



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

Conversation Preparation Guides

Title: Personnel Policies

Topic: Policies and Rules

Level: Intermediate-Advanced

Practice on Your Own

Imagine you are starting a job or internship in a target language country, and you are learning about workplace rules and policies for staff.

- What do you need to know about workplace culture in the country? You may want to search online and prepare a list of questions for your conversation partner. The questions could be about topics such as proper work attire, how the work day is structured, men's and women's interactions in the office, etc.
 - If available for the country, CultureTalk videos in the "Work" category might be helpful resources.
- Review vocabulary that you might need to know: work schedule, lunch breaks, holidays, sick days, etc. Make sure you are comfortable with the present tense and speaking about times, especially in the context of a schedule or routine.
- You might need to ask your supervisor or co-workers about office policies. Take each of these vocabulary words and put it into a question: "What time do we start each morning? What should I do if I am sick?" keeping in mind how to address each person in your office in a culturally appropriate way.
- Finally, think of a situation where you might need to address a conflict. Is there an individual or an office you can reach out to for help? Think of how you might describe a difference in work style with a coworker, a scheduling problem, or a complaint about the boss.

Practice in Conversation Session

- Your conversation partner can help you learn more about general office "do's and don'ts" in the country.
- Role play several office scenarios to get acquainted with expectations for the office. Always switch roles with your conversation partner so you can practice both sides of the discussion. For example:
 - A first-day orientation with a supervisor telling a new employee about office policies
 - An employee asking about taking a day off to do an important errand (the bank, the consulate, etc)
 - A supervisor speaking with an employee who has been coming late to work recently