



# OFFICE ANNOYANCES



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:  
19S9-L1L9-ZHK3

1

## Warm-up

How much of your work day do you spend complaining?

2

## Synonyms

Match the words from the article on the left to their synonyms on the right.

- |                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. a gripe/a grievance | a. a complaint   |
| 2. moan/whinge         | b. an irritation |
| 3. irritable           | c. annoyed       |
| 4. an annoyance        | d. a problem     |
| 5. pointless           | e. to complain   |
| 6. an issue            | f. unnecessary   |

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## Before you read

Work with a partner and put the items below in order from the most annoying (1) to the least annoying (10). Then compare your list with other pairs.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| colleagues munching loudly on their lunch                       | someone stealing your favourite mug             |
| messy desks   | freezing cold air conditioning                  |
| unrealistic deadlines   | office gossip                                   |
| getting a phone call when you're just about to leave the office | being copied into emails that don't concern you |
| embarrassing team building exercises                            | meetings about meetings                         |



Which of these things do you think British workers find the most annoying? Scan the article below to find the answer.

**THE**  
**INDEPENDENT**

## UK workers reveal their biggest office gripes - from messy desks to slow computers and smelly food

Unsurprisingly, IT issues take up a major part of the list

1. If end of day phone calls or a colleague munching loudly on their lunch drives you mad then you're not alone because they both rated highly in a poll of office worker gripes.
2. Revealing that the average office worker spends the equivalent of two weeks a year moaning and 52 per cent saying their entire working day can be ruined by a few annoyances, Brits have revealed a comprehensive list of complaints that particularly irritate them.
3. Taking the top spot, annoyed Brits said that getting a phone call when you're just about to leave the office for the day was their biggest pet peeve, followed by a string of IT issues such as slow computers and printers jamming, as well as freezing cold air conditioning and messy desks.
4. Other issues that drive staff mad include being copied into e-mails that don't concern them, colleagues who suck up to the boss, people who ignore a ringing phone and uncomfortable chairs.
5. In addition, someone stealing your favourite mug, junk mail, unrealistic deadlines and meetings about meetings also made the list.
6. "It's clear that there's no shortage of annoyances in the workplace that raise people's blood pressure on a daily basis," Geoffrey Dennis, Chief Executive of international animal charity SPANA told a national newspaper.
7. "From pointless meetings to colleagues who use your favourite mug, these frustrations seem to be part of office life in Britain."
8. Other common gripes included having an insensitive boss, those who choose to micromanage everything, embarrassing team building exercises and having to engage in small talk.
9. But some irritable Brits were more frustrated by being asked to share a desk, office gossip, not having enough annual leave and office jargon.
10. Interestingly, the study also revealed that two thirds of office workers are most likely to moan to other colleagues.
11. And, while one in 20 said they start moaning the minute they step into the office, another 15 per cent admitted that they 'whinge all day long.'
12. Despite their grievances though, researchers found that most are unlikely to take action regarding their work worries with two thirds saying they wouldn't confront a colleague who was annoying them.

*Adapted from The Independent, by Sarah Young, 1st September 2017*

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#### Checking understanding

Read the text again and put 'T' (true) or 'F' (false) next to each statement below.

1. The time that the average office worker spends complaining is around 14 days a year.
2. In the poll, people said it didn't take many annoyances to spoil their work day.
3. When workers complain, they first go to their manager.
4. One in twenty workers said that they complained for the whole day.
5. Most British office workers will say something if a colleague does something that annoys them.



## 5 Find the words

Find a word or phrase in the text which means ...

1. something that particularly annoys you (**noun, P.3**): \_\_\_\_\_
2. a series of connected things (**noun + preposition, P.3**): \_\_\_\_\_
3. try to make someone in authority like you by doing or saying nice things (**phrasal verb, P.4**):  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. a lot of (sth) (**informal phrase, P.6**): \_\_\_\_\_
5. to control every part of something in a way that isn't wanted (**verb, P.8**): \_\_\_\_\_
6. special words and phrases used at work by people in the same industry (**noun, P.9**):  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 6 Phrases

Without checking the article, complete the phrases below with an appropriate word.

1. being in the office when the weather is lovely
2. \_\_\_\_\_ to engage in small talk
3. \_\_\_\_\_ from holiday to hundreds of emails
4. \_\_\_\_\_ to share desks or 'hot desk'
5. someone \_\_\_\_\_ credit for work you've done
6. people not \_\_\_\_\_ the microwave when their food spills
7. someone \_\_\_\_\_ their chair out in the middle of the aisle

Have any of these things recently happened to you?

## 7 Talking point

1. Do you think office complaints affect productivity? Why or why not?
2. Which of the things mentioned in the article are not annoying for you? Why?
3. Would you confront a colleague if they were doing something that annoyed you? Why or why not?
4. Do you think that complaining about something that annoys you is a negative thing? Why or why not?



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## Homework

Write a short article about the things that annoy you in your workplace and anything that can be done to improve how they make you feel.