



Corporate culture

Getting started

What makes a company a good place to work?

Number the following in order of importance for you (1 = the most important).

a good relationship with your boss
friendly colleagues
a variety of different things to do
a fixed routine
good opportunities for promotion
flexible hours

Compare your list with a partner. Try to agree on the three most important things.

Company culture

Reading

1 Read the following dictionary definition.

Company culture *n.* the values, beliefs and traditions in a company which influence the behaviour of its staff. It is important for jobseekers to know about the culture of an organisation before accepting a job.

2 What kind of company culture is best for you? Do the quiz to find out. Circle A for *agree* or D for *disagree*.

What kind of company culture would suit you?

SECTION A

- 1 I like taking time to have a chat with colleagues even if this means spending more time at work. A/D
- 2 It's nice when people at work celebrate birthdays or special occasions. A/D
- 3 I prefer people to fix a time to meet me rather than come to my office or my desk at any time. A/D
- 4 I don't like working in an open space with everyone's desk in the same area. I work better in an office of my own. A/D
- 5 I like to put photos and personal objects in my workplace. A/D

SECTION B

- 6 If I disagree with my boss, I should be able to tell him/her. A/D
- 7 I prefer to receive a formal report about my work, not just casual comments. A/D
- 8 When my boss gives me something to do, I like to get detailed instructions that I can follow. A/D
- 9 It's important for me to feel I am involved in the decision-making process at work. A/D
- 10 A company should have standard procedures and policies that everyone must follow, not ones which change with people's situations or personalities. A/D

SECTION C

- 11 A company must keep up with the times. A/D
- 12 I need to take on challenges to make my job interesting. A/D
- 13 When planning a strategy, it is useful to look at what has worked well in the past. A/D
- 14 A company should be proud of its traditions. A/D
- 15 Finally, which of these proverbs do you prefer?
 - a Better safe than sorry
 - b Nothing ventured, nothing gained



3 Add up your scores for sections A, B and C.

SCORES

Section A

- 1 A=1 D=0 4 A=0 D=1
 2 A=1 D=0 5 A=1 D=0
 3 A=0 D=1

Questions 1–5 are about your relationship with colleagues. A score of higher than 2 suggests that you like to work for a company where employees are friends and can talk about personal matters. A score of 2 or less means that you prefer to keep your work life separate from your personal life.

Section B

- 6 A=1 D=0 9 A=1 D=0
 7 A=0 D=1 10 A=0 D=1
 8 A=0 D=1

Questions 6 to 10 are about your relationship with your managers. A score of higher than 2 suggests you like to work in a company where roles between managers and staff are flexible. A score of 2 or less means that you like to work in a company where people have clearly defined roles and there is more distance between staff and managers.

Section C

- 11 A=1 D=0 14 A=0 D=1
 12 A=1 D=0 15 a=0 b=1
 13 A=0 D=1

Questions 11 to 15 are about your attitude to tradition. A score of higher than 2 means you like to work in a company which values new ideas and takes serious risks. A score of 2 or less means you prefer the security of a company with strong traditions.

4 Compare your scores with a partner to see if you would like to work in the same sort of organisation.

Vocabulary

When recording vocabulary it is useful to record words which are often used together. These are called *collocations*. Usually the words are from different parts of speech.

verb–noun collocations like these are very useful.
run a business **launch a product**

1 Look at the questions in the corporate culture quiz again. Find verb–noun collocations with these meanings.

- 1 talk informally *have a chat*
 2 make an appointment
 3 change things to be more modern
 4 agree to do something difficult
 5 decide the way to do something in the future

There are other types of collocations like these:

adjective–noun

We offer a **wide range** of services.
 This seems an **effective solution**.

noun–verb

Sales increase in the summer.
 The **market is expanding** quickly.

verb–adverb

They have **invested heavily** in new technology.
 I have to **work closely** with my colleagues.

2 Find adjective–noun collocations in the quiz with these meanings.

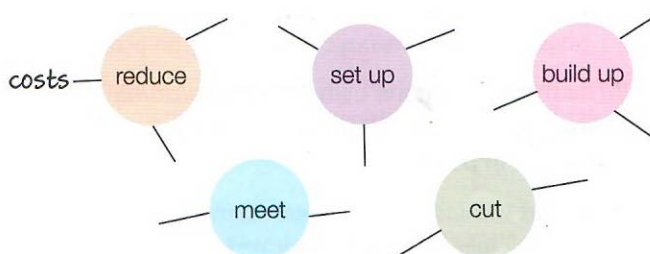
- 1 the normal ways of doing something
 2 (*in the scores analysis*) big danger

It can also be useful to record the verbs that often go before adjective–noun collocations, for example, the collocation **wide range** is often preceded by the verbs **offer** or **provide**.

What verbs would commonly come before the two adjective–noun collocations you found for questions 1 and 2 above? Look back to the quiz to find out.

3 Which words and expressions in the box can form collocations with the verbs below? You can use some of the words and expressions more than once.

a meeting your needs a good relationship
 prices the risk a deadline a system
 a business costs your confidence



- 4 Read the following company profiles from a networking site for professionals, and circle the correct words. Use the vocabulary information and the collocations in Exercise 3 to help you.

Geniolink provides software and IT support for small businesses. We specialise in 1 *meeting/ touching* the needs of customers in local markets. We work 2 *tightly/ closely* with each of our clients to 3 *build up/ set up* good relationships, look at how technology can provide 4 *capable/ effective* solutions to their problems and help them to 5 *take on/ keep up* new challenges. Communicating with us is easy. We provide our clients with just one number to call for all their IT needs, so they can 6 *run/ make* their businesses while our local experts manage the systems.

IV Software is a global technology company which deals with clients in over 150 countries. We offer a 7 *tall/ wide* range of technology and consulting services and each year we invest 8 *heavily/ deeply* in research and development. We aim to bring benefits to all the countries we work in. With our cutting edge technology, we promote growth, encourage investment and 9 *reduce/ cut* risks. Our work includes helping governments to 10 *build up/ set up* systems which will increase the availability of clean water and improve the health and safety of populations. We hope to make the world a better place for everyone.

- 5 Look at the profiles again and choose three more useful collocations to record in your vocabulary notes.

- 6  Business English students often confuse collocations with *make*, *do* and *have*. Choose the correct collocation with *make*, *do* or *have* in the following sentences.

- For my visit, please *do/make/have* a reservation at the Station Hotel.
- You need to *make/do/have* all the arrangements as soon as possible.
- I am looking forward to *making/doing/having* business with you.
- I want to *do/make/have* a meeting with all staff.
- Our employee *did/made/had* a mistake with the sending date.
- Could you come and *make/do/have* a product demonstration in our office?
- I need to *make/do/have* changes to the product.

- 7 Write three questions using the *make/do/have* collocations above. Then ask and answer the questions in pairs.

When did you last make a hotel reservation?
Last month when I went to New York.

Describing changes

Listening

- 1  08 A company's culture often changes over the years. Listen to a telephone conversation in which one person is asking another about the company culture at his place of work. In which order do they talk about the following things?

- possibilities for promotion
- staff benefits
- the company culture

- 2  08 Listen to the conversation again. Make notes on what Adam says about:

- the company when he joined
- the company now

- 3 Compare your notes with a partner. Did you write down the same points?
- 4 Adam says the change in the company happened after a merger. What other events do you think could change the culture of a company? Discuss your ideas with your partner.



Writing

- 1 You are the staff representative in a company. The management are proposing some changes to your working hours. You decide to call a meeting with staff to discuss the changes with them. Plan an email to all staff:
- saying what the changes to the working hours will involve
 - giving the time and day of the meeting
 - explaining why the meeting is important
- 2 Match the sentence beginnings with the possible continuations on the next page.

- The management are planning to make
- The management want to introduce
- I would like to set up
- Could we have
- I think we need to

- a let them know our opinions ...
- b a meeting ...
- c make our feelings clear ...
- d some changes ...

- 3 Now choose three of the sentences to complete and put them in the right order to create your email. Write 30–40 words.

Asking for information

Speaking

- 1 Look at the list of questions below. Find five pairs of questions which have the same meaning and write them next to each other in the table below. You will be left with four questions which do not form a pair.

~~What's the name of your company?~~

What's your job?

What are you studying?

What do you hope to do in the future?

What do you enjoy about your job/studies?

What time do you start and finish work?

Do you do many different things in your work/studies?

Do you travel much in your job?

What exactly do you do?

What are your plans for the future?

What are your working hours?

~~Who do you work for?~~

What does your job involve?

What do you do?

Question A	Question B
What's the name of your company?	Who do you work for?

- 2 Work in pairs. Choose three of the questions from Exercise 1 to ask your partner. When your partner answers, ask another question of your own.

Student A: What are your plans for the future?

Student B: I want to work for my father's company.

Student A: Oh. Where is that based?

- 3 Work in a different pair. Read through the list of questions (1–6) and the list of reasons (a–f). Take it in turns to ask and answer questions. When answering, choose a reason from the box and add either another reason or more detail of your own.

- Is it important for a company to:
 - 1 offer flexible hours? *c*
 - 2 give employees their own workspace?
 - 3 provide laptops for their employees?
 - 4 offer training to their employees?

- 5 have a workforce with different types of people?
- 6 have rules about what their employees can wear?

- a this is part of the company's image
- b different people can bring different ideas
- c some staff have family commitments
- d staff need a place to leave unfinished work
- e staff need to feel they can develop
- f staff can work when they are travelling

Student A: Is it important for a company to offer flexible hours?

Student B: Yes, because some staff have family commitments. It can be a good thing for working parents who need to organise childcare.

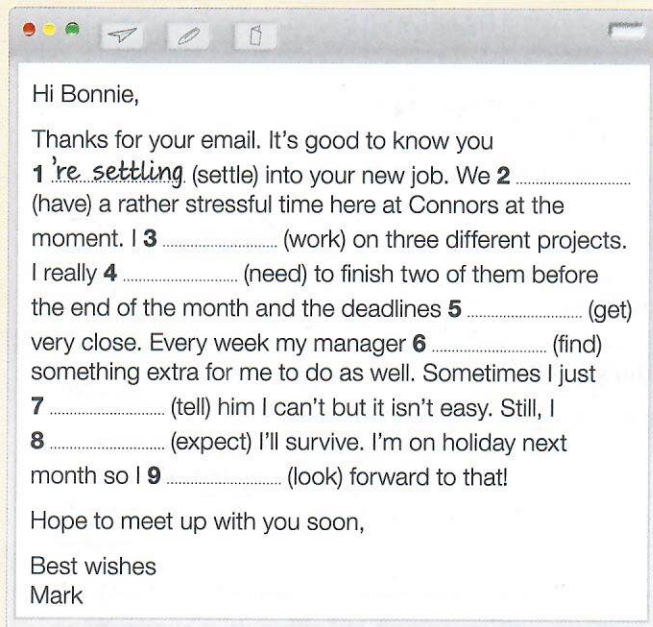


Grammar workshop 1

Units 1–4

Present simple and present continuous

- 1 Complete the email by putting the verbs in brackets in the correct form, either present simple or present continuous.



Hi Bonnie,

Thanks for your email. It's good to know you 1 're settling (settle) into your new job. We 2 (have) a rather stressful time here at Connors at the moment. I 3 (work) on three different projects. I really 4 (need) to finish two of them before the end of the month and the deadlines 5 (get) very close. Every week my manager 6 (find) something extra for me to do as well. Sometimes I just 7 (tell) him I can't but it isn't easy. Still, I 8 (expect) I'll survive. I'm on holiday next month so I 9 (look) forward to that!

Hope to meet up with you soon,

Best wishes
Mark

- Usually the verb **have** is a state verb.
*Our company **has** (= possesses) three offices in Scotland (NOT 'is having').*
(In an informal style, we can also use *have/has got* in this case.)
- In expressions where it does not mean 'possess', we can use it in the continuous.
*The manager **is having** lunch at the moment.*

- 2  Business English students sometimes confuse these two uses. Choose the correct form of **have** in the following sentences.

- 1 'Where are your colleagues?' 'They *have* / *are having* a drink in the bar.'
- 2 We *have* / *are having* a number of products which might interest you.

- 3 You can't come in now because the department *have* / *are having* a meeting.
- 4 We *have* / *are having* a really good new designer in our department.
- 5 We *have* / *are having* a big meeting room with an electronic whiteboard and computer.
- 6 'Why is the training room empty?' 'The team *all have* / *are all having* coffee in the canteen.'
- 7 I can't do that today because I *have* / *am having* too much other work to do.
- 8 My colleague *has* / *is having* a really interesting time at the trade fair.

Position of time phrases

- Short time adverbs of frequency like **sometimes** usually go after the verb *to be* but before another main verb.
*We **always** meet at 9 o'clock.*
*He **is sometimes** late.*
- Frequency expressions like **every day** usually go at the end of the phrase.
*We speak on the phone **every day**.*
*The manager is having lunch **at the moment**.*

Put the words in brackets in the correct position in these sentences.

- 1 I check my emails from home. (sometimes)
I sometimes check my emails from home.
- 2 She is in the office on Mondays. (never)
- 3 They promote people from within the company. (often)
- 4 We have a shareholders meeting. (twice a year)
- 5 My PA doesn't deal with matters like this. (usually)
- 6 He comes to the board meeting. (every week)
- 7 They use artificial flavourings in their products. (never)
- 8 Those suppliers aren't very reliable. (always)
- 9 The hotel is fully booked in July. (often)
- 10 We are reviewing a number of our policies. (currently)

Past simple and past continuous

1 Read the text and then write questions in the past simple for the given answers.



Levi Strauss was born in Bavaria in 1829 but when he was 17, he and his family emigrated to the USA. In 1853, he set up his first clothing business in Battery Street, San Francisco. Some years later, he received a letter from a local tailor named Jacob Davis. Davis had an idea for a new design for men's trousers and wanted to know if Levi was interested. The two men

went into partnership and production began in 1873. At that time the trousers were called 'overalls'. Later, in 1960, they stopped using this name and started calling the trousers 'jeans' instead.

The company always ran strong advertising campaigns for their products. At first they used posters and billboards, but later advertised on the radio and made their first TV commercial in 1966. Their strong advertising is probably one reason why the company grew so rapidly.



- 1 When did Levi Strauss' family emigrate to the USA?

When he was seventeen.

- 2

In Battery Street, San Francisco.

- 3

In 1873.

- 4

In 1960.

- 5

In 1966.

- 6

Probably because of their strong advertising.

- 2 Put the verbs in brackets in the correct form, either past simple or past continuous. Use each tense once in each sentence.

- 1 I was taking (take) out my phone when your message came (come) through.

- 2 When I (go) into the boardroom, the CEO (sit) at the head of the table.

- 3 They (wear) visitors badges so I (know) they didn't work there.

- 4 He (live) in the USA when he (meet) his business partner.

- 5 I (write) an email to our suppliers when the computer screen (freeze).

- 6 I (not send) the document because the scanner (not work).

- 3 Business English students sometimes try to use the past continuous too much instead of the past simple. Correct the following sentences by replacing the past continuous with the past simple. TWO of the sentences are correct.

- 1 I was on holiday for three weeks and I ~~was just coming~~ back yesterday. just came

- 2 I am writing with regard to your advertisement which I was reading in *Business Chronicle*.

- 3 The refreshments arrived while he was giving the presentation.

- 4 I couldn't print the document because the printer was falling on the floor.

- 5 They were locking up when the manager phoned to say she was still in the building.

- 6 I was working in the same department for six years so after that I was ready for a change.

- 4 Business English students sometimes spell *-ing* forms and past tenses wrongly. Correct the following wrong spellings made by candidates in Cambridge business exams. TWO of the sentences are correct.

- 1 He is ~~studing~~ business administration at Harvard. studying

- 2 I am writting to confirm the conference room booking.

- 3 We stopped making that model two years ago.

- 4 Profits drouped in the second half of the year.

- 5 Two new clients are comming this afternoon.

- 6 You can get the information by refering to the website.

- 7 Our company is planing to make a video.

- 8 They delivered the order this morning.