

Organisation

Present simple and continuous

The present simple is used in the following ways.

- to describe facts and permanent situations
*We **don't have** a large hierarchy.*
- to describe routines and fixed timetables
*Our managers **report** in on a daily basis.*
*The train to Bucharest **leaves** at six thirty tomorrow.*

The present continuous is used in the following ways.

- to describe unfinished or temporary actions or situations
*We're **restructuring** the department at the moment.*
*I'm **working** in another department for a few weeks.*
- to describe future arrangements
*When **are** you **holding** the teamwork seminar?*

Note! We do not use the present continuous to express the following.

routines (<i>usually, normally</i> etc.)	emotions (<i>like, love, hate</i>)
ownership (<i>own, have, need</i>)	opinions (<i>think, believe, feel</i>)
senses (<i>see, hear, feel</i>)	

Past simple

The past simple is used in the following ways.

- to describe finished events
*I **sent** the report to the client yesterday.*
- to refer to definite or finished time (*ago, yesterday, last*, all dates)
*The meeting **didn't finish** until 3 o'clock.*

Present perfect

The present perfect is used in the following ways.

- to describe events that started in the past and are still continuing
*Some employees **have been working** from home since 2004.*
- to refer to unfinished time (*already, today, this, for, since, yet, ever, never*)
*Their technical support **has improved** a lot already.*
- to describe changes that affect the present situation
*We've **just implemented** a 24-hour IT support service.*

Note! The present perfect simple emphasises the product of an action while the present perfect continuous emphasises the process itself.

*We've **reduced** our overheads by 15 per cent.*
*We've **been looking** at ways of reducing our overheads.*

For expresses the duration of an action. **Since** states a starting point.

*We've been working with them **for five years** / **since 2007**.*

Grammar practice

**Present
simple and
continuous**

1 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

- We (try) 're trying to cut costs by 20 per cent this year.
- The post (not / arrive) _____ until 10.30.
- How long (you / stay) _____ in Paris after the conference?
- At the moment, I (feel) _____ we should cancel the project.
- Who (you / report) _____ to?
- With our teleworking initiative, we (not / need) _____ as much office space.
- The videoconference (not / start) _____ until 3.30 this afternoon.
- I (see) _____ the MD on Monday about working from home.

**Past simple
and present
perfect**

2 Complete the dialogue with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

- Ingrid Ah, Xiang, I (¹want) wanted to talk to you about a follow-up report to that team leadership seminar we (²run) _____ last year. The MD (³ask) _____ about it the other day and wants some kind of feedback – you know, whether we (⁴do) _____ anything about the recommendations yet. That kind of thing.
- Xiang Well, we still (⁵not / implement) _____ all the recommendations as the report only (⁶come) _____ back six months ago.
- Ingrid I know. And I think that's exactly why the MD wants some kind of update. What (⁷we / do) _____ so far?
- Xiang We (⁸start) _____ screening all managerial applicants for appropriate leadership attributes but we (⁹not / manage) _____ to set up the assessment centres yet for existing team leaders.
- Ingrid And why's that?
- Xiang We (¹⁰have) _____ a few problems setting them up.
- Ingrid What kind of problems?
- Xiang Well, there (¹¹be) _____ some resistance amongst some of the managers. They think the assessments are a threat to their jobs.
- Ingrid But (¹²not / you / explain) _____ to them their jobs are safe?
- Xiang I did. But there's also the issue of who actually does the assessments.
- Ingrid Isn't that for HR to decide?
- Xiang We originally (¹³ask) _____ them to propose a framework for doing the assessments but they (¹⁴come) _____ back and said the department heads should do it as they know the managers better.
- Ingrid (¹⁵you / speak) _____ to any department heads yet?
- Xiang Yes, we (¹⁶speak) _____ to most of them last week. They (¹⁷say) _____ it would mean more unnecessary paperwork and it (¹⁸will) _____ affect their relationships with their managers.

**Present
perfect
simple and
continuous**

3 Complete the sentences with the more appropriate form of the present perfect simple or continuous.

- We've finally (finished) / *been finishing* the company restructuring.
- I haven't *read* / *been reading* the report yet.
- We've *run* / *been running* training days this summer and they're proving very useful.
- Have you *filled* / *been filling* in the questionnaire yet?
- Staff who have *worked* / *been working* at home recently have increased productivity.
- How long have you *waited* / *been waiting* for them to finish the report?
- Sales have *gone* / *been going* up by 12 per cent this year.
- Staff have *worked* / *been working* very long hours recently so they're tired.

Reading practice

1 Read the text and put the paragraphs in the correct order.

a **What happened to the teleworking revolution?**

As the new millennium approached, we all dreamt of working from the comfort of our own homes. Tricia Patel finds out whether reality lived up to the hype.

It was said to be the biggest change in our working lives since the industrial revolution. New technology would make office space a thing of the past as companies would save fortunes in rent by setting employees up to work from their own homes. Employees, in turn, looked forward to a working life that started when they stumbled out of bed and sat down at their computers. Spared the stress of the daily commute, the new flexibility would finally put them in charge of their lives. The dream was an ideal win-win situation. But has reality lived up to the hype? The government recently commissioned a study to find out whether the office exodus is still continuing or whether the good old desk is once more back in fashion.

b This definition of working from home includes people who use their own living space as part of their full-time job. This includes more mobile workers who travel a lot using their own home as a base and people who work from home at least one day a week. Seven out of ten teleworkers are likely to be men. One in four of them is employed by a company in either the business or financial services sector.

c 'The way to get around these problems is to work from home just a couple of days a week,' argues Hunt. 'That's definitely the way forward. It has all the advantages but avoids any of the downsides of teleworking. If you look at the figures, it's definitely the future.'

d However, business change expert Marsha Hunt thinks this is not the main saving. 'The single greatest cost to an employer is recruiting and training a new employee. And with an ageing UK workforce, it's vital that companies retain staff. Giving employees the flexibility to work from home can be the difference between retaining and losing key personnel.'

e The advantages teleworking offers these businesses have not changed. BT, who has been promoting working from home initiatives for twenty years now, claims to have saved hundreds of millions of pounds of office space expenditure to date. The company currently has well over 10,000 home-based staff and with average costs per desk in the UK £20,000, the attractions are obvious.

f Further disadvantages for teleworkers include the lack of quick technical support when computers go wrong and the resentment of colleagues unhappy at not being allowed to telework themselves. However, the biggest complaint is isolation from daily office life. Many teleworkers feel cut off socially and politically from their office-based colleagues.

g Hunt points out, though, that any employee using their own home as office space has the disadvantage of effectively subsidising the company. 'Take someone working from home in London, for example. Office space is massively expensive in London, so if the company can put desks in people's homes, the employees are effectively paying to work for the company.'

h The government Labour Force study shows that the number of people now working from home has risen to 3.2 million, or approximately 9 per cent of the UK workforce. The figures represent an increase of 19 per cent on the previous year, so in terms of numbers alone, teleworking is indeed more popular than ever before. The study also profiles who is most likely to work from home and an explanation of exactly what counts as working from home.

2 Match a summary with each paragraph of the text.

- 1 introduction a
- 2 figures to show teleworking trends
- 3 details on how the figures were arrived at
- 4 the advantages for companies
- 5 the main advantage for companies
- 6 a disadvantage for employees
- 7 further disadvantages for employees
- 8 conclusion

3 Read the text again and choose the correct option for each question.

- 1 The Labour Force study revealed that
 - a) about 9 per cent of the UK workforce works at home.
 - b) 3.2 million more people in the UK now work from home.
 - c) 19 per cent of the UK workforce now works at home.
- 2 The definition of working from home does not include
 - a) sales reps who spend most of their time travelling.
 - b) people who only work from home one or two days a week.
 - c) people working at home in part-time jobs.
- 3 According to Marsha Hunt, the main savings teleworking offers companies are in
 - a) rent for office space.
 - b) equipment and technical support.
 - c) recruitment and training.
- 4 Teleworkers subsidise companies by
 - a) providing free office space.
 - b) doing unpaid overtime.
 - c) reducing staff turnover.
- 5 The main problem facing teleworkers is
 - a) the lack of technical support.
 - b) not being part of everyday office life.
 - c) the jealousy of office-based colleagues.
- 6 Marsha Hunt thinks that in future
 - a) the trend towards working from home will decrease.
 - b) more people will work from home one or two days a week.
 - c) companies will continue to reduce office space.

Vocabulary 4 Match the words from the text with their definitions.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1 hype | a) disadvantage |
| 2 commute | b) publicity that exaggerates the importance of something |
| 3 exodus | c) bitterness or anger at someone or something |
| 4 downside | d) being kept away from other people and things |
| 5 isolation | e) daily journey to work |
| 6 resentment | f) departure of many people at the same time |

Vocabulary practice

Managing 1 Use the noun form of the following verbs to complete the email below.

brief collaborate respond co-ordinate
motivate assign assess balance allocate

email RE: New sales project

From : Higgins, Alan [ajh@concam.co.uk]
Sent: Friday 7 December 10.17pm
To: Brownjohn, Cornelia
Subject: RE: New sales project

Connie

Sorry you couldn't make it to the meeting yesterday. I've attached your project ¹ brief outlining the strategy for the new sales project. It's going to be a tough ² _____ with ambitious targets but I'm sure you can do it.

We've already started recruiting the new team and the ³ _____ has been great. I'll hand over all the CVs for your ⁴ _____. I think it's very important that we get the right ⁵ _____ of personalities within the team – we don't want compatibility problems that will have a negative effect on ⁶ _____. I think it's vital you concentrate on team ⁷ _____ – so don't get too 'hands on' and involved on a day-to-day basis. The budget ⁸ _____ is quite generous so you should be able to afford to recruit the right people.

And finally, don't forget that ⁹ _____ with other offices is one of the prime objectives – so make sure communication channels are set up properly right at the start.

Good luck!

2 Match the words then use them to complete the sentences below.

real-time	units
online	information
flexible	advantage
business	support
competitive	working
communication	structure
company	processes
operating	channels

- Technology now gives us real-time information on sales as they happen so we can order products the moment we look as if we might run out of stock.
- The company is divided into six separate _____.
- We're assessing the effectiveness of our _____ to see whether we can improve the flow of information between project team members.
- They've streamlined their _____ by removing some of the layers of hierarchy in senior management.
- I don't think the new _____ policies have increased productivity, but letting employees work from home has certainly improved morale.
- Our web team will provide the _____ for the new product.
- We're hoping that by producing in the Czech Republic, we can get good quality at good prices, which will give us a _____ over our rivals.
- She wants us to review our _____ to find out how we can reduce production times and waste levels.

**Describing
tasks**

3 Match the words with opposite meanings.

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| 1 nimble | a) dynamic |
| 2 static | b) hampered |
| 3 feasible | c) focused |
| 4 flexible | d) simple |
| 5 complex | e) rigid |
| 6 diverse | f) impossible |

Writing practice: Organising a report

- Formal report** 1 You have been asked to write a report on how communication could be improved within your project team. You have made the following notes to help you plan your report. Use the notes to write a report of 200–250 words.

Notes on planning a report

Report making recommendations

- Start with an introduction
aim – to identify problems with communication within the team & make recommendations on how to improve it
- Findings – state your main points & give one or more supporting ideas for each main point
 - 1) *whole team rarely gets together*
 - 2) *people in different departments are in different parts of the building*
 - 3) *people don't copy emails to other team members*
- Conclusion – summarise your main points
 - 1) *improving procedures will improve attitudes among team members*
 - 2) *no real reason why communication shouldn't be better*
- Recommendation – say what action needs to be taken
 - 1) *schedule weekly meetings*
 - 2) *ensure people are copied in on emails*
 - 3) *organise a team-building seminar*

Don't forget to lay it out in separate paragraphs with headings!!