

Conversation Questions for the Business English Classroom



by roadtogrammar.com

Suggested Use

Each set of conversations contains a minimum of six questions on a particular topic. Most topics are suitable for pre-intermediate level upwards (B1+). The topics can be discussed in pairs, small groups or large groups. You should set aside 5-10 minutes for the activity.

A good strategy for using these sorts of questions is as follows:

- 1 Run through the questions quickly to make sure the class understands them.
- 2 Model one or two answers yourself.
- 3 Tell the class how long you expect them to work on the activity.
- 4 Split the class into groups and let them begin.
- 5 Monitor the groups to:
 - encourage them to stick to English
 - help with vocabulary
 - ensure they are answering in full (in particular, some questions are framed as YES/NO questions, but fuller answers are expected)
- 6 After their time is up, ask each group to share an answer briefly with the class.

Online Version

There is an online version of these questions available here:

<http://www.roadtogrammar.com/businessenglish/biz15>

The online version is formatted so that it can be used on a smartboard or can be viewed on a mobile device.

Usage

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Talking about my job

What do you like best about your job?
What do you like least?
How long have you had your current job?
What skills do you need to be good at your job?
Is your work stressful?
What are your main responsibilities?



Working with Others

Do you find it easy to get on with people at work?
Do you prefer to work in a team or independently? Why?
What kind of people get on your nerves?
What kind of people are a pleasure to deal with?
What kind of communication issues do you routinely face at work?
Describe your ideal boss. Would you make a good boss?



Talking about My Company

What is your company's market share in its field?
Does your company have a good reputation with the public?
Does your company ever do work for the public sector?
What is your company's business model?
Do employees tend to stay on for a long time or is there a high rate of turnover?
How does your company market itself?



Large and Small Companies

Would you rather work in a big company or a small company? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of each?

Would you work for the government? Why or why not?
Would you work for a multinational company? Why or why not?

Would you work for a company that produces a harmful product, such as tobacco or arms?

Would you work for a charitable organisation?

Would you like to run a small or large company?

Would you ever set up a business with your family?



Job Satisfaction

Are you satisfied with your current work?

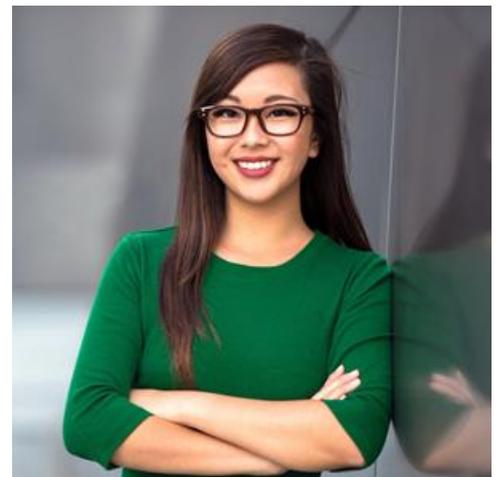
Would you prefer to work for a large or a small company?
Why?

Would you take a less enjoyable job for a higher wage?

How important is status to you in your job?

Would you enjoy freelance work?

How many hours a week do you work?



Motivation

Do you find it easy to motivate yourself? Why or why not?

Do you ever read self-help books?

Would you prefer a well-paid job where you are under pressure or a more relaxed job with less remuneration?

What kind of things get you riled up at work?

How often do you take a break at work and what do you do on your breaks?

What is the best way for a boss to motivate their employees?



Office Problems

What kind of communication problems do people face in an office?

Do you ever squabble with your coworkers?

How would you rate your communication skills?

How would you rate your time management skills?

Do you ever get impatient with others?

Do you prefer working in a team or working by yourself? Is this suited to the type of work that you do?



Discussing Time

How can you make sure that you are always on time?

How important is it to be punctual in your country?

What are some good time management habits?

What are some English idioms related to time? What are some from your own language?

What would you do differently if you had more time?

When you work, how often should you take a break and what should you do?

What are three ways to save time in your daily life?



Money

What is the best way to make money?

How much money do you need to be considered rich in your country?

What are some English idioms related to time? What are some from your own language?

Are you good with money? Explain.

Do you track your monthly or weekly household budget? Explain.

Does your job involve calculations? Explain.

Do you know how to define GDP, inflation and other economic indicators? Explain.



Workplace Trends

Discuss these current workplace trends. Do you see each one as a positive or negative thing?

- More focus on work-life balance
- More focus on gender equality
- Faster pace of work
- Companies taking a stand on social issues
- Employees working remotely

Is your company modern or traditional?

Do you enjoy working remotely?

What are some current trends in your workplace?

Do you feel that you have a good work-life balance?



Business technology

Are you tech-savvy?

What new business technology do you think we will see in five or ten years? Which are you most excited about?

Can technology sometimes be an obstacle at the workplace?

What are your favourite apps and websites?

How does your company use technology?

Is your company prepared for future challenges when it comes to technology?



Changes

What would you like to change about your job or your workplace?

How would you like to improve yourself?

What advice would you give a younger you?

How has your industry changed in the past 30 years?

How will it change in the future?

Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future?



Products and Services

Give an example of a purchase you made that did not meet your expectations.

Are you loyal to particular brands? Why or why not?

Name a company that has good customer service.

Name one that offers poor customer service.

What is unique about the product or service offered by your organisation?

Does your company have a good reputation? Do most people know of it?



Rules and Regulations

What kind of rules and regulations does your company have?

Is the management strict or lenient?

What happens if you come to work a little late?

What are the rules regarding social media at the workplace?

Does your company have a dress code?

Do you need to take your lunch hour at a specified time?

What kind of behavior could get you into trouble in your workplace?



Dealing with Clients

Do you need to liaise with clients as part of your work?

Are you good at handling customers?

Do you prefer to deal with customers in person, on the phone or by email?

Do you know the correct procedure for handling a customer complaint?

What kind of people are the easiest and the most difficult to deal with?

Describe some difficult customers that you have dealt with in the past.



Finance and Investing

Are you financially literate?

Do you understand the ins and outs of investing in the stock market?

What is the best way to invest and grow your money if you have \$5000? \$50,000? \$500,000?

Describe your spending and saving habits?

How willing are you to take a risk with your money?

What are your views on cryptocurrencies?



Meetings

How often do you need to attend meetings at your workplace?

How long do your meetings usually last?

Are they generally formal or informal? Does someone take minutes?

Do you speak a lot at meetings or are you usually quiet?

Do you ever feel that meetings are unproductive?

What are the key ways to make sure a meeting is efficient and productive?



Giving Presentations

Do you need to give presentations for your job?

Does giving a presentation make you nervous?

Why do people fear public speaking?

What are some tips for delivering an effective presentation?

What are some things you should NOT do when giving a presentation?

What is the best way to prep for a presentation?

What are some ways to make a presentation more interesting?



Health and Safety Issues

- Do you know the basics of first aid?
- Do you know what to do in case of a fire?
- Does your work affect your health?
- Do you need to be fit in order to do your job?
- What kind of health and insurance benefits does your company provide you?
- Do you often take time off work due to sickness?
- Is it healthy to spend your workday sitting at a desk?
- How often should you take breaks?
- Do you ever come in to work even when you don't feel so well?



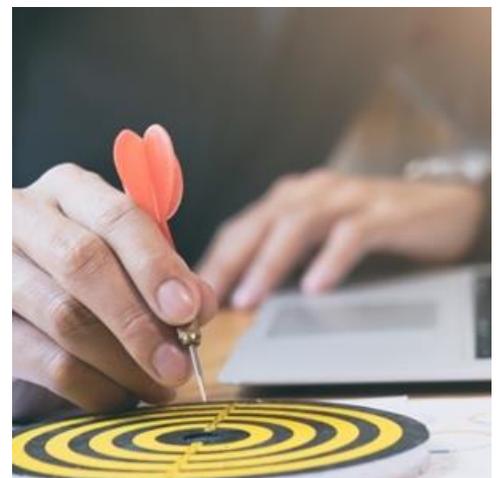
Interviews and Jobhunting

- Describe your last interview. How did you do?
- What is the best way to prepare for a job interview?
- What tips do you have for a successful interview?
- What are some things you should NOT do during a job interview?
- Have you ever faced an interviewer who was not professional?
- What are some typical questions you may be asked at an interview and how would you answer them?



Business Models

- Choose an interesting company and talk about its business model.
- Why are tech companies such as Facebook and Google so successful?
- How do companies such as Facebook and Google make money?
- How do low-cost airlines keep their prices so low?
- Describe a company that makes money using a franchising system.
- How do multilevel marketing companies make money? Is it good to work for them?



Company Facilities

Does Your company have a cafeteria or café? If so, do you eat there?

How would you rate your office décor?

Does your office provide ample parking?

Are you provided with a laptop or other equipment with which to do your work?

Describe your immediate workspace. Do you have a cubicle or a separate room? Is it ergonomic?

What other facilities does your company provide? (For example, a creche, a garden or a prayer room.)



Leaders and Role Models

Describe a leader in business who you respect or admire and explain why?

What is your definition of an effective leader?

Do you have a role model or mentor at work?

Do you ever get frustrated with the management in your company?

Describe the best leader you have worked for or with.

Do you believe that you would make a good leader?



Sales and Marketing

Have you ever worked in sales or marketing? Would you like to?

What is the difference between sales and marketing?

How good of a salesperson are you? Explain.

What are your best tips for making sales?

Would you accept a job where the pay is based on commission?

What are the personal characteristics of a good salesman?

How does your company market its products or services?



Social Issues at Work

Would you say that your company is diverse?

Are there many women in leadership roles where you work?

Is there a big gap in pay between the top management and the rank and file employees?

What special perks do the management receive?

What facilities does your workplace provide for disabled persons?

What does your company do to show it cares about its workforce?



My Skill Set

Describe the main skills required for your job.

How important is critical thinking for your work?

Does your work require technical skills?

How easy or difficult would it be to train someone to do what you do? Would you be easy to replace?

Do you find your job intellectually stimulating? Why or why not?

What further skills would you like to acquire?

