

## UNIT 5 CORPORATE LADDER

**UNIT OVERVIEW:** In this unit students will discuss jobs and work environments.

**Conversation Starters:** *Work Experiences*

Friends talk about jobs and career choices.

**Building Fluency**

Expressing suitability; verb phrases — work activities

**Conversation Model**

How's your new job? — Use intonation to show you haven't finished speaking

**Let's Talk About It:** *Can you handle it?*

Evaluate occupations and discuss whether or not they suit you.

**Conversation Idioms:**

make your way up the corporate ladder

am not office worker material

can't handle

being on my feet

stick it out a bit longer

spill the beans

keep at it

waste my life

make a big mistake

can't take it any longer

am not cut out for

is not for me

stare at a computer screen

It's so good to see you

get fired

figure out that...

after a while

Additional Links for this unit: Tom from the U.K. and Martin from the U.S. debate where to work.

<http://www.elllo.org/english/0601/T632-Martin-Interview.htm>

### STEP 1 BUILDING THE ATMOSPHERE

If you know your students have work experience, ask them if they like(d) their jobs or not. Next, ask your students to talk about under what circumstances they would consider quitting a job. If they do not have any work experience, simply ask why people quit their jobs in general. Write their ideas on the board. Tell your class that Amy has quit a job before. Have them listen to the **Amy and Erik introduction** for the reason why she quit (she realized she didn't like it). Provide hints as necessary. Finally, ask your students what they think about Amy's reason for quitting. Do they think it is a legitimate reason?

**Script [Track 30]**

Amy: Hi, and welcome to Unit 5, the "Corporate Ladder."

Erik: Amy, have you ever had a job that you really didn't like?

Amy: You mean like this one? Just joking!

Erik: Very funny.

Amy: Well, I had one job once, that was really good at first. But after a while, I realized that I actually didn't like it.

Erik: Really? Well, that's what our friends are talking about. Let's listen.

### STEP 2 CONVERSATION STARTERS: WORK EXPERIENCES

*Students will listen to people talk about jobs and career choices.*

#### 1. First Listening

- Books closed. Tell students that they are going to read the three questions for the First Listening exercise. Have students open their books at the same time and read the questions. When they finish, ask the class to close their books again. In pairs, have them try to remember what the questions were. Let them open their books again and check.
- Books closed, play the audio. After the audio is finished, allow the students to open their books and try to answer the questions. Have students discuss the answers in pairs. Play the audio again if need be.

- Note that this activity may reveal that some students do better by listening while not looking at the text, while other students will perform better by looking at the text. Encourage students to experiment with the styles and see what works best for them.

**PREVIEW:**

Direct the students' attention to the words in the box in the Second Listening activity. Allow students to ask about any unknown vocabulary.

**2. Second Listening**

Play the audio and ask students to fill in the missing words. Have students compare answers in pairs and then check as a class.

**Answer Key**

First Listening:

1 – c, 2 – a, 3 – a

Second Listening:

1 – corporate, 2 – unemployed, 3 – quit / stand, 4 – year, 5 – imagined, 6 – boring / material, 7 – happy

**BONUS**

Have students read and answer the questions in pairs. You may want to give your students a chance to read the script in pairs on page 85 before discussing the questions.

**Script [Track 31]**

**Soon:** Hey, Simon!

**Simon:** Oh, Soon, it's so good to see you! I can't believe it's only been a year since we graduated. It feels like a lifetime!

**Soon:** Yeah, I know what you mean.

**Simon:** So, come on! Spill the beans. How's life as a hot-shot business woman at Visi-Tech?! With your brains you must be making your way up the corporate ladder, hey?

**Soon:** Hmm. Well, not quite. Actually, I'm now officially unemployed.

**Simon:** What? You're joking, right? You didn't get fired, did you?

**Soon:** No, no, no. I quit. I couldn't stand the place any longer.

**Simon:** Geez, after only a year? What was so bad that made you want to quit?

**Soon:** Well, I guess I just realized that I wasn't cut out for the job. I mean, it was completely different from what I imagined when I applied.

**Simon:** Oh. How so?

**Soon:** I thought I would have more responsibility, more challenges, you know? But all I ever did was photocopying and data entry. It was so boring. I guess I'm just not office worker material.

**Simon:** So you just quit? Man, that's so unlike you. Why didn't you just keep at it and show them what you could do?

**Soon:** You know, I don't see what the big deal is with quitting.

**Simon:** Hmm.

**Soon:** I guess I figured out that spending every day just sitting behind a desk staring at a computer screen isn't for me. And I didn't want to sit around waiting for some chance that might never come. I don't want to waste my life.

**Simon:** Hmm. Well, it's a bit of a shock. But as long as you're happy, I guess.

**Soon:** Yeah, well, I guess.

**STEP 3 BUILDING FLUENCY: EXPRESSING SUITABILITY**

*Students will practice using phrases for expressing suitability as well as several verb phrases for describing work activities.*

**1. Expressions**

- Have students decide which expressions mean that something is suitable and which mean that something is not suitable. Elicit the answers as a class.
- Then, put students in pairs. To reinforce the language, have them play a game in which partner A closes the book. Partner B then reads one of the expressions. Partner A has to try to remember the other phrases that have a similar meaning.

**Answer Key**

I don't think it suits me = 1, 3, 4

I think it suits me = 2, 5, 6

**2. Vocabulary**

Have students match the phrases to the best images. Allow students to go over the answers in pairs before checking as a class.

Next, still working in pairs, have students think of three jobs for each phrase that matches the description (for example: wearing a suit = banker, businessman, government official, etc). After the students have come up with two or three jobs for each phrase, have them switch partners and compare their jobs.

**HOW THE GRAMMAR WORKS**

Note to your students that these expressions are not synonyms for "it suits me" or "it doesn't suit me" but are common phrases we use when talking about suitability. Also be sure to inform them of the slightly different meanings and levels of strength/weakness that each expression has.

**Unsuitable: 1 = Strongest; 3 = Neutral**

- 1) I can't handle it: I can't deal with it, I'm physically / mentally unable to do it
- 2) I'm not cut out for it: I don't think I have the necessary capacity to do it
- 3) It's not for me: I don't like it and am not interested in doing it

**Suitable: 1 = Strongest; 3 = Neutral**

- 1) I enjoy it: I love doing it
- 2) I don't mind it: I don't love it, but I'm not at all opposed to doing it
- 3) I'm quite happy to do it: I would be willing to do it (this is often used in response to an open request for someone to volunteer to do something)

**NOTES**

- The strength of "I don't mind" and "I'm quite happy to" depends on voice tone.
- When expressing "suitability," "I'm not cut out for," "I don't mind," "... is not for me" are not used in positive forms. Likewise, "I'm quite happy to" is not used in a negative form.

**3. Let's Practice**

Have students work in pairs to practice talking about what is suitable or not suitable for them. Encourage students to ask follow-up questions and to give more details in their answers. They could start with the question:

How do you feel about wearing a suit?

**STEP 4 CONVERSATION MODEL: HOW'S YOUR NEW JOB?**

*Students will look at the use of intonation to indicate when one hasn't finished speaking.*

**Optional Warm-up:**

- Write the following questions on the board.
  - 1) *How does the man feel about his job?*
  - 2) *What is something he does not mind?*
  - 3) *What is something he doesn't like?*
- Books closed. Direct the students to the questions on the board. Next, have the students listen to the audio and try to answer the questions above. After listening as needed, students compare answers in pairs and then as a class.

**1. Situation**

- Have your students check the conversation for unknown words, and explain any difficult phrases.

**VOCAB TROUBLESHOOTING**

Hey – Hi

You're making good money – You're making a lot of money

Stick it out a bit longer – not give up and keep trying

## HOW THE PRONUNCIATION WORKS: USE INTONATION TO SHOW YOU HAVEN'T FINISHED SPEAKING

Introduce the unit pronunciation point which looks at the use of intonation to “hold the floor” or indicate that you haven’t finished speaking. When we’ve finished speaking, or finished “our turn,” we typically indicate this by making our voices go down at the end of the sentence. However, there are many cases where grammatically it may seem that we’ve finished saying what we want to say, but actually we have more to add. In these cases we must raise our voices to indicate this. Therefore, because after saying “I don’t mind the money” the male character in the **Conversation Model** also intends to add “but staring at a computer screen all day is not for me” he must make his voice go up on “money” and down on “me.” (Note that it may also be possible to make his voice go down on “money” and up on “but” if the pause between “money” and “but” is kept to a minimum.)

- Next, play the conversation model [Track 32] and encourage students to listen out for the pronunciation of “I don’t mind the money, but...”.
- As a class do a choral practice of this conversation, focusing particularly on the pronunciation point. Say each line or chunk, and have your students repeat.

## EXTRA PRONUNCIATION POINTS: CUT AND BLEND SOUNDS, JUMP THE /T/ SOUND

Not so great – no(t) so great

I’m just not cut out for – I’m jus no(t) *cu dou(t)* for

You’ll get used to it after a while – you’ll ge(t) use(d) to *itaf(t)ara* while

I should stick it out a bit longer – I shoul(d) *sti kitou tabi(t)* longer

### 2. Substitution

Have students work individually to connect the phrases in the columns to make a coherent conversation. Then, have students compare answers in pairs.

#### Answer Key

Being a tutor – teaching children – dealing with parents

Being an accountant – working with numbers – the stress

Working as a gardener – working outside – straining my back all day

Being a waitress – being on my feet all day – dealing with rude customers

### 3. Practice

- Have students use the **substitution** words to practice the conversation. Remind them to take particular care when saying “I don’t mind the money, but...”.
- Have early finishers create their own conversations.
- Choose a pair to demonstrate the conversation. Comment on how they made their voices go up to hold the floor, and offer pronunciation and intonation advice as necessary.

## STEP 5 LET’S TALK ABOUT IT: CAN YOU HANDLE IT?

*Students will evaluate several occupations and discuss whether or not they think these occupations suit them.*

### Optional Warm-up

- Have students choose six jobs from the list of job titles (they can simply underline or put a (√) next to the words). Then in pairs, have them describe the jobs to their partner without using any of the words in the actual job title. Set a time limit of one minute per exchange and see if students can get their partner to guess all six jobs in one minute. See sample below:

A: *This person mops floors, washes dishes, folds clothes...*

B: *House cleaner.*

A: *Correct. Next, this person helps students, gives homework...*

B: *Teacher.*

- Encourage students to change lists after each round of exchanges. Have students practice with three different partners.

### 1. Get Ready

Have students write down difficult things for each job and whether they can handle it. Monitor the students as they fill in the table and assist as needed.

## 2. Let's Talk

Put students in small groups to discuss their answers. Be sure that they record the names of classmates who are interested in each job. Have students keep tabs on how the group feels about each job. (i.e. three out of four would like to be a teacher).

## 3. Follow Up

Before each group reports their findings to the class, give them a chance to tally up their findings (for example, three out of four would enjoy being a teacher). If possible keep a running tally on the board for each job to see which job(s) are most and least popular.

### BONUS: Speaking Activity

If time permits, have students try the bonus speaking questions. This could be done as either a pair/group/class discussion or an extemporaneous speaking exercise.

### BONUS ACTIVITY

- Being able to talk unprepared on any given topic is what conversation is all about. Moreover, this kind of task is also included in many popular language proficiency tests, such as TOEFL, IELTS and the speaking/writing TOEIC test.
- With only 20 seconds' preparation time, see how long your students can talk about the topics listed in the **Bonus Speaking Activity** (aim for about one minute). Most students have difficulty speaking continuously and logically for one minute at first, but can speak for a longer period when made aware of the importance of structure in their response (for example, opinion – reasons/details – conclusion). Having a sound structure can help them manage their thoughts and keep their responses logical. After practicing a few times, try again and see who can talk on the theme the longest. This activity can also be tried as a “quick writing” exercise.

## STEP 6 LANGUAGE AWARENESS

Assign the language awareness activity on page 85 for homework. If necessary, do the first one or two questions together as a class. Leave 5 or 10 minutes at the beginning of the next class to go through the answers.

### Answer Key

1. It's so good to see you!
2. It feels like a lifetime!
3. Spill the beans.
4. You must be making your way up the corporate ladder.
5. You didn't get fired, did you?
6. Geez
7. How so?
8. I'm just not office worker material.
9. keep at it
10. hmm

## STEP 7 AMY'S CAREER TIP

Many students say that they want a job where they can use their English. However, students are often not sure of what kind of job they want to do and what jobs actually require English skills. Knowing that one's dream job requires English skills can motivate some students with their study. However, we all know that foreign language skills in themselves in most cases will not directly lead to getting a job. Even translation and interpreting, one job area that many students express interest in, require completely different skills and knowledge in addition to competence in at least two languages. The sooner students realize this, the better. Here are some ways to help your students:

- In some countries there are whole magazines and books dedicated to advising people who are interested in using English in their careers. Directing students to this literature may be useful.
- Having students search job advertisements for jobs that require proficiency in a foreign language may also be an interesting exercise.
- Another idea is to have students write letters to people in their country who use English in their work (for example translators, actors, business people, administration workers in the international center of local universities, language teachers, diplomats, etc.) and ask them about their use of English at work and how they prepared themselves for this.

## STEP 8 UNIT TEST

Make copies of the Unit Test for each student. Start by playing the audio for the Listening section (download Track 5 from <http://www.elttestcenter.com>). Decide whether you give them one or two listenings. Then, allow the students about 5-10 minutes to complete the rest of the test. Correct the test in class, and record the score.

**AUDIO Script**

Over the summer, I worked as an assistant sales person for an office equipment company. Basically, my job was to call up companies and see if they were interested in buying a new photocopier, or new computers, or office furniture, or whatever. But, trust me, it's not that easy to call up a complete stranger and sell them something they don't want or need. I can handle talking to people I don't know. In fact, I really enjoy it. But this summer, I realized that I'm just not cut out for selling things.

**Answer Key****Part A.**

1. c
2. d

**Part B.**

3. do volunteer work
4. being a doctor
5. is not for me
6. handle

**Part C.**

7. feet
8. desk
9. self-employed
10. staring