

THREE WISE KANGAROOS

BUSINESS ENGLISH THROUGH DISCUSSION



***10 Lessons for
Today's
Workplace***

current business
trends

focused on
developing
practical skills

suitable for B1–C1
learners

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Introduction

Business English Through Discussion is a practical and engaging resource designed to help learners build the language and communication skills needed to succeed in today's business environment. Through carefully selected readings, thought-provoking discussions, and interactive speaking activities, learners develop the confidence to communicate effectively while expanding their Business English vocabulary in context.

The e-book is organised into ten theme-based units, each centred on a contemporary business topic. Every unit includes a concise reading text, comprehension questions, discussion tasks, vocabulary extension, additional speaking practice, and a roleplay activity. Together, these components provide a balanced approach to language learning, integrating reading, speaking, and vocabulary development in a meaningful and communicative way.

The topics have been chosen to reflect current trends and challenges in the modern workplace, encouraging learners to explore issues from multiple perspectives. The discussion activities promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to express and justify opinions—essential skills for effective communication in professional settings. The roleplays offer learners the opportunity to put newly acquired language into practice by simulating realistic workplace scenarios, helping to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world communication.

Vocabulary is introduced in context and reinforced through clear definitions, practical examples, and communicative tasks, enabling learners to understand not only the meaning of new expressions but also how to use them naturally and accurately.

Designed for learners at B1, B2, and C1 levels, ***Business English Through Discussion*** is a flexible resource for both classroom teaching and self-study. Whether used as a complete course or as a source of supplementary materials, it provides engaging, up-to-date content that encourages meaningful communication while equipping learners with the language and confidence to navigate today's business world.

1. THE RISE OF THE “ANTI-OFFICE OFFICE” TREND

Offices are shifting from “where you sit” to places you want to go



For decades, offices followed a fairly predictable formula: rows of desks, fluorescent lighting, gray carpets, and small meeting rooms with little personality. However, as workplace expectations have evolved, many companies have started embracing a new concept known as the “anti-office office.” This trend aims to create workspaces that feel less like traditional offices and more like places where people actually want to spend time.

The anti-office office combines elements of home, cafés, hotels, and even leisure spaces. Instead of assigned desks and formal cubicles, employees may find comfortable sofas, quiet reading corners, plants, artwork, and open social areas. Some workplaces even include game rooms, fitness spaces, or kitchens designed to encourage informal conversations and collaboration.

The trend gained momentum after the COVID-19 pandemic, when millions of employees became used to working from home. Returning to a rigid office environment suddenly felt unnecessary and, for many, unattractive. As a result, employers realized that if they wanted people back in the workplace, the office needed to offer something employees could not get at home—community, creativity, and flexibility.

Supporters argue that anti-office offices improve morale, encourage innovation, and help companies attract talent. Critics, however, question whether such spaces can sometimes become distracting or blur the line between work and relaxation. Nevertheless, as businesses continue to compete for skilled employees, the anti-office office appears to be more than just a passing trend.

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What was the typical design of traditional offices in the past?
2. What kinds of features can employees find in an anti-office office?
3. Why did the anti-office office trend become more popular after the pandemic?
4. According to the text, what did employers realize about bringing employees back to the workplace?
5. What are two advantages and one possible disadvantage of anti-office offices mentioned in the text?



The anti-office offers home-like, function-driven spaces to create an environment people want to work in.

Over to you:

- Would you prefer working in a traditional office or an anti-office office? Why?
- What makes a workplace comfortable and motivating for you?
- Do you think office design affects productivity? Why or why not?
- Have you ever worked or studied in a space designed like a café or lounge? What was it like?
- Should companies invest money in creating more attractive workspaces, or focus on salaries and benefits instead?
- Do you think working from home has permanently changed people's expectations about offices? Why?
- Could an anti-office office be distracting for some employees? In what ways?
- Do you think younger employees value workplace design more than older generations? Why or why not?
- In the future, do you think offices will disappear completely, or will they simply change? Why?

Useful Vocabulary

office-centric culture

A workplace culture built around physical office presence.

Example: Some companies still maintain an office-centric culture.

to enhance creativity

To improve or increase someone's ability to produce original ideas or think in innovative ways.

Example: Many anti-office spaces are designed to enhance creativity through flexible layouts and inspiring design.

to avoid burnout

To prevent physical or mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress, pressure, or overwork.

Example: Flexible schedules can help employees avoid burnout and maintain a healthier work-life balance.

to foster collaboration

To encourage people to work together, share ideas, and cooperate effectively toward common goals.

Example: Open social spaces in modern offices are intended to foster collaboration among team members.

hot-desking

A system where employees do not have assigned desks.

Example: Hot-desking became common after companies downsized office space.

to opt out (of something)

To choose not to participate.

Example: Many workers opted out of office-based contracts.

to phase something out

To gradually stop using or doing something.

Example: Some companies are phasing out assigned desks.

to be chained to your desk

To spend all your time working in one place.

Example: Nobody wants to feel chained to their desk anymore.

to break away from something

To leave a traditional system or pattern.

Example: Younger workers want to break away from office culture.

to think outside the box

To think creatively or unconventionally.

Example: Remote teams often have to think outside the box.

More conversation

1. What are the biggest advantages and disadvantages of an **office-centric culture**?
2. Can office design really **enhance creativity**, or is creativity mostly personal?
3. What strategies do you use **to avoid burnout** in your professional or personal life?
4. Do you think **hot-desking** saves money at the expense of employee comfort?
5. Why do some employees **opt out of** traditional office jobs?
6. Could companies eventually **phase out** physical offices completely?
7. What tools or practices help remote teams **foster collaboration**?

IN WORKPLACE NAPPING

Several forward-thinking companies now allow or encourage on-the-job napping to boost employee wellness, productivity, and creativity. Major firms like Google, Nike, Zappos, Ben & Jerry's, and Uber offer dedicated nap rooms or specialized sleep pods. These initiatives are designed to help employees recharge, with 20-30 minute naps enhancing memory, focus, and reducing stress.

1. Do you think allowing employees to nap during working hours is a smart investment or an unnecessary perk? Why?
2. Research suggests that a 20–30 minute nap can improve focus, memory, and creativity. If your employer offered a sleep pod, would you actually use it, or would you feel uncomfortable sleeping at work?
3. Do initiatives like nap rooms genuinely improve employee well-being and productivity, or are they sometimes used to encourage people to spend even more time at work?



Nap pods are part of making the office feel more like a hospitality or wellness space rather than a traditional workplace.

Time to re-think the office!

Your company has decided to invest in new facilities to create a better working environment. Look at the following options and roleplay a meeting. Talk about the pros and cons of each idea and decide which 5 the company should opt for.

Wellness and recovery spaces

- nap pods / sleep capsules
- massage chairs
- meditation or mindfulness rooms
- quiet “decompression” rooms with dim lighting
- on-site yoga / pilates studios

Residential-style kitchens and cafés

- barista coffee bars
- open kitchens with communal dining tables
- free breakfast stations
- healthy snack bars
- smoothie or juice bars

Outdoor lifestyle spaces

- rooftop terraces
- outdoor meeting gardens
- firepit lounges
- outdoor coworking patios
- BBQ areas

Biophilic spaces: bringing nature indoors

- indoor gardens
- trees and large plant installations
- water features
- natural materials like wood, cork, stone
- skylights and maximum natural light

Fitness + active commuting facilities

- on-site gym
- bike storage
- showers and changing rooms
- standing workstation areas
- indoor walking tracks