

# Unit 4 Offices

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## The paperless office

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## Prepositions of place; the imperative

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## Career skills: Directions

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# A place to work



## Keynotes

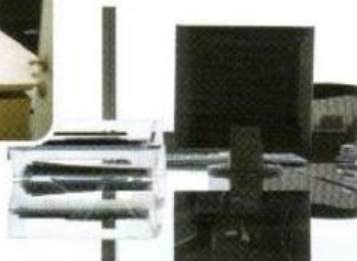
We can use the word **office** to describe the building that a company is in or an individual room where employees work. Many workers **share an office** or have a **desk** in an **open-plan** office. Modern technology now makes it easier for people to have a **home office**, so our work life and home life are closer than ever before.



## Preview



1 \_\_\_\_\_



2 \_\_\_\_\_



3 \_\_\_\_\_



4 \_\_\_\_\_

**1** Label the offices with the words in the box.

modern    open-plan    shared    traditional

**2** Discuss the questions.

What kind of desk do you work at? Is it similar to any of the pictures above? Which of the offices would you like to work in? Why?

**3** Are you the kind of person who likes a tidy place to work? Do the questionnaire about offices.

## How tidy are you?

Which describes you best – A, B or C?

- 1** Your friend phones to say that she is coming to visit in five minutes. Do you ...
  - A wait for her to arrive – there is nothing you need to do?
  - B tidy one or two things and then relax?
  - C panic – you need more than five minutes to tidy up?
- 2** You receive an important letter. You read it. What do you do next?
  - A File it immediately.
  - B File it later.
  - C Put it under all the other papers.

- 3** A colleague asks to use your office to speak to an important client. Do you ...
  - A agree – but ask your colleague not to move anything on your desk?
  - B agree – but ask your colleague to wait for a moment while you tidy?
  - C say no – the office is too untidy?
- 4** You need to find a document. How long does it take?
  - A Five minutes – you have a lot of files and you need to remember where it is.
  - B One minute – you don't have many files, so you find things quickly.
  - C Fifteen minutes – you know it's on your desk ... somewhere!

*Look at the analysis on page 145.*

**Speaking** Do you agree with the analysis on page 145? Why? / Why not?

**Reading** **1** Read the article on the opposite page. Choose the sentence a–c that best describes the main point.

- a All employees have tidy desks.
- b A tidy desk isn't always important.
- c We don't like desks.

**2** Read the article again and answer the questions.

- 1 What things made from paper does the writer have on his desk?
- 2 What is next to the keyboard?
- 3 Where do workers usually put their documents?
- 4 How much time do people with untidy desks spend looking for things each day?
- 5 How many types of worker does the article mention?
- 6 What are the disadvantages of being a 'filer'?
- 7 What are the advantages of being a 'piler'?
- 8 What should you do next time you tidy your desk?



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**Glossary**

**expert** (n) a person who knows a lot about a subject

**research** (n) the study of a subject to find new information

**disorganised** (adj) not organised

**current** (adj) happening at the moment

A tidy desk?

## The paperless office

Leave my desk alone. It works

<sup>1</sup> I'm writing this article at my desk. It isn't a tidy desk – there are lots of things on it (books, brochures, files, notepads and newspapers). There are six pens and some documents next to the keyboard and there's a printer under my chair. It isn't a problem, and there are a lot of desks like mine in The Economist's offices.

<sup>2</sup> But in many companies it's very important to have a tidy office. Some companies say that workers can't leave

documents or paper on their desk at the end of the day. Employees put all the documents into filing cabinets or drawers. Experts say that a person who works at an untidy desk is not organised and spends about one-and-a-half hours a day looking for things. An organised worker always has a tidy workspace.

<sup>3</sup> But is that true? Research shows that there are two types of worker. The first type is the 'filer'. They receive a document and immediately file it. The

second type is the 'piler'. They have piles of paper on their desk. Who do you think can find things quickly? The answer may surprise you.

<sup>4</sup> Workers who file everything have a tidy desk, but they file too much. There are two main problems with this. First, the files and filing cabinets take a lot of space in the office. And second, there are so many files that it takes time to remember where a particular document is.

<sup>5</sup> Now let's look at 'pilers'. They often have an untidy desk, but they aren't always disorganised. Some experts say that a busy desk helps 'pilers' to think about current projects and makes it easy to find documents.

<sup>6</sup> So next time you tidy your desk, stop and think. Perhaps an untidy desk makes it easier to find things! ■

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Vocabulary **1** Label the pictures with the words in the box.

file keyboard shredder bookcase printer chair  
stapler envelope mouse cupboard paperclip sofa



1 chair



2 \_\_\_\_\_



3 \_\_\_\_\_



4 \_\_\_\_\_



5 \_\_\_\_\_



6 \_\_\_\_\_



7 \_\_\_\_\_



8 \_\_\_\_\_



9 \_\_\_\_\_



10 \_\_\_\_\_

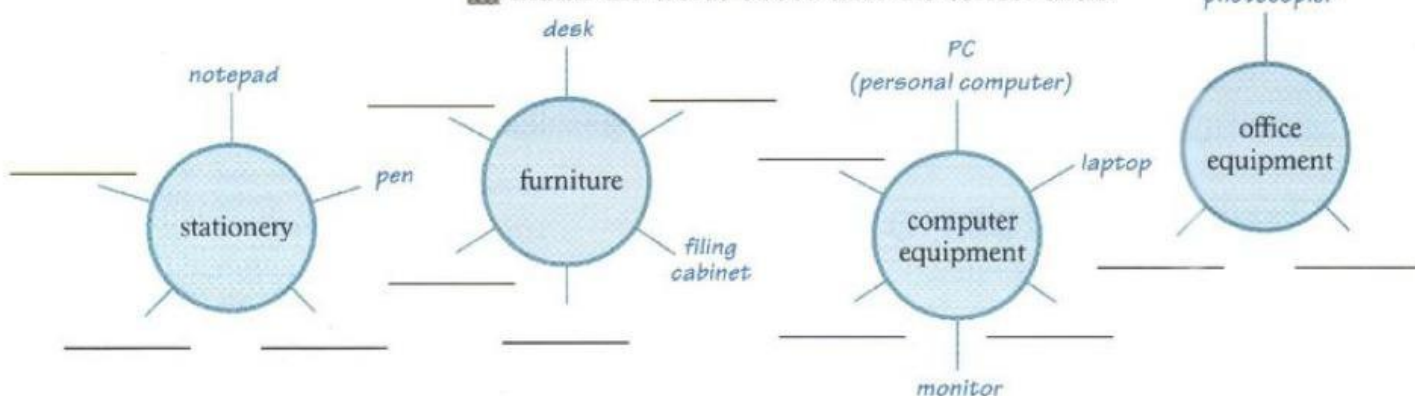


11 \_\_\_\_\_



12 \_\_\_\_\_

**2** Match the words above with the correct circle.



**3** Complete the sentences with the correct word in *italics*.

- 1 Use your *printer* / pen to write notes.
- 2 There's a problem with my computer – the *monitor* / *shredder* doesn't work.
- 3 The dictionary is in the *sofa* / *bookcase*.
- 4 Put the stationery in the *keyboard* / *cupboard*, please.
- 5 Do you want an *envelope* / *mouse* for your letter?
- 6 I need to attach a document to this letter. Do you have a *file* / *paperclip*?
- 7 Make three copies of this document on the *photocopier* / *stapler*.
- 8 Is the contract in the *chair* / *filing cabinet*?

Speaking

Choose two items from each group in exercise 2 that you think are most useful in an office. Compare your list with a partner.

**1** Which kind of worker are you – a ‘filer’ or a ‘piler’? Why? Do you tidy things on your computer in the same way?

Example of answer: I am a filer worker because I like to organize my documents in files or folders

Your answer here:

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Reading Recording

Read the paragraphs 4 and 5 from the article "The Paperless Office" and record and Mp3 audio in Vocaroo, copy the link and paste it in the chart bellow

Link from Vocaroo: