



Unit 2 — In the Office

Reading: Dialog between two workmates

2025 English for the Office. All rights reserved.

Jack: Hey Don, how's your first week going?

Don: Pretty good thanks. Everyone is really nice, but it is hard to remember everyone's name. It's Jim, isn't it?

Jack: Almost, Jack. Don't worry, it took me almost a year to remember everyone.

Don: I hope I get it before then, I'm usually pretty good with names.

Jack: You may want to check the dress code again. Sheila won't be happy if she sees you wearing those trainers and she has a temper.

Don: I am supposed to have my orientation today at 3pm and they said she would talk about the dress code then, but thanks for the warning. Sheila is the woman in charge of human resources, yeah?

Jack: Yes, that's her. I'm not surprised that you remember her already.

Terry: Don, I have Mr Timms on the line for you. Can I put him through?

Don: No, can you tell him I will call him back in 5 minutes I need to check his file first.

Terry: Sure thing.

Jack: Hey Terry, how long will you be filling in for Sarah?

Terry: I think she is back tomorrow. I'll be glad to get back to my office. I have no idea how you guys cope with this open-plan setting, it is far too noisy to concentrate. In our department we need peace and quiet to work well.

Don: I actually like the cubicles. It gives a much more friendly feeling than when everyone is in their own office with the door closed. We had that at my last job and it wasn't nice.

Terry: You must be joking. I can hardly hear myself think when someone starts shredding paper in here.

Jack: Same here Don, but Terry comes from a time when white-collar work meant having your own office. He doesn't like all the changes that happened here recently.

Don: What kind of changes?

Jack: Well the cubicles for one, but also all of the senior staff members used to have their own assistant to help with the paperwork and filing but now they have to do it themselves.

Don: Oh, I can see why they wouldn't like that. All of that admin work can be very time consuming, and it is pretty boring too!

Jack: Yeah but if you ask Sarah nicely she will do some of it for you. She just doesn't like Terry that much.

Don: Oh, where are the filing cabinets anyway? I haven't noticed any around the office.

Jack: No, they are in the annex with the photocopier. Turn left when you go into the building and then down to the end of the corridor and through the double doors at the end.

Don: Great, I will need that later on.

Jack: Anyway, I'd better get back to work. Enjoy your orientation later on, and don't let Sheila scare you too much. She is a nice lady when you get to know her.

Don: Thanks Jack. See you later.

Discussion Questions

What do you think is the hardest thing about starting a new job?

Are dress codes a good idea in offices? Why?

Would you prefer to work in an open-plan office or a traditional office? Why?