

Office life has many more complexities and nuances than have been reviewed so far. What has already been reviewed dealt largely with administrative hierarchy and *social class*, but a great deal of office life is a special kind of *mundane routine*. Administrative *hassles* also abound.



## Office Work

For all the excitement of a promotion, work is still work. This means it always has a moderately unpleasant side. First, there is the possibility that you are required to do something that isn't very appealing to you. In addition to this, there are ordinary *pains in the neck* that just never seem to quite go away. These might include a boss or co-worker one doesn't care for, problems in your building, or just the feeling that the work never ends and you'd rather be doing something else.

### Q. Warm Up Questions

- 1) Can you think of some problems that you've seen in office life?
- 2) Why aren't managers and executives immune from these problems?

## Conversation

**Alex:** It looks like this merger just might happen.

**Erik:** That's fascinating news Alex. It must have been exciting to be part of the team that *explored* the idea and negotiated the terms.

**Alex:** It was, I won't lie. I do, however, have you to thank, because it was your suggesting me for this promotion that made all of this possible.

**Erik:** It was my pleasure Alex, I'm just glad it all turned out so well.



### Q. Conversation Question

- 1) Will the merger happen?
- 2) How big a role in it did Alex play?

**Social Class:** One's place in society as determined by one's wealth or income.

**Mundane:** Ordinary, uninteresting, unexceptional, banal.

**Routine:** A daily sequence of repeated, almost autonomic, behaviors.

**Hassle:** An annoyance, irritation, or inconvenience. Usually more remarkable for its banality.

**Pain in the Neck:** Slang for a hassle or annoyance. Something easy to ignore but hard to solve.

**Explore:** To venture to an unknown place to learn something.

## Grammar point

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### Reporting verbs

Some verbs like suggest, promise, advise etc describe what people say, or summarize their words. They are useful because you can summarize the actual words people say without repeating them.

- Verb + (object) + that clause: She **promised me that** she would come back soon.
- Verb + -ing: He **denied breaking** the window.
- Verb + infinitive: Mike **offered** to help her.
- Verb + object + infinitive: He **warned** me not to touch the fence.
- Other patterns: He **explained how to do** it.

Meg **agreed with** David.

They **congratulated him on** promoting.

Complete the reported statements by using given verbs.

1) My boss said, "This is how to use the machine." (explain)

\_\_\_\_\_.

2) He said, "Be careful. Don't turn off the computer now." (warn)

\_\_\_\_\_.

3) She said, "Shall I go with you?" (offer)

\_\_\_\_\_.

## Practice IT!

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1) Is it worth a great deal of effort to find a job with few or no negative aspects? Is it realistic to believe such a job exists?

2) How should one best deal with the frustrations that are



Alex and Janice both agree that the parking situation at their office building is *distressing*. The building has been *expanded* multiple times over the past few years in order to cope with the growth of Radial Systems, but the parking facilities have not been *proportionally* expanded.



## The Parking Lot

At most modern office buildings, cars can be parked in a secure lot or *parking garage*. Such structures are ideal for meeting the parking needs of many employees with limited space. Unfortunately, many buildings do not provide sufficient parking spaces for all their employees. When *designated* parking facilities fill up, they *relegate* the remaining cars to park in pay-lots or on the parallel-parking spaces on the side of the street. These options are considerably more inconvenient for employees.

### Q. Warm Up Questions

- 1) What happened to the parking situation at the office building?
- 2) Where do many of the employees have to park now?

## Conversation

**Alex:** Janice, this is the third day in a row I had to park 4 blocks from the building.

**Janice:** Yeah, it happened to me too!

**Alex:** This is ridiculous, I should talk to the other managers and executives and see what they plan to do about this.

**Janice:** This could only get worse if the merger happens too.

**Alex:** Absolutely. This can't continue.



### Q. Conversation Question

- 1) How many days in a row has Alex had to park far from the building?
- 2) What threatens to make the situation even worse?



Security *necessitates* that everyone in the building either wear a badge or sign-in. When an employee forgets their badge, it is a terrible inconvenience, as they must spend a great deal of additional time with security *verifying* their identity. It is, of course, rare that this happens, but it managed to happen to Alex.

## Forgotten Badge

Modern office buildings are often also *equipped* with a security force to prevent theft and unauthorized entry. They usually maintain a prominent desk at the entrance to every major office building to *keep tabs* on everyone who enters and leaves. Visitors must sign-in with them and *undergo* any number of other procedures as necessary to ensure the safety of the building.

### Q. Warm Up Questions

- 1) What did Alex lose that he needs to enter the building?
- 2) What does it take to enter the building without the item from question 1?

## Conversation

**Alex:** Hi, I'm Alex Hansen, I'm sure you've seen me come in and out a thousand times.

**Security Guard:** I'm sorry sir, but without a badge we're going to have to verify your identity.

**Alex:** Fine, do what you have to do. Can you please just tell me where to get a *replacement*.

**Security Guard:** Your identity checks out Mr. Hansen, if you wish to follow me to the main security office we can put in a request for a new badge.



### Q. Conversation Question

- 1) Why does Alex hope the guard knows him?
- 2) What do Alex and the guard do once he gets into the building?

**Necessitates:** To make necessary, unavoidable.

**Verifying:** to double-check or get definite proof regarding.

**Equipped:** Given or assigned a particular piece of equipment, to have a feature or ability.

**Keep Tabs:** Slang for keep track of or watch carefully.

**Undergo:** to experience or go through a process.

**Replacement:** That which takes the place of something similar before it.

## Grammar point

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### *By far*

**Example:** John is by far the tallest person in the class.

We can modify superlative with *by far*. This phrase is used when explaining that something or someone is much more superior to others. It can be put before the superlative form of an adjective or at the end.

**Example:** This restaurant is the best in this town *by far*.

Change the word order and make complete sentences.

1) (Jack this the is far skillful in department by most).

Jack is the most skillful in this department by far \_\_\_\_.

2) (this best is by car the buy on far the market).

This car is by far the best buy on the market \_\_\_\_.

3) (she experienced is far by most the employee of company this). she is by far the most experienced employee of this company\_\_\_\_\_.



## Practice III

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1) What documents do you have in case you need to establish your identity? Could you have a better plan for this eventuality?

2) Does the building have an appropriate amount of



Alex has been very successful since his promotion. He has hired an assistant, dealt with several challenging problems and helped plan an *upcoming* merger. Alex knows he has some additional vacation days and would like to reward himself for his recent accomplishments.

## Vacation Time

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Vacation time is a precious *commodity* in the world of senior management. Though managers and executives get more vacation time *allotted* to them each year, there is a meaningful sense in which they generally relax less. This means they cannot neglect to take their vacation without risking being *overwhelmed* by stress. Many companies actually require their employees to use their vacation time, and also schedule certain corporate retreats or activities in vacation-like *settings*.

### Q. Warm Up Questions

- 1) Why does Alex feel like he should take a vacation?
- 2) Why is it important that most managers take vacations?

## Conversation

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**Alex:** Janice, it's high-time I had a vacation. Do you have any ideas?

**Janice:** Well Alex, it is your vacation. Where would you like to go?

**Alex:** I've always wanted to go to Hawaii.

**Janice:** So go there!

**Alex:** I don't know if I want to be on a plane for so long.

**Janice:** Soon enough, you may not have much of a chance to go at all. I'll put in the request for you.



### Q. Conversation Question

- 1) Where does Alex want to go?
- 2) What is his one reservation about going there?

**Upcoming:** Anticipated, soon to occur.

**Commodity:** Something bought or sold, something valuable.

**Allotted:** Assigned, proportionately distributed.

**Overwhelmed:** Reaching a point of emotional exhaustion.

**Retreat:** The act of seeking refuge. The place where refuge is sought.

**Settings:** Locations or places.

## Grammar point

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### *Seems to have + verb(past participle)*

**Example:** The rain seems to have stopped.

Seem is a copular verb and it is followed by adjectives. Also, it can be followed by the infinitives of other verbs like seems to have. To have is infinitive, being used in perfect form. This expression indicates that the event expressed by a past infinitive happened before the time of the main verb.

Change the word order and make complete sentences.

1) (started seems the to meeting already have).  
the meeting seems to have started already \_\_\_\_\_.

2) (have the system computer to seems broken).  
the computer system seems to have broken \_\_\_\_\_.

3) (her seems address have changed to).  
her address seems to have changed  
\_\_\_\_\_.



## Practice IT!

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1) Describe how vacations differ from business travel. Explain how you would make your travel arrangements differently.



Alex gets to go to Hawaii, like he has always wanted. Having learned about the challenges travel can bring, he makes a point not to plan an especially elaborate trip. One airline, one hotel and he's comfortable taking taxis everywhere or just *lounging* on the beach.

### Summertime, When The Living is Easy.

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The two times of year in which vacations are most commonly taken are summer and winter. This means that travel is more of a hassle then. One of the main reason why *tropical* vacation spots are so popular is that their weather and climate are rather *invariant* year-round, unaffected by the seasons. That means they are still attractive places to visit even during the quiet times of the year. This, however, usually requires the *expenditure* of vacation time, a rare *resource*. Vacations therefore, need to go well.

#### Q. Warm Up Questions

- 1) What are Alex's vacation plans?
- 2) Why are tropical vacation destinations popular?

### Conversation

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**Alex:** I'm here!

**Bartender:** Where are you coming from?

**Alex:** Denver. And you wouldn't believe the difference.

**Bartender:** Don't be so sure, I've been there, but obviously I'd rather be here.

**Alex:** That makes two of us. Let me get a strong drink with some pineapple in it and I'm going to take the next few weeks *one day at a time*.



#### Q. Conversation Question

- 1) Where is Alex from?
- 2) What kind of drink does he order?

**Lounging:** Relaxing, being leisurely.

**Tropical:** Reminiscent of or located in the tropics.

**Allotted:** Assigned, proportionately distributed.

**Invariant:** Unchanging, stable.

**Expenditure:** The use of a finite supply, spending.

**Resource:** a source of supply, support, or aid.

**One day at a Time:** A colloquial phrase which indicates that one will not worry excessively about the future.

## Grammar point

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**Seems to have Vs. seemed to have**

**Example:** It *seems to have stopped* raining.

It *seemed to have stopped* raining.

In the first example sentence, we are saying that now we think it has stopped raining. In the second sentence, we are saying that in the past we thought it had stopped raining. The verb tenses indicate different times.

Make the sentences in the following situations.

1) You think that it has started snowing.

\_\_\_\_\_.

2) You thought that your computer had been fixed completely.

\_\_\_\_\_.

3) You thought that your supervisor had finished talking on the phone.

\_\_\_\_\_.

4) You think that the sale has just started.

\_\_\_\_\_.



## Practice IT!

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1) How would you make sure you enjoyed your vacation? Is a vacation the kind of thing where such a controlling attitude is appropriate? Explain your answer.

2) Do you prefer a vacation in which you try to accomplish a



There's no better way to ruin a vacation than with a computer problem. Alex, unfortunately, still has to do some work while on his trip, which is why he brought his laptop computer. Unfortunately, it keeps *freezing up* on him, and his own efforts to *diagnose* the problem have been *ineffectual*.

## Tech-Support

Technical Support is a service provided by many technology companies in order to assist customers with problems they may have. Often, the problems are simple user *ignorance* of how the product works or how to use the product properly. Other times, however, the problems are very real and very frustrating. In such cases, a technical support *technician* may work with a customer for hours on the phone trying to *pinpoint* the cause of a specific problem with very limited means.

### Q. Warm Up Questions

- 1) Why has Alex brought his laptop computer?
- 2) Why has Alex resorted to calling tech support?

## Conversation

**Alex:** Hello, is this Moshiba tech-support?

**Technician:** Yes sir, it is, how can I help you?

**Alex:** I'm on vacation and I would really like to have this problem with my computer solved as quickly as possible.

**Technician:** What seems to be the problem sir?

**Alex:** My computer keeps locking up or becoming very sluggish. It seems to happen at completely random times.

**Technician:** Well sir, hopefully this won't take long to solve.

### Q. Conversation Question

- 1) What brand of computer does Alex own?
- 2) When does Alex's problem occur?



**Freezing Up:** Ceasing motion suddenly, as though freezing from cold.

**Diagnose:** To identify the source of a problem.

**Ineffectual:** Ineffective, producing no effect or no desired effect.

**Ignorance:** Lack of knowledge.

**Technician:** A technical or mechanical expert, usually involved in diagnosing and fixing problems with machines.

**Pinpoint:** to precisely identify.

## Grammar point

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**How come...?**

**Example:** *How come* Jimmy has to wash the dishes today?

"*How come?*" is essentially similar to "why?", but it often serves a slightly different function. This expression carries a challenging, more emphatic tone than a simple "why?". Unlike "why," "*how come*" strongly suggests that the questioner has already developed an opinion on the situation and has decided that something is not proper or fair.

Make the sentences based on the situations.

1) You wonder why you need to clean the room by yourself.

\_\_\_\_\_.

2) You wonder why Bob was late for the meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_.

3) You think it's not fair that Jeff was selected as the employee of the year.

\_\_\_\_\_.



## Practice IT!

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- 1) How prepared are you to deal with a computer malfunction?  
Do you know much about computers or are you reliant on others to help you?
- 2) Would you try to solve a technology or work-related



At the beginning of this unit, Alex was dealing with some of the stresses of office life again. This time, it's not about adjusting to a promotion, but rather a question of dealing with unpleasant aspect of office life. This seems to remind him that he's entitled to take vacations. He escaped but a minor problem followed him. Let's review what we learned in this unit.

## Conversation

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**Alex:** I'm back!

**Janice:** How was Hawaii?

**Alex:** Marvelous! I'm so glad I went. I just wish my computer hadn't been acting up then.

**Janice:** That's too bad.

**Alex:** Well, I solved it easily enough. Now I hope this merger is coming along smoothly and that they've solved that parking issue.

**Janice:** You might be better off if you just keep thinking about your vacation instead.

## Q. Warm Up Questions

- 1) What are some downsides about office life?
- 2) Did a vacation seem to help Alex?

## Q. Conversation Question

- 1) Was Alex's computer problem a big deal?
- 2) Have all the other problems in the office been resolved?

## Matching

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Line up the following words with their definitions.

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 1) Mundane   | _____ to not remember.                               |
| 2) Expanded  | _____ Anticipated, soon to occur.                    |
| 3) Forget    | _____ Made larger.                                   |
| 4) Upcoming  | _____ Unchanging, stable.                            |
| 5) Invariant | _____ Ordinary, uninteresting, unexceptional, banal. |
| 6) Pinpoint  | _____ to precisely identify.                         |

## Grammar point

Complete the reported statements by using given verbs.

- 1) He said to me, "Why don't you look online for good deal air tickets?"  
(suggest) \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) She said, "I don't want to get involved in the project." (refuse)  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Change the word order and make complete sentences.

- 1) (had he bicycle his stolen). he had his bicycle stolen \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) (sister got in her my leg hurt accident the left).  
My sister got her left leg hurt in the accident. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3) (the to seems product begun for the rebate have).  
the rebate for the product seems to have begun \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) (the campaign for the new product seemed to have  
been over). the campaign for the new product seemed to have  
been over \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) (last how stayed you up late come night)?  
how come you stayed up late last night \_\_\_\_\_?



## Practice IT!

- 1) What do you think of Alex's career at Radial Systems? Has he done well and made good choices? Explain your answer.
- 2) What would you do differently than Alex? Do you think you could have done better? Why or why not?