

EPISODE 14
LEVEL A1.2/A2.1

READING COMPREHENSION



PROBLEMS IN THE OFFICE



My "fantastic" boss said we needed to **improve** (= make better) the situation in our office. And what should we improve? We are **shorthanded** (= we don't have enough people to work). Many of my colleagues are **off** (= not at work) every week. But we have **loads of work** (= we have a lot of work to do). We have a real mess in our **filing cabinets** (= special cupboards for documents). As a result, we can't find any **files** (= documents). Our equipment is not the best either. Our Xerox is **down** (= it's not working now). And we have **run out of** paper (= we don't have any more paper). The fax machine is **broken** too, so we must repair it. I think my boss will go mad before the end of this week.

More contexts for the new words:

- When you use a computer, you have lots of **files** in your folders.
(= You may have many documents, pictures, etc. saved on your disc)
- He has a cold and he went to the doctor yesterday. He is **off** sick .
(= He will not be at work this week)
- Fortunately, prices are **down** this year.
(= The cost of living is not so high any more)



EXERCISE 1

Match the sentence halves.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Our filing cabinets | a. are full of documents. |
| 2. I have run out of | b. off. |
| 3. We have to improve | c. sugar. |
| 4. My colleague is ill, so he's | d. the political situation in the country. |



EXERCISE 2

Complete the questions, then answer them.

1. What should your boss improve at your workplace?
2. When was the last time you were on leave? Why?
3. What have you run out of recently at home?
4. What do you usually do when your office is short-staffed?

ENGLISH IN USE



*My "fantastic" boss **said** we needed to improve the situation in our office.*

OR

*My "fantastic" boss **told us** we needed to improve the situation in our office.*

Remember that after "to tell" we need to say "who".

Look at some more examples to help you remember how to use "to say":

*She **said** she liked him.*

*She **said** she wanted to get the job.*

*She **said** she was really happy.*

IDIOM CLOSE-UP



A/ Susan is off sick again. Have you visited her?

B/ Yes, I have. She **LOOKS LIKE DEATH WARMED UP**.

If you look/feel like death warmed up, you look/ feel very ill.

PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



There are many phrasal verbs which use the preposition 'off'. Very often, the meaning of the phrasal verb is connected to the *disappearance* of something. Here are a few examples:

1. If you **TURN** something **OFF**, you stop a piece of equipment working by pressing a button.

Will you **turn off** the television, please?
It is now safe to **turn off** your computer.

2. If food or drink **GOES OFF**, it is no longer fresh.

This bacon smells a bit funny - do you think it's **gone off**?
Fresh meat **goes off** after a day or two in the fridge.



EXERCISE 3

Rewrite the sentences keeping the same meaning and using the word in capitals. Use the idiom and phrasal verbs you have learned in this lesson.

1. I feel very sick.

UP

2. Is this food still good to eat?

OFF

3. Don't forget to switch off the lights.

TURN

NEWS



EMPLOYEE ABSENTEEISM

More and more employers have to deal with increasing employee **absenteeism**. Many workers are **on sick leave** because of really **insignificant** reasons, such as a cold or a **runny nose**. If the situation continues this way, workplaces will need to take on **temporary** workers, who can do the job of the absent permanent employees.

GLOSSARY

- **absenteeism** – not being at work/ school when you should be
- **on sick leave** – away from work because of illness
- **insignificant** – not important
- **runny nose** – when your nose produces a lot of water because of a cold or allergy
- **temporary** – not needed for very long

KEY TO EXERCISES

Ex.1

1. a
2. c
3. d
4. b

Ex.2

1. improve
2. off
3. out
4. shorthanded

Ex.3

1. I feel like death warmed up.
2. Hasn't this food gone off?
3. Don't forget to turn off the lights.