



2

Work-life balance

Starting point

- 1 What is 'work-life' balance?
- 2 Is there a 'long-hours' working culture in your country?

Working with words | Work-life balance

- 1 Why should employers care about their employees' work-life balance?
- 2 Read the extract of a company's terms and conditions for its employees. Choose the correct heading for each section.
 - Family and health
 - Working hours
 - Holiday

Terms and conditions of employment

1 _____
The company operates a system of flexitime. All employees must be at work during the core hours of between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. but they can start and finish work between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Employees must take their lunch break anytime between midday and 2 p.m. and this should not be less than 30 minutes long. Paid overtime must be done outside of the flexible working hours (e.g. before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m.) and agreed in writing by your manager. The company also allows home-working (where appropriate to the employee's roles and responsibilities) for up to a maximum of eight hours on one day a week. Requests to work from home must be made in writing to your manager.

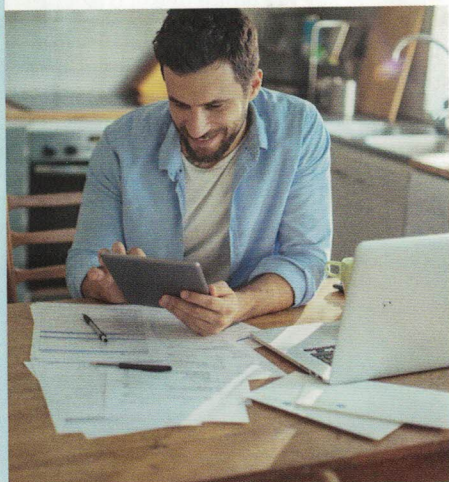
2 _____
Full-time employees receive 25 working days' holiday (not including public holidays) in a calendar year. Annual leave for part-time staff is calculated

according to the number of days worked per year. After five years of service, an employee can take an extra two days' leave per year. Managers may accept requests for additional leave depending on your circumstances.

3 _____
Expectant mothers can take up to 52 weeks' maternity leave at the following rates: 12 weeks of full pay, 27 weeks of statutory pay and an additional 13 weeks of unpaid leave. Fathers can take two weeks off for paternity leave at any time between the child's birth until eight weeks afterwards.

For sick leave, employees receive full pay for a short-term illness up to 28 days. For longer-term illness, employees with over 24 months' service will receive full pay for up to six months. Employees with under 24 months' service receive statutory pay after 28 days. A medical certificate is required from your doctor if you are absent for more than five days.

- 3 Do you think these terms and conditions provide a good work-life balance for



Tip | Compound words

Business texts and official documents often contain compound words. Compound words can be written as one word (e.g. *overtime*), with a hyphen (e.g. *home-working*), or as two words (e.g. *statutory pay*). You can use your dictionary to check.

4 Look for compound words in the text and match them to definitions 1–10.

- 1 A system of working a particular number of hours each week or month but choosing when you start and finish. flexitime
- 2 The times when you always have to work. _____
- 3 Time at work in addition to your normal hours. _____
- 4 Not working in your office but at your house. _____
- 5 The number of days off for holidays per year. _____
- 6 Extra days off. _____
- 7 An official rate of pay according to the law. _____
- 8 Time off with no money. _____
- 9 Time off for men to spend time with a new baby. _____
- 10 All your normal salary. _____

5 Read a new employee's questions to their manager. Using the terms and conditions in the text in 2, what will the manager reply?

- 1 Can I start work earlier in the day so I finish by five o'clock?
- 2 I'd like to finish work every day at three-thirty. Is that possible?
- 3 How long can I take for lunch?
- 4 I worked until eight last night. Do I get paid anything extra?
- 5 January 1st is a public holiday, but is it part of my normal holiday?
- 6 Does everyone get the same amount of annual leave?
- 7 My wife is having a baby next month. Can I take some time off when it's born?
- 8 Sorry I was off sick yesterday. Do I still get paid?

6 Work with a partner.

Student A: You are a new employee at Student B's company. Ask the questions in 5.

Student B: Student A is a new employee at your company. Answer their questions with true answers for your company.

7 Now change roles and repeat 6. Afterwards, compare your answers.

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 2** on page 108.

8 ► 2.1 Listen to two people talking about their company and their work-life balance. Make notes on each question in the table.

What is good about the work-life balance at your company?
Speaker 1:
Speaker 2:
What don't you like about the system?
Speaker 1:
Speaker 2:
What would you change about it?
Speaker 1:
Speaker 2:

9 Work with a partner. Discuss the three questions in 8 for you and your company.

Language at work | *to + infinitive* and *-ing* form

1 Take this quiz to find out if you have a good work-life balance.



FIND OUT YOUR WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Write 2 if the statement is true for you, 1 if it's mostly true and 0 if it's not true.

- 1 I enjoy **doing** exercise and **playing** sport. ____
- 2 I never think **about checking** work emails in my free time. ____
- 3 This year, I **intend to take** all my annual leave. ____
- 4 I always leave work on time **to make sure** I have free time in the evening. ____
- 5 I think it's **important to take** an hour for lunch. ____

Now add up your score and find out what it means:

- 0-4** Your life is out of balance. Put less emphasis on your job and give more time to family, friends and leisure.
- 5-8** Your work-life balance is OK, but be careful. You need to spend more time relaxing.
- 9-10** You have a great work-life balance. Don't change it!

2 Do you agree with your quiz results? Do you think you have a good work-life balance?

3 Look at the verb patterns in **bold** in the quiz in 1. Choose the correct word in *italics* to complete the explanations a-e in the *Language point*. Then write the sentence number from the quiz that matches each explanation.

LANGUAGE POINT

- a We use *to + infinitive* / *the -ing form* when it follows an adjective.
- b We use *to + infinitive* / *the -ing form* when it follows a preposition.
- c We use *to + infinitive* / *the -ing form* to express purpose.
- d *To + infinitive* / *The -ing form* often comes after verbs about likes and dislikes.
- e *To + infinitive* / *The -ing form* often comes after verbs about making plans and decisions.

4 Which of these common verbs and phrases are usually followed by ...?
to + infinitive _____
the -ing form _____

want agree responsible for it's difficult look forward to involve
 would like plan interested in I'm pleased enjoy decide

» For more information, go to **Grammar reference** on page 109.

Tip | to: infinitive or preposition?

The infinitive form is to + base form of the verb: **to do**, **to go**, **to make**. When 'to' is a preposition after a verb, remember to use the -ing form:
look forward to meeting you.

- 5 These questions are from a survey about a new system of flexible working hours to improve employee work-life balance. Decide if the verb patterns in *italics* in the questions are correct or not. Correct any verbs patterns that are wrong.
- 1 How difficult is it *to balance* your current job with your home-life?
 - 2 Do you like *working* at the same times every day?
 - 3 What percentage of your time consists of *to work* in teams and what percentage on your own?
 - 4 Do you often stay late *to finish* what you are working on, or do you leave it until the next day?
 - 5 Do you plan *taking* unpaid leave at any time in the next three years?
 - 6 In your position, is it easy *to take* time off for childcare or to care for a sick or elderly relative?
 - 7 Would you like *managing* your own working hours?
 - 8 If you had flexitime, would you decide *starting* work earlier or later in the day?

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 2** on page 109.

- 6 Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions in 5 about your own working hours. Give reasons for your answers.
- 7 Imagine your company wants to survey its own employees' opinions on their work-life balance. Write three questions it should ask. Then ask your partner.

Practically speaking | How to say 'yes'

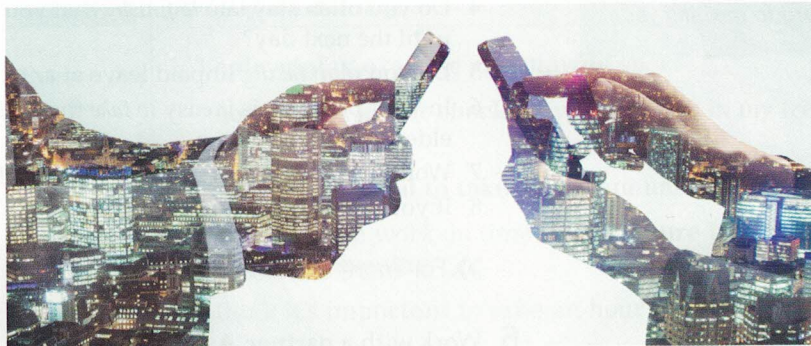


- 1 When your boss or colleagues ask you to do something, do you always say 'yes'? How difficult is it to say 'no'?
- 2 ► 2.2 Listen to four conversations. Match each conversation to the requests in a-d.
- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Conversation 1: ____ | a to work late |
| Conversation 2: ____ | b to do some paid overtime |
| Conversation 3: ____ | c to take a day off next week |
| Conversation 4: ____ | d to work during the lunch break |
- 3 ► 2.2 Each person answers 'yes' in different ways. Listen again and match these answers to requests a-d.
- 1 Yes, absolutely! ____
 - 2 Yes, no problem. ____
 - 3 Yes, I suppose so. ____
 - 4 Yes, sure. ____
- 4 Which response in 3 is less positive? In which situations and with whom would you normally use this response?
- 5 Work with a partner. Practise these conversations by making the request and answering 'yes' in different ways.
- A manager asks you to work this weekend and offers a bonus.
 - A manager asks you to work on your day off. Three other employees are off sick today so they need help.
 - A colleague asks you to help him during the lunch break.
 - A manager asks you to work late this evening because no one else is available to help.

Business communication | Exchanging contact details

- 1 How much information do you keep about your work contacts? Tick (✓) the type of information you keep.

☐ Email	☐ Website	☐ Work address
☐ Home address	☐ Mobile number	☐ Office number
☐ Home number	☐ Picture	☐ Name of spouse
☐ Name(s) of children	☐ Birthday	☐ Other?



- 2 How difficult is it to organize contact information these days? Why?
- 3 ▶ 2.3 Listen to a phone conversation between two colleagues, Raul and Mirella. Complete the missing information from a business card.
- Name: Leif _____
- Office: _____
- Email: _____
- Company website: _____

- 4 ▶ 2.3 Match expressions 1–8 to responses a–h. Then listen again and

- 1 Could you give me his details? ____
- 2 Can I have his number? ____
- 3 Sorry, can you repeat that? ____
- 4 So that's 96 7 55 6745. ____
- 5 And do you spell his last name with one N or double N? ____
- 6 Sorry, was that E-R or A-R? ____
- 7 Do you have his email? ____
- 8 What's his company's web address? ____

- a A as in apple. So it's Gunnarson.
- b Yes, it's double 0 46 for Sweden. And then 967 double 5 6745.
- c It's www.SBNshipping.se/sales. The SBN is in upper case letters.
- d Double N. So that's G-U-N-N-A-R-S-O-N.
- e Yes, that's it.
- f It's leif.gunnarson@sbnshipping.se
- g Yes, sure.
- h His mobile or his office?

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 2** on page 108.

- 5 Prepare for a similar conversation with your partner. Write down a last name, a phone number, email and company web address.
- 6 Take turns to ask for and give the contact details using these prompts. Afterwards, check the information is correct.
- 1 Can / last name?
 - 2 What / number?
 - 3 Could / give / email?
 - 4 Do / company web address?
- 7 Work with a partner and practise two similar phone conversations. Student A, turn to page 137. Student B, turn to page 142.

Key expressions

Asking for contact details

Could you give me her details?
 Can I have his number?
 What's your web address?
 Do you have his/her email?

Saying phone numbers and emails

00 = double zero / zero zero / double oh
 Say phone numbers in groups:
 095...745...6745
 @ = at . = dot / = slash
 _ = underscore - = dash
 lower case = a, b, c, etc.
 UPPER CASE = A, B, C, etc.

Checking numbers and spelling

So that's ...
 Do you spell that with one N or double N?
 A for apple. / A as in apple.
 A not E.

Asking for repetition and clarification

Can you say that again?
 Can you repeat that?
 Is that E-R or A-R?
 Sorry, was that E-R or A-R?

Corridor conversations

Work in small groups. Each player places a counter on 'Start'. Take turns to roll a dice and move to another square.

GREEN SQUARES Ask all the players a question using the phrase.

BLUE SQUARES Move to the nearest square another player is on and speak to that player.

PINK SQUARES A player talks to one other player.

PURPLE SQUARES Follow the instructions.

The player who lands on 'End' first is the winner.

START

Work some paid overtime. Have another go.

Ask another player about what his/her department deals with.

END

Do you like ...?

How often do you ...?

Ask another player about his/her main responsibilities.

Check the spelling of another player's name.

Move to the nearest player's square. Say hello and ask a question.

Move to the nearest player's square. Ask him/her a question about his/her leisure time.

Can you give me ...?

Take unpaid leave. Miss a go.

Ask for and check another player's phone number.

Next year, do you plan to ...?

Move to the nearest player's square. Ask him/her to describe his/her job.

Ask another player if he/she's interested in any sports.

In your job, is it difficult to ...?

Take a day off. Miss a go.

Ask for and check another player's email address.

Move to the nearest player's square. Ask for and check his/her company web address.