for the previous ten months, I should get a redundancy payment and one-month's notice to leave. As I left the meeting, the big boss accompanied me to the lift. He uncomfortably tried to start some small talk. 'So ... er ... what have been doing for the last few months?'

All I could think of was a variety of football matches, sunny days walking round London Zoo, afternoons in the cinema. However, instead I heard myself saying, 'Obviously, it's been a difficult time for me and my family.'





# WORKING CONDITIONS

## SPEAKING

- 1 Read the fact file. Then work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- Which facts surprise you? Why?
- Is there anything you don't find surprising?
- How do you think your country compares in terms of all the facts and figures?

## VOCABULARY The world of work

- 2 Complete the sentences below with these pairs of words and phrases. You may need to change the order of the words.

crèche + childcare	compassionate leave + grateful
opposition + raise	voluntary redundancy + cuts
perk + subsidised	early retirement + pension
tribunal + dismissal	unions + casualisation
quit + notice	crackdown + absenteeism

- If I want to \_\_\_\_\_, I basically just have to give my boss a week's \_\_\_\_\_.
- We all get \_\_\_\_\_ travel, which is a nice \_\_\_\_\_ of the job.
- When my father died, I was granted two month's \_\_\_\_\_, which I'm eternally \_\_\_\_\_ for.
- We have a \_\_\_\_\_ at work where I can leave my daughter, which makes \_\_\_\_\_ much easier.
- My dad was planning to take \_\_\_\_\_, but he basically can't afford to live on the state \_\_\_\_\_.
- We're losing so much money because of \_\_\_\_\_ that we've decided to launch a bit of a \_\_\_\_\_ and start demanding sick notes.
- He was sacked last year, but he took his employers to a \_\_\_\_\_ and was awarded compensation on the grounds of unfair \_\_\_\_\_.
- The government promised to \_\_\_\_\_ the statutory minimum wage, but they're facing a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ from business leaders.
- We were facing swingeing \_\_\_\_\_ across the department and in the end I just decided to take \_\_\_\_\_ instead.
- There are fewer and fewer secure jobs, but the \_\_\_\_\_ have done nothing to prevent this \_\_\_\_\_ of the workforce.

- 3 Work in pairs. Cover the sentences in Exercise 2. See if you can remember the verbs that were used with these nouns and noun phrases.

a week's notice	a tribunal
compassionate leave	compensation
early retirement	the minimum wage
the state pension	a lot of opposition
a crackdown	voluntary redundancy

- 4 Look at Exercise 2 and check your ideas. Underline any other phrases that are new for you.

## FACT FILE

- Nearly two thirds of British workers don't consider taking stationery home from work to be stealing.
- German women get 14 weeks' maternity leave at full pay, 6 weeks of which can be taken before birth. Both parents can take 12 months at around 67% of pay and have their jobs protected for 3 years.
- Japanese companies spend approximately \$23.5 billion a year entertaining clients, which according to the IMF is the equivalent of the GDP of Estonia!
- The average monthly income in Guinea Bissau, West Africa, is around \$20.
- Approximately 21 million people around the world are victims of forced labour and slavery.
- On average over a whole year, Mexicans (43 hrs/wk) and Greeks (42 hrs/wk) work the longest hours, and the Dutch work the least (27 hrs/wk).
- Nepal now has the lowest retirement age in the world at 58, while Australia has the highest at 70.

- 5 Work in groups. Answer the questions.

- What other perks can you think of for different kinds of jobs?
- Under what circumstances do you think it's OK to grant workers compassionate leave?
- On what grounds is it OK to sack someone?
- Are crèches common in workplaces in your country? Do you think they're a good idea?
- What's the state pension like in your country?
- Why do you think there is so much absenteeism? What's the best way to tackle the problem?
- How does the workforce become casualised?

