

English for Human Resources

Working hours

to work overtime = to do more than the usual hours required by the contract

- We aren't paid when we work overtime, we can take time off in lieu.
- We had to work overtime to get the project finished on time.

to work shifts = to work in teams at different times of the day and night

- In today's twenty-four hour society, more and more people work shifts.
- We get paid more when we work shifts to compensate for the irregular times.

shift work = when groups of workers work at different times of the day and night

- The irregular rhythm of shift work can be very hard on family life.
- Production keeps going non-stop so we have a lot of people who do shift work.

to be on the night shift = to work with a group during the night, often from ten pm to six am

- It's very hard on the night shift because I can't sleep very well during the day.
- Some people prefer to be on the night shift because they are at home when the children come home from school.

flexitime = a system where people can vary the start and end times

- As we work flexitime, I take the children to school and arrive at nine thirty.
- With flexitime, as long as I have done my seven hours, I can leave at four thirty.

a roster = a list of who's working when and where

- The weekly roster is put up on the board so that you can see who is working.
- Look on the roster to see what job you are doing.

to have time off = to take vacation or leave

- I'd like to have some time off next month. I need a break.
- If you want to have time off, you have to fill out a request form and give it to your line manager.

to take a day off = to have an authorised absence from work for a day

- I had two days off last week so I have a lot of work to catch up on.
- I'd like a day off next week to deal with some family matters. Friday if that is convenient.

full-time = work a whole working week

- At the moment I only work two days a week but I would like to work full-time.
- After the birth of my son, I didn't want to go back full-time so do three days a week now.

part-time = to work a part of the day or week

- When I was a student, I had a part-time job in a bar.

- We are looking for a part-time receptionist to work mornings.

to be punctual = to start or arrive at the specified time

- She's very punctual, always here on time.
- Please be punctual. I don't want to have to wait for late arrivals.

home working = to work from home rather than going into the office

- Home working misses the social element of going to work.
- Modern technology means that home working has become a real possibility for many people.

time sheet = a record of the numbers of hours worked by an employee

- Fill out this time sheet every day and hand it to your manager on Fridays.
- We no longer have time sheets as this is done automatically by the electronic ID badges.

unsocial hours = hours outside of the normal working week

- Although the hours are rather unsocial, I don't want a nine to five job.
- Lots of professions work very unsocial hours and don't necessarily get compensated for it.

to take a break = to stop work for a short time to relax

- You can buy tea or coffee when you take a break.
- Sometimes it's a good idea to take a break and come back to a job refreshed.

to clock in/out = to record the start or finish time of work on a special machine

- The staff clock in when they arrive and clock out as they leave.
- Flexitime means that everyone has to clock in and out to keep a check on the hours worked.

public holidays = national holidays that are not generally worked

- Your holiday entitlement does not include public holidays like Christmas Day.
- If a public holiday is on a Thursday, many people take the Friday off and have a long weekend.

hourly rate = the salary that is paid per hour of work

- We are paid a considerably higher hourly rate for Sundays or evening work.
- The part-time employees are paid an hourly rate but the permanent staff are paid a fixed salary.

fixed hours = the working hours of an employee do not change or cannot be varied

- The admin staff work fixed hours; nine to five, five days a week.
- As a freelancer, I don't have any fixed hours but work when the work is there.

Applying for a job 1

Learn the vocabulary to talk about getting or changing jobs in English:

If there is **'a vacancy'**, there is a job available because a new post has been created or a person has left.

- Larry's move to London has created a vacancy in Marketing if you are interested.
- We don't have any vacancies at the moment but we will keep your CV on file.

When a post becomes vacant, the company **'advertises the post'** in the press.

- Although the post was advertised last month, we promoted someone internally.
- We advertised the post in the national press last week and have received lots of applications.

If you **'apply for a job'**, you send in a CV or letter because you want the job.

- Ten people have applied for the job just from advertising it internally.
- I've applied for that job in Glasgow even though I'm don't really have enough experience.

When you want a new job, you send **'letters of application'** to the company concerned.

- I've written letters of application for four different jobs but had no reply yet.
- We have received letters of application from a wide range of candidates.

The candidates who apply for the job are also known as the **'applicants'**.

- The number of applicants is very high. There are a lot of people with the right qualifications and experience.
- We do a pre-selection of the applicants based on their previous experience.

A company can use a **'recruitment agency'** to fill their vacancies

- We use a recruitment agency to advertise the post and do a pre-selection.
- There are several recruitment agencies who specialize in our sector so we can find highly qualified candidates quickly.

A **'job description'** details all the duties, responsibilities and personal qualities necessary for a specific job.

- We have written new job descriptions for all the jobs in our department.
- I don't think making the coffee is in my job description!

Your **'qualifications'** are your academic or professional diplomas.

- For a post at this level, we consider experience to be more important than academic qualifications.
- For this post, we give full training. The only qualification necessary is a high school diploma.

'Experience' is the knowledge acquired through time already spent in work, in different jobs.

- I have a lot of experience managing a small team and would now like to manage a bigger one.
- The best candidates are those who have previous experience in the food industry.

'Salary and benefits' are what you are paid and the extras you receive in return for the work you do.

- Although the starting salary is not very high, the benefits include health insurance.
- We pay very competitive salaries and provide some of the best benefits in the sector.

Applying for a job 2

Let's continue learning vocabulary to talk about getting or changing jobs in English:

Applying for a job may mean filling out an '**application form**' giving your personal details.

- If you are interested in the job, could you fill out this application form, please?
- I have completed the application form for that job and sent it back to the personnel department.

The application form includes your '**contact details**'; your home address, your phone number and your email address.

- We have your contact details so we will be in touch soon.
- If you give me your contact details, I'll call you to set up an interview.

It also includes your '**employment history**' where you list the previous positions you have held with the name of the company, job title and dates of employment.

- I have already held similar positions as you can see from my employment history.
- There are gaps in her employment history. I would like to know what she was doing during these periods.

A list of previous positions held needs to highlight the '**relevant experience**' showing why the candidate is suitable for the job.

- As you can see from my CV, I have all the relevant experience you require.
- This candidate doesn't have the relevant experience in our sector but is very well qualified in every other aspect.

A '**job description**' is drawn up for candidates giving all the relevant information about the job detailing responsibilities as well as location and salary.

- I don't think that my job description includes all the task I am currently doing.
- We are currently writing job descriptions for the new jobs being created in the sales team.

After the final interviews, a formal '**job offer**' is made to the best candidate.

- We hope to make a formal job offer as soon as we have had replies from your referees.
- I turned down the job offer I received from them because the salary wasn't as good as my present one.

The job offer will include information regarding salary and '**holiday entitlement**'. (British English)

- The holiday entitlement is only 20 days a year but that doesn't include public holidays.
- Although the holiday entitlement is very generous, holidays have to be taken at certain times of the year.

The job offer will also give a '**starting date**' for the job.

- I have to work out my notice in my present job so can we put back the starting date?
- Originally they wanted me to start next week but as I was available, I suggested an earlier starting date.

The job offer will also specify a '**probation period**' at the end of which a new recruit can be dismissed if they are not suitable for the position.

- They let him go at the end of the probation period.
- She is still on her probation period. We have another two weeks to make a final decision.

Hire and Fire

If you '**hire**' someone, you employ them.

- We hired him on a six month contract.
- I hear that they are not hiring people at the moment because of budget problems.

If you **'fire'** somebody, you dismiss them from their job, usually because of something they did.

- I had to fire Sally because she kept on making mistakes.
- If you don't improve, they may decide to fire you.

If you **'make somebody redundant'**, you dismiss them from their job for economic reasons.

- They are closing down the factory and making 500 people redundant.
- I was made redundant from my last job.

If you **'recruit'** people, you persuade them to work for you.

- We need to recruit more young engineers.
- It's difficult to recruit people because our pay is so low.

If you **'headhunt'** someone for a job, you approach them because you think they are well-qualified for the job and offer them the job.

- We need to look at the people doing similar jobs in other companies and headhunt the best one.
- He was headhunted at great expense but the job didn't work out and he left.

If you **'hand in (or give in) your notice'**, you tell your employer that you are going to leave the company.

- She handed in her notice this morning and is leaving at the end of the month.
- He gave in his notice and they told him he could leave straight away.

If a company **'gives someone notice'**, they tell them that they are going to lose their jobs.

- The company only gave me three days' notice that I was being made redundant.
- We have to give her two months' notice that we are letting her go.

If an employer **'sacks'** someone, they fire them.

- They sacked me without notice after ten years with the company.
- I hear they intend to sack him because of his bullying.

If you **'get the sack'** or are **'given the sack'**, you are fired.

- He was given the sack because he kept arriving late.
- If I keep making mistakes, I'm going to get the sack.

'Severance pay' is money paid to workers when they are made redundant.

- The redundant workers were given 26 weeks' severance pay.
- After ten years, I got three days' notice and no severance pay.

If you take legal action against your employer for **'unfair dismissal'**, you claim that they dismissed you for no good reason.

- He is suing them for unfair dismissal as he says he was only ever late once.
- Dismiss me and I'll take you to court for unfair dismissal. I've done nothing to deserve this.

If you take legal action against your employer for '**constructive dismissal**', you claim that you were forced to leave your job because of the actions/behavior of your employer.

- She is making a claim for constructive dismissal because she claims her immediate boss bullied her.
- I'm sure you have the grounds for a complaint of constructive dismissal.

Pay

'**Pay**' is money that you get from your employer, either as a wage or as a salary.

- What are the pay and conditions for the job?
- Pay rates in the industry are very poor.

'**Back pay**' is money owed to you by your employer for work done in the past which has not yet been paid.

- I'm still owed 3 months back pay for the overtime I did before Christmas.
- The company cannot afford to give you the back pay it owes you.

A '**pay cut**' is a reduction in the amount of pay you are given.

- We are asking you all to accept a pay cut of 10% to keep the company going.
- He has the stark choice of accepting a pay cut or losing his job.

A '**pay rise**' is an increase in pay.

- We are looking for a pay rise in line with inflation.
- I'm going to ask my boss for a pay rise.

A '**pay rate**' is the amount per hour (or some other period) that you pay.

- The pay rate is \$12 an hour.
- The industry cannot attract good quality workers because of the low pay rates.

'**Net pay**' is the amount earned after deductions (usually for social security and pensions and perhaps for tax.)

- The gross pay is \$12 an hour but net pay is only \$9.50 an hour.
- He said he is only earning \$5 an hour but that is his net pay, not his gross.

'**Equal pay**' means that men and women get the same pay for doing the same job.

- The women workers are asking for equal pay with the men.
- In this country, if you don't give the women equal pay, you could go to jail.

An '**itemized pay statement**' contains a detailed breakdown of the pay you have earned and the deductions taken from it.

- The bank want me to give them my itemized pay statements for the last six months.
- The law states that employees must receive itemized pay statements.

'**Performance-related pay**' is where the amount you are paid depends on the quality/quantity of your work.

- Since we introduced performance-related pay, production has doubled.
- They may need the incentive of performance-related pay.

A '**pay scale**' is a range of different pay rates which people will receive depending on various factors (e.g. their grade in the company, their qualifications, their years in the company.)

- We have six grades on our pay scale. You will start on the bottom one.
- Perhaps we need to change our pay scale to take account of the loyalty people have shown us?

Salary

A '**salary**' is the money you are paid, usually monthly, for doing a job, usually non-manual.

- I get a good salary but I need more money.
- What sort of salary are they offering?

A '**competitive salary**' is a good one for that particular job.

- We are offering a very competitive salary so we should get good applicants.
- We are not recruiting the best people because our salaries are not very competitive.

A person who gets a salary is a '**salaried employee**'.

- We've reduced the number of salaried employees by 50% and replaced them by temporary workers.
- It is much easier to get a loan if you are a salaried employee.

If you need money, you can ask for '**a salary advance**'.

- Can I have a salary advance? I'm broke.
- I asked my boss for a salary advance but he refused to give me one.

If you '**undertake a salary review**', you look at all the salaries to decide which need changing.

- The committee are undertaking a salary review and will report back in a few weeks time.
- We need to undertake a salary review as our salaries are not very competitive.

'**A salary scale**' is the range of salaries available.

- When you start, you will be at the bottom of the salary scale but you will not stay there for long.
- Our salary scale is not very competitive compared to our competition.

If a salary is good, we can say that it is '**attractive**'.

- We are offering a very attractive salary for the job.
- It is an attractive salary but I will have to work on Saturdays.

Everybody hopes to get a '**salary increase**'.

- We had no salary increase this year because the company was in trouble.
- If you offer me an increase in salary, I will stay.

The '**basic salary**' is the salary before any extras such as bonuses.

- The basic salary is quite low but there are large incentive bonuses.
- I prefer to have a large basic salary as there is more security.

When you start a job, you will receive your '**initial salary**'.

- The initial salary is quite low but you should get promoted to a better job quite quickly.
- If we want to recruit better people, we will have to offer a more competitive initial salary.

Jobs & related verbs

If you **'apply for'** a job, you ask a company for a job.

- I've applied for six jobs in the last week and haven't heard back from any of them.
- We were expecting a lot of people to apply for the job but not as many as this

If you **'are out of'** a job, you do not have any work. If you are 'put out of a job', you are made redundant.

- I'm out of a job at the moment but I'm hopeful I'll get something soon.
- My biggest fear is being put of my job. At my age, I would struggle to find another one.

If you are **'sacked from'** your job, you lose it for disciplinary, not economic, reasons.

- He was sacked from his job for stealing.
- I wouldn't employ somebody who had been sacked from a previous job.

If you **'create'** a job, you establish a new job which didn't previously exist.

- We've created ten new jobs in the Production Department.
- I think we need to create a new job specifically to look after this project.

If you **'find somebody'** a job, you use your contacts to get them a job.

- I'm sure I can find your son a job in our warehouse for the summer.
- Can you find me a job in your company?

If you **'give up' a job'**, you resign from it.

- I'm giving up my job and devoting all my time to my song writing.
- If you give up your job, you won't find it easy to get another one in this economic climate.

If you **'hold down'** a job, you keep it.

- I've held down this job for over three years now.
- She manages to hold down two jobs.

If you **'hunt for'** a job, you actively look for one.

- She's been hunting for a job for two months without any success.
- You need to hunt for a job more systematically; not just when you feel like it.

If you **'resign from'** a job, you give it up. (see number 6!)

- He resigned from his post because he couldn't stand the long hours.
- I resigned from my previous employer because I thought some of their sales techniques were unethical.

If you **'take up'** a job, you start it.

- I'm leaving here at the end of the week and I take up a new job with OUP next month.
- It's quite difficult taking up a new job and having to learn all the ropes again.

If your job **'is at stake'**, it is at risk of being lost.

- There are 500 jobs at stake if we don't get the contract.
- If I make a mess of this, my job will be at stake.

If your job **'is in jeopardy'**, it is also at risk.

- The fall in demand puts all our jobs in jeopardy.
- With their jobs in jeopardy, you would have expected the unions to have been more cooperative.

Jobs & related adjectives

An **'absorbing'** job is one that is very interesting and claims all your attention.

- My job is so absorbing that I sometimes forget to have lunch.
- I get bored in my job. I need one that is much more absorbing.

A **'badly-paid'** job is one where you receive less income than the average.

- The hotel industry has a lot of badly-paid jobs.
- My salary may sound high in absolute terms but I am comparatively badly-paid for the job I do.

A **'boring'** job is dull and without interest.

- I think that being an accountant would be a really boring job.
- Would you stay in a boring job if you were really well paid?

A **'casual'** job is one which is not regular or fixed.

- We offer a lot of casual jobs during the Christmas rush.
- The unions want us to have fewer casual jobs and more permanent employees.

A **'challenging'** job is one that is very difficult and tests a person's ability.

- It is a very challenging job and we need to find somebody who is tough mentally.
- I don't find my job very challenging any more and I need a fresh challenge.

A **'dead-end'** job is one with no hopes of promotion or advancement.

- I was in a dead-end job with no hope of further progress so I left the company.
- If people think they are in dead-end jobs, they lose their motivation.

An **'exacting'** job is one that requires a lot of care, effort and attention.

- Being a surgeon is a very exacting job – you can't afford to lose your concentration.
- Research jobs are very exacting – you must get every detail right when you are running tests.

A **'demanding'** job requires a lot of effort from you.

- I have a very demanding job. I don't have much spare time.
- My job is very physically demanding. I get very tired.

A **'part-time'** job is one where you do not work 'full-time'.

- I only want a part-time job as I have to look after my children.

- The company is trying to replace full-time jobs with part-time jobs to save money.

A '**menial**' job is one with a low social value.

- I can only find menial jobs such as cleaning.
- He thinks that making the coffee is a menial job and he won't do it.

A '**prestigious**' job is one that gives the person a lot of respect.

- Being Prime Minister is a prestigious job but the salary is not all that good.
- Running our New York office is the sort of prestigious job I am looking for.

A '**secure**' job is one that is safe from redundancy etc.

- There are no more secure jobs in this company. Everybody's job is at risk.
- I want to make sure that the next job I get is really secure. I'm fed up with all this job insecurity.

Careers

Learn the vocabulary in English to talk about the evolution of your jobs since you began working:

If your '**career has its ups and downs**' , it has good moments and bad moments.

- My career has had its ups and downs but I'm doing very well at the moment.
- His career has its ups and downs but he remains as enthusiastic as ever.

If your '**career has blossomed**', it has done very well.

- She started out as an office junior but since then her career has blossomed .
- Since I improved the level of my English, my career has blossomed.

If you have had a '**brilliant career**', you have a very good one.

- She's had a brilliant career with top jobs in several Wall Street firms.
- When you look back on your brilliant career, you must be very proud.

If you have had a '**colorful career**', it has been interesting and exciting.

- His colorful career has taken him to many exciting locations.
- As an accountant, you won't have a very colorful career.

A '**demanding career**' is one which takes a lot of effort and/or time.

- He has had a very demanding career in finance with little time to spend with his family.
- I don't want a very demanding career. I want plenty of time for my hobbies.

A '**distinguished career**', is one which is respected for its extremely high standard.

- He had a distinguished career in the Ministry of Finance before moving to the private sector.
- You haven't had a very distinguished career so far, have you?

If you spend your '**entire career**' doing something, that is all you have done.

- I have spent my entire career working for the one company.
- I don't want to spend my entire career doing nothing but research.

If you have a '**flourishing career**', it has grown and developed successfully.

- She has had a flourishing career as a designer of children's clothes.
- I don't seem to be having much of a flourishing career in this company.

A '**glittering career**' is one which causes excitement and admiration.

- His glittering career as an actor has brought him wealth and fame.
- The boss began her glittering career with the firm as a humble receptionist.

A '**modest career**' is one where there are no notable achievements.

- He has had a very modest career in our auditing office with no real successes or failures.
- You've had a very modest career so far with very little in the way of achievements.

(Notice though that to 'be modest about your career' means that there are notable achievements but that you tend not to talk about them.)

A '**promising career**' is one which promises great success in the future.

- She has started a very promising career in the City and we are sure she is going to do well.
- I seemed to have such a promising career when I was starting out but it has all gone badly wrong.

If you have a '**varied career**', you have done lots of different jobs.

- I've had a varied career so far, from policeman to actor.
- We're looking for a candidate with a varied career as this job requires a range of skills.

Contracts

Learn the vocabulary in English to talk about job contracts:

A '**binding contract**' is one which cannot be legally avoided or stopped.

We have a legally binding contract and you must supply us with these services.

- You can't walk out on your binding contract just because you have received a better offer elsewhere.

An '**exclusive contract**' is one which prevents the person from working with other people.

- You have an exclusive contract to work with us and you cannot take on work for anybody else.
- I think we should offer her an exclusive contract so that she only works for us.

A '**renewable contract**' is one which can be continued after it has finished by a new one. The opposite of this is a 'non-renewable contract'.

- To work on this project, we can offer you a non-renewable contract of one year.
- The contract is for one year, renewable for a second year if we are satisfied with your work.

A '**temporary contract**' is one that is not permanent.

- We can give you a temporary contract for six months.
- You'll start on a temporary contract and we may then offer you a permanent one.

A '**valid contract**' is one that has legal force.

- This contract is not valid until it is signed by both parties.
- This letter is not a valid contract. I want a proper one.

A '**breach of contract**' is when the person does something which breaks the terms of the contract.

- If you don't agree to move to Paris, you will be in breach of your contract.
- If you refuse to work on Sunday, that is a breach of contract and we will dismiss you.

The '**terms of contract**' are the conditions contained within the contract.

- Under the terms of your contract, you have to work on some Sundays.
- You are asking me to do something which is not in the terms of my contract.

If you '**draw up**' a contract, you prepare it.

- I'll draw up a contract for you and you can sign it tomorrow.
- I'll get a new contract drawn up including the new terms and conditions.

If you '**get out of**' a contract, you are no longer bound by it.

- I'm not happy in my job and need to find a way to get out of my contract.
- I think she's being difficult because she wants to get out of her contract with us.

If you '**go through**' a contract, you look at it in detail.

- We need to spend a few minutes going through your contract.
- Make sure you go through your contract carefully before you sign it.

Management

The top people in a company can be called '**senior management**'.

- We need to get approval for this from senior management.
With my qualifications and experience, I should have a job in senior management.

Of course, another term for this is '**top management**'.

- He rose quickly through the company and had a top management position before he was 30.
- The top management of this company have no imagination or drive.

Not surprisingly, the opposite of 'senior management' is '**junior management**'.

- He was promoted from the shop floor into a junior management position.
- I feel I'm ready to move up from this junior management job.

Between 'senior' and 'junior' management is '**middle management**'.

- It's time I was promoted from junior management to middle management.
- He rose rapidly to middle management but was then never offered a senior post.

The group of managers can be called the '**management team**'.

- We have a strong management team, full of high quality people.
- We need to improve our management team to bring new life to the company.

'Aggressive management' means being determined to do well and using strong methods to achieve success.

- His aggressive management style has upset a few people.
- We need some aggressive management to wake up this sleeping giant.

'Day-to-day management' is concerned with the ordinary and regular issues of a company.

- I spend so long on the day-to-day management of my department that I have no time to look at the long-term.
- You will deal with the day-to-day management of the company while I work on the strategy.

'Strategic management' is concerned with the long-term of the company.

- This company lacks good strategic management and is just drifting.
- You need to spend more time on strategic management and less on day-to-day issues.

'General management' is concerned with all aspects of the company, not a specialist area such as Research or Marketing.

- You've spent your whole career in Sales and you need some experience of general management.
- You need some time in general management to get an overview of the company.

If there is **'inefficient management'**, a company will not use its resources as well as it should. The opposite of this is 'efficient management'.

- The company is riddled with inefficient management. Don't work with them.
- If we replaced the inefficient management, we could turn this company around.

'Weak management' lacks the determination to carry out difficult decisions or actions.

- This department has suffered from weak management for the last ten years.
There is a culture of weak management in this organization.

The opposite of this is **'strong management'**. Notice that you can be 'strong' without being 'aggressive' – the first is reactive to events and the second is proactive.

- This company needs some strong management to take on the unions.
- We need strong management in this company, but not too aggressive.

Changes - verbs 1

Learn the vocabulary in English to talk about the many changes that take place in a company or organization :

'to promote' = to move someone up to a higher position in the organization.

- He handed his notice in last month when he didn't get promoted to senior manager.
- She wants to be promoted to supervisor but doesn't have the interpersonal skills for that job yet.

'to renew' = to make new, to extend the life or replace something.

- I originally had a two-year contract but it has been renewed twice.
- We need to renew the work permits for the foreign workers who have been here a year.

'to lay off' = to make redundant, to stop employing someone

- When we closed the warehouse, we laid off more than fifty people.
- Technological advances means that we have had to lay off more and more unskilled workers.

'to demote' = to move someone to a lower lever in the hierarchy

- She was demoted after the terrible changeover to the new accounting system.
- Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to demote anyone who does not live up to expectations.

'to sideline' = to not promote someone, to move them to a position with less effective power

- When the new CEO was nominated, he was sidelined to another department.
- After a period as a very ineffectual head of department, he was sidelined until he retired.

'to replace' = to exchange one thing for another, to put a person in the job of someone else.

- Ken replaced Tanya when she left to pursue another career.
- When David left, he was replaced by two people as the job had grown enormously.

'to retire' = to stop working due to ill health or age.

- Jack suffers from ill health and has had to retire early.
- The statutory age for retirement is 60 although people often retire early if they can.

'to increase' = to get bigger in amount or size.

- Contributions that employees pay increased faster than salaries so cutting their net incomes.
- Even though profits have increased, we are not in a position to increase salaries above the rate of inflation.

'to expand' = to increase in size, number or importance.

- We have expanded our retail operations very quickly over the last three years.
- The company expanded very quickly in the 1990s but has since stopped growing so fast.

'to restructure' = to organize a business or system in a new way to make it more efficient.

- Currently we are restructuring our organization and dividing it into five cost centres.
- He lost his job when the company restructured the department.

Changes - verbs 2

Learn the vocabulary in English to talk about the many changes that take place in a company or organization :

'to streamline' = to improve the effectiveness of parts of an organization, often by simplifying procedures.

- We are streamlining the procedure to cut the time it takes to deliver to the customer.

- Streamlining administration and giving more responsibility to individuals will reduce costs considerably.

'to relocate' = to move to a new place

- Production is being relocated to Bulgaria next year creating lots of redundancies here.
- My company paid all the costs when I was relocated to my previous job in Scotland.

'to relax' = to make a rule less strict or severe.

- Unfortunately we can't relax the no-smoking ban. The law won't permit it.
- We have relaxed the dress code considerably and now people often wear jeans to the office.

'to enforce' = to impose a rule more strictly or to make people follow a rule.

- For health and safety reasons, we have to enforce the no-smoking rules.
- It is extremely difficult to enforce time-keeping rules without some form of electronic system.

'to adjust' = to change something a little to make it correct or suitable.

- We are adjusting the salary scales so that they reflect present responsibilities better.
- Salaries are adjusted annually according to the rate of inflation and the financial results.

'to reduce' = to make smaller in size, quantity or importance.

- We have reduced the number of workers with the introduction of more modern technology.
- In order to reduce expenditure in the department, we have introduced several cost-cutting measures.

'to deteriorate' = to become worse

- Morale has deteriorated since the rumours of closure began.
- Sales figures have continued to deteriorate despite the launch of the latest version.

'to downsize' = to make a company or organization smaller by reducing the number of people working for it.

- The organization has a plan to downsize in order to reduce costs.
- Many organizations downsized during the 1980s when new technologies were introduced.

'to phase in' = to introduce something in stages over a period of time

- The changes in pay scales will be phased in over the next three years.
- The new organization will be phased in gradually starting here in head office.

'to phase out' = to remove or stop doing something gradually over a period of time.

- That line of products has been phased out and replaced by the new range.
- It has taken us six months to phase out the old software and introduce the new.

Time off

Learn the vocabulary to talk about being absent from jobs in English:

to take time off = to be absent from work, at home or on vacation.

- I'm going to take a few days off to visit my parents.
- I'm taking Monday off to go to the dentist and do some jobs at home.

to take a vacation = to take time away from work, especially when you travel for pleasure.

- I'm taking my vacation next month. We're going to Spain.
- I have to take my vacation during the school holidays because of my children.

to take a sabbatical = to take time away from work to study or travel, usually while continuing to be paid.

- He's on a sabbatical while he does his MBA. He'll be back next month.
- She's on a sabbatical from her job while she does research for her thesis.

to take unpaid leave = to have an authorized absence from work but without salary.

- She's taken some unpaid leave while she moves house.
- I don't have any paid holiday left so I'd like to take unpaid leave.

to be off sick = to be absent from work due to illness.

- When you are off sick, you must provide a doctor's note.
- He has been off sick for a few days now. I think he'll be back at work on Monday.

To be on sick leave = the time that you can be absent from work, often while being paid part or all of your salary.

- She is having an operation and so will be on sick leave for the next two months.
- When you are on sick leave prescribed by your doctor, you get paid your full salary for the first three months.

maternity leave = the period a mother is legally authorised to be absent from work before and after the birth of a child.

- Her maternity leave finishes next week but she is not coming back to work.
- Statutory maternity leave is paid for up to 26 weeks and can start 11 weeks before the baby is due.

parental leave = the time that a parent is allowed to spend away from work to take care of their baby.

- He has taken parental leave to look after the baby while his wife returns to work.
- You have to work for an employer for one year to qualify for parental leave to look after your children.

statutory sick pay = the money paid by a company to an employee who cannot work due to illness.

- If you are absent from work due to illness, you may be able to claim sick pay.

- To claim sick pay, you have to have medical certificate from your doctor stating that you are unable to work.

a public holiday = a day when almost everybody does not have to go to work (for example in the US July 4th or January 1st).

- We have 25 days paid holiday plus 10 public holidays.
- When there is a public holiday on a Thursday, many people take the Friday off too.

Pay

'Pay' is money that you get from your employer, either as a wage or as a salary.

- What are the pay and conditions for the job?
- Pay rates in the industry are very poor.

'Back pay' is money owed to you by your employer for work done in the past which has not yet been paid.

- I'm still owed 3 months back pay for the overtime I did before Christmas.
- The company cannot afford to give you the back pay it owes you.

A **'pay cut'** is a reduction in the amount of pay you are given.

- We are asking you all to accept a pay cut of 10% to keep the company going.
- He has the stark choice of accepting a pay cut or losing his job.

A **'pay rise'** is an increase in pay.

- We are looking for a pay rise in line with inflation.
- I'm going to ask my boss for a pay rise.

A **'pay rate'** is the amount per hour (or some other period) that you pay.

- The pay rate is \$12 an hour.
- The industry cannot attract good quality workers because of the low pay rates.

'Net pay' is the amount earned after deductions (usually for social security and pensions and perhaps for tax.)

- The gross pay is \$12 an hour but net pay is only \$9.50 an hour.
- He said he is only earning \$5 an hour but that is his net pay, not his gross.

'Equal pay' means that men and women get the same pay for doing the same job.

- The women workers are asking for equal pay with the men.
- In this country, if you don't give the women equal pay, you could go to jail.

An **'itemized pay statement'** contains a detailed breakdown of the pay you have earned and the deductions taken from it.

- The bank want me to give them my itemized pay statements for the last six months.
- The law states that employees must receive itemized pay statements.

'**Performance-related pay**' is where the amount you are paid depends on the quality/quantity of your work.

- Since we introduced performance-related pay, production has doubled.
- They may need the incentive of performance-related pay.

A '**pay scale**' is a range of different pay rates which people will receive depending on various factors (e.g. their grade in the company, their qualifications, their years in the company.)

- We have six grades on our pay scale. You will start on the bottom one.
- Perhaps we need to change our pay scale to take account of the loyalty people have shown us?

Pay 2

We all go to work to earn money. Let's look at more vocabulary to talk about our salaries:

'**gross salary**' is the salary before anything is deducted for contributions and tax.

- Her gross salary is £50 000 but obviously she takes home considerably less than that.
- He earns £40 000 a year gross.

'**net salary**' is the salary that you are paid after deductions have made

- My gross salary is around £60 000 but the net is around £48 000.
- The net salary is the gross salary minus the deductions the employer makes for contributions and tax.

'**deductions**' are payments made by the employer for an employee to health and pension schemes based on the gross salary.

- Although my gross salary seems good, after deductions, I haven't very much left.
- The details of the deductions are on your pay statement. You can see what you are paying.

'**income tax**' is the tax which is paid on the money you earn.

- In the UK, income tax is deducted directly from your salary and paid to the state.
- In some countries, you have to complete an income tax return annually to calculate the tax to be paid.

'**rate**' is the amount you are paid per hour, week or month of work.

- I don't know what the standard rate is for this type of work.
- Some people are paid on piece rate. They are paid by their output, not by the time it takes.

The '**basic state pension**' is the money paid on retirement to everyone who has paid contributions for the required number of years.

- Although I contribute to the state pension fund, I also pay into a private one too.
- The basic state pension is very low, too low for a decent standard of living.

The '**national minimum wage**' is the minimum an employee can be paid per hour of work.

- Everyone here is paid a rate that is better than the minimum wage.
- The national minimum wage varies according to age. Young people are paid less than adults.

The '**equal pay**' law states that employers must pay the same to men and women who are doing the same or similar jobs.

- Equal pay for women is the law but many are still paid less than their male colleagues.
- Each year, there are many cases where women take their employer to court to fight for equal pay.

'**overtime**' is a higher rate of pay for working more than the usual hours or unsocial hours.

- When I work on Sundays, I am paid overtime.
- I do a lot more hours than in my contract but I don't get paid overtime.

A '**bonus**' is an extra amount of money paid as a reward on top of your fixed salary.

- We usually get a bonus at Christmas depending on how well the company has done.
- Every year, usually in January, we receive a bonus. It is a discretionary bonus related to your performance.

Pay 3

More vocabulary on the important topic of money:

'**commission**' is paid to people in sales based on the amounts of goods sold.

- Working here I get paid a fixed salary and commission based on my sales.
- I get paid a commission on the deals I negotiate.

People who are '**hourly paid**' are paid a fixed rate for each hour that they work and not a fixed salary for a year or task.

- He isn't a salaried employee, he is hourly paid.
- For everyone who is hourly paid, wages are paid weekly.

'**benefits**' are the extras that you are given by your employer on top of your salary. These may include private health insurance, a private pension, company car.

- Although my gross salary is not high for the sector, I get a lot of extra benefits.
- He has a very good benefits package including a car and private health insurance.

A '**taxable benefit**' is a benefit which is considered as part of your income and therefore included in the income to be declared for tax.

- The value of the company car is included in my income. It is a taxable benefit.

- Meals in the canteen, drinks and parking are generally not taxable benefits.

'**expenses**' are the costs that you incur doing your job that are reimbursed by the company, notably for travel.

- When I travel, I pay for my tickets and hotels and then claim my expenses back.
- The company is very strict about expenses. We can't spend more than a certain amount on hotels or meals.

In order to claim expenses, you must keep all '**receipts**' for payments you have made.

- On the 30th of the month, we hand in all our receipts for our expenses.
- When I take someone to lunch I always have to get a receipt so that I'll be reimbursed.

If you use your own car to travel to another location for your work, you may be able to claim '**mileage**' and be reimbursed a fixed rate per mile travelled to cover the cost.

- It is better for the company to pay mileage than provide company cars.
- There is a fixed rate for mileage depending on the size of the car.

a '**pay review**' is when salaries are considered for changes.

- The unions are preparing for the negotiations in the annual pay review.
- A lot of changes to pay grades are being considered during the pay review. When the company closed the branch, the redundancy pay was very generous.

'**redundancy pay**' is given if you lose your job and are made redundant. This is usually related to the time you have worked for the company.

- When I lost my job, I used my redundancy pay to set up my own company.
- When the company closed the branch, the redundancy pay was very generous.

'**notice**', specified in the terms of your contract, is the time worked between telling your employer that you are leaving your job and actually leaving.

- I have to work out two months notice before I can start my new job.
- When I left, I was paid my notice but I didn't have to work it.

Pay 4

More vocabulary on the important topic of money. This time, we look at what you receive when you are unable to work in a typical country within the European Union:

When you are ill and unable to work, you may **claim statutory sick pay**. This is the minimum by law.

- If you have a work contract, you can claim statutory sick pay from your first day of work.
- When I was ill, I claimed statutory sick pay which was much less than my salary.

The time that the doctor **signs you off** for is the period of that you cannot work.

- The doctor has signed me off for two weeks.
- I was off sick but the doctor didn't sign me off until the second week.

When you are off work, to claim sick pay, you must provide a **sick note** from your doctor.

- The doctor gave me a sick note to give to my employer.
- If you want to claim sick pay, you must see your doctor for a sick note.

When you are no longer able to work through illness, you can claim **incapacity benefit** to replace your salary.

- He will not be able to return to work and should now claim incapacity benefit.
- Stress has now replaced back pain as the main reason that people are unable to work and claim incapacity benefit.

An employer can pay **occupational sick pay**, that is pay more than the minimum sick pay for a certain time depending on the terms of contract.

- I haven't worked here long enough, so I don't qualify for occupational sick pay.
- In some companies, occupational sick pay makes up your full salary for up to one month.

The **minimum period of service** is the time you have to have worked before you qualify for occupational sick pay.

- There is no minimum period of service to qualify for statutory sick pay.
- The minimum period of service to qualify for occupational sick pay is three months.

If you also qualify for occupational sick pay, you may be off **on full pay**.

- I have excellent fringe benefits. If I am off sick, I am on full pay for one month.
- Unfortunately I am not on full pay now as I have been off work too long.

When a woman is expecting a baby, she can take maternity leave and have **maternity pay**.

- I can take twenty-six weeks leave with maternity pay and twenty six weeks unpaid.
- To qualify for maternity pay, I have to have worked for twenty-six weeks for my employer when I am expecting my baby.

If a father wishes to stop work to help with a new born child, he may qualify for **paternity pay** while he is absent from his job.

- After twenty-six weeks working here, you can take two weeks leave with paternity pay.
- To qualify for paternity pay, leave must be taken when the child is born or very soon after.

Common Phrasal Verbs 1

These are verbs with more than one part; the verb and one or two particles.

'close down' = to shut

- We have closed down the small local branches and created bigger regional offices.
- The factory closed down in the 1970s because it was too expensive to produce here.

'fight against' = to make an effort to stop something happening

- All the workers fought against the closure but the plant was no longer profitable.
- The unions have been fighting against the proposed changes as they think it will mean job losses.

'go back on something' = to change an agreement

- We had come to an agreement but now she has gone back on it.
- The company promised to review the situation but went back on its word and didn't.

'put back' = to postpone, delay in time

- They promised to make a decision today but it has been put back until next week.
- My visit has been put back until a later date when it will be easier to plan.

'fall behind' = not risen as fast as, fail to do something as fast as required

- We have fallen behind schedule. It won't be completed on time.
- Our salaries have fallen behind the national average with the small increase we have had.

'turn down' = to refuse, not accept

- We offered a two per cent increase but it was turned down.
- We offered him a much higher salary but he turned it down and didn't join our team.

'fill in for someone' = to replace someone during an absence

- I need to brief the person who will be filling in for me while I am on maternity.
- I filled in for Jamie while he was on holiday.

'back someone up' = to support or to help

- Whenever there is a dispute with someone in my team, my manager always backs me up.
- Nobody backed him up when he said he had been discriminated against.

'work out' = to calculate

- I don't know how much holiday I have left. I need to work it out.
- We need to work out how much this is really going to cost.

'drag on' = to last a long time, go on longer than anticipated

- The negotiations are dragging on. I think we'll never reach an agreement.
- The meeting dragged on and on. I thought I'd never get home.

Common Phrasal Verbs 2

In English, we use a lot of phrasal verbs. These are verbs with more than one part; the verb and one or two particles. Let's continue looking at some of the most common in the area of Human Resources:

'get on' = to have a good relationship

- I don't like my boss. We just don't get on.
- The atmosphere is terrible. He doesn't get on with his co-workers.

'follow up' = to find out more about or take further action on something.

- Before we offer her the job, we need to follow up on her references.
- The training is followed up by regular refresher courses over a six-month period.

'set up' = to arrange for an activity or event to happen

- I'd like to discuss it further. Can we set up a meeting?
- I've set up interviews with the remaining three candidates.

'make up' = do or pay extra to cover a difference.

- I'd like to leave early on Friday. I'll make up the time next week.
- There was an error in your expenses. We'll make up the difference next month.

'hand in' = to give something

- He's leaving at the end of the month. He has handed in his resignation.
- I haven't handed my time sheet in yet. I must do it now.

'work out' your notice = to continue working through the period after you have resigned.

- They asked him to leave immediately. He didn't have to work out his notice.
- He negotiated a deal so he didn't have to work out his notice and could leave sooner.

'sort out' = to resolve

- We don't know who is going to replace Sue. We have to sort it out soon.
- I have finally sorted out the error on the time sheets. It's all correct now.

'carry on' = to continue

- We still haven't found a suitable candidate. We'll have to carry on looking.
- Until we get the new software installed, we'll have to carry on using the old.

'back out' = to decide not to do something previously agreed.

- They had agreed to do it but then backed out.
- He had accepted the post but backed out at the last minute so we're considering other candidates.

'go with' = to adopt or support an idea or plan.

- I think your idea is a good one. I think we should go with it.
- We're not really sure which agency to go with. We don't think any of them are really what we are really looking for.