

# 5B | The office

## VOCABULARY: office activities

1 Match the verbs in column A to the phrases in column B in as many ways as possible.

A	B
1 do	an email
2 make	a phone call
3 receive	a report
4 send	a photocopy
5 write	some photocopying
	the filing
	the coffee

2 Work in pairs. Discuss these questions.

- How many of the activities in exercise 1 do you do every day?
- Which activity do you think is the most difficult to do in a foreign language?
- Do you ever have to do any of them in English?

## READING

1 Read the article below about different types of people who work in offices. Match the types of people a–d to the descriptions 1–4.

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| a The trainee      | c The workaholic |
| b The office flirt | d The boss       |

2 Match the types a–d in exercise 1 to the activities 1–8.

Which office type ...

- 1 has a habit of making terrible jokes?
- 2 does the most work and spends the most time in the office?
- 3 spends the least time at their desk?
- 4 is always very enthusiastic?
- 5 is friendly one minute and angry the next?
- 6 takes fewer days' holidays than anyone else?
- 7 usually makes the coffee for everyone else?
- 8 thinks that chatting is more interesting than working?

3 Here are three more common office types. What do you think their main characteristics are?

- The office joker • The lazy worker • The gossip

## Real life

# Office Stereotypes

**W**hether you love them or hate them, work just wouldn't be the same without them.

Here is a description of some of the most common office types. Is there one in your office?

**1** This person is always very keen to appear to be your 'friend'. They often ask you about your weekend or your family. But the next minute they're asking you whether you've written that urgent report. They often have the annoying habit of making jokes – very bad jokes – which you have to laugh at. But the worst thing is that their moods change so quickly. When there's a crisis in the office, the happy, joking 'friend' disappears and is replaced by a bossy bully.

**2** For most people, the office is a place where you work from nine to five. But for this person, the office is their home. In fact they spend much less time at home than they do at their desk. If they have to take a holiday, they always make sure they have their cell phone and laptop with them so they can send and receive emails. And they make more business calls than when they're at work.

**3** He or she is usually the youngest person in the office, but is also the person with the most energy and enthusiasm. They've probably just finished school and are getting some work experience before they start university. No task is too boring for them and no job is too repetitive. They just love making coffee and really don't mind doing all that last-minute photocopying.

**4** This person spends more time chatting with their colleagues than working. They find work boring and they are always trying to make life in the office a little more interesting. They've always got a smile and a compliment for visitors – especially if they're young and good-looking. They spend very little time at their desks and are usually to be found by the photocopier or the coffee machine, trying to get a date for the next office party.

## GRAMMAR: comparing nouns

Use *more* + noun + *than* to compare two things or people.

*He spends more time at work than with his family.*

Use *less/fewer* + noun + *than* to make negative comparisons. Use *less* with uncountable nouns and *fewer* with countable nouns.

*He spends less time with his family than he does with his boss.*

*He takes fewer holidays than anyone else in the office.*

Use *the* + *most* + noun to compare more than two things or people.

*People who do things too quickly often make the most mistakes.*

Use *the least/fewest* + noun to make negative comparisons.

*The workaholic always takes the fewest days holiday.*

➤ SEE LANGUAGE REFERENCE PAGE 54

- 1 Choose the correct words to complete the text. Then say which office type from Reading exercise 3 is being described.

They receive the (1) *more* / *most* emails of anyone in the office – usually funny messages from friends. They then share these jokes with everyone else, so they spend (2) *more* / *most* time walking round the office than at their desks. They do the (3) *less* / *least* work of anyone and think that their mission is to make sure that there are (4) *less* / *fewer* sad faces on a Monday morning.

- 2 Complete the sentences with words from the box so that they are true for you.

more fewer less  
the most the fewest the least

- I know \_\_\_\_\_ jokes than most of my friends.
- I make \_\_\_\_\_ phone calls in the morning.
- I do \_\_\_\_\_ work possible on Friday afternoons.
- I have \_\_\_\_\_ free time than my friends.
- I have \_\_\_\_\_ energy at the of the week.
- I do \_\_\_\_\_ work in the morning than in the afternoon.

- 3 Compare your sentences with a partner.

## SPEAKING

- 1 Work in groups of four, A–D. Imagine that you work in an office. The company wants to organize a party for the office staff.

A: Turn to page 127. C: Turn to page 130.  
B: Turn to page 134. D: Turn to page 132.

Read the information on your role card and think about your answers to the questions below.

- What kind of party would you like: a meal in a restaurant, a disco, a drinks party? Where would you like the party to be?
  - What day of the week would you prefer for the party? What time should it start and finish?
  - Who should be invited to the party: only company staff, a staff and their partners, staff and as many friends as they like?
  - Who should pay for the party: the company, the staff, both the company and the staff?
- 2 Now work with your group. The boss has called a meeting to discuss the party. Share your opinions and decide what sort of party you are going to have.

