

Unit 1: Understanding Your Workplace

- 1.1 Who works here?
- 1.2 Understanding your job
- 1.3 Understanding others' jobs
- 1.4 What do I do now?



1.1

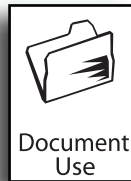
Who works here?

Instructor notes

Introduction and topic background

This topic includes information about how workplaces are organized, including departments and job titles. Understanding who works at a workplace helps new employees understand how they fit in. The materials in this topic examine some similarities between workplaces, but also emphasize that each workplace is different. By learning about similarities and differences between workplaces, learners will be better prepared to recognize how they fit into new workplaces.

Focus on essential skills



Before you get started

You may wish to prepare for this topic by reflecting on your own experiences, including your current position, in workplaces with different organizational structures. Consider your co-workers, reporting structures, names of departments, titles of managers and supervisors.

Key messages



These are the key messages that will be reinforced throughout this topic. Keep these in mind as you lead the discussions.

1. Each workplace is different; some differences are due to size of organization and sector.
2. All workplaces have an organizational structure; understanding the organizational structure helps you understand how you fit in.
3. Organizational charts are a formal way to represent who works at an organization and reporting structures.
4. Very few workers are familiar with the job titles of everyone in their workplace.

Instructions



1. Begin exploring this topic with learners using the **Discussion questions**. Next have learners read and answer the questions about job titles and departments. For learners with stronger reading skills you may wish to adapt these activities. Instead of distributing the handouts, consider asking learners to generate department functions and job titles within the different organizations.
2. Following the introductory activities, have learners read the workplace scenarios and answer the questions. The final two questions can be used to generate class or small group discussion.
3. If appropriate for learners in your class, distribute the **Organizational chart** and explain how the chart is organized. Organizational charts illustrate hierarchies and reporting structures within an organization. Point out that readers start from the top and work their way down to interpret the chart.
4. Have learners work on their own to answer the questions about the chart and to create

their own organizational chart. As with the previous activity, you can use the final few questions as a starting point for class or small group discussion.

Discussion questions



Discuss the following questions with your learners. Record differences on a whiteboard or flip chart paper for everyone's reference.

1.
 - a) What was your job title?
 - b) What was your supervisor's title?
 - c) Who did your supervisor report to?
 - d) Was it a large or small company?
 - e) What were some of the departments?
 - f) What kind of job was it? (Organize jobs into sectors for learners' reference.)
 - Accommodation and Food Service (Service and Hospitality)
 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
 - Construction
 - Finance and Insurance
 - Health Care
 - Retail Trade
 - Transportation and Warehousing
 - Manufacturing
 - Motive Power

2. Ask learners if they can identify any patterns across the responses they generated based on the size of organization or the sector.

Related topics

1.3: *Understanding others' jobs*

Other resources that teach this topic

- Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training (2004) *Job well done: ASPECT's guide to success at work*. Victoria, BC: Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training.

Extension activities

Find several other examples of organizational charts on the Internet. Discuss how they look; compare similarities and differences.

Have learners call, tour or conduct an interview at a workplace that interests them. They could ask for materials such as organizational charts that they can then present to the class.

Departments, titles and more

Workplaces are usually organized into departments. In smaller workplaces there are usually fewer departments than in larger workplaces.

Below you will see some common departments listed. Match the name of the department with its function:

Department	Function
Finance/Accounting	Issues paycheques
Human Resources	Develops new products
Sales	Makes the products a company sells
Research & Development	Sells products
Production	Makes hiring decisions

Who reports to who?

Within departments, responsibility is shared between different workers. Usually, there is a hierarchy, which means that some workers are responsible for the work of others.

Job titles can provide some information about employees' responsibilities and position within a workplace. Generally, larger organizations have three or four levels of staff.

Level	Sample Job Titles
Executive	executive director, president, owner
Management	general manager, district manager, assistant manager
Supervisor	supervisor, foreman
Staff	associate, clerk, operator Note: Co-workers may have very different titles from each other.

It's your turn

Read the following job titles within each of the three tables below. Write the level beside each job title: executive, manager, supervisor or staff. Remember, not all organizations have employees at every level.

Small Construction Company

Job Title	Level
Bricklayer	
Owner/President	
Lead Hand	
Vice-President	

Large Manufacturing Company

Job Title	Level
Painter	
Finishing Manager	
President	
Director of Production	
Paint Supervisor	

Grocery Store

Job Title	Level
Cashier	
Assistant Manager	
Owner	
Manager	
Clerk	

Common abbreviations

There are many common abbreviations you will see at work. Some refer to departments and job titles. Write the full word or words beside the short forms and abbreviations below:

Dept. _____

HR _____

Mgr. _____

Asst. _____

Dir. _____

Org. _____

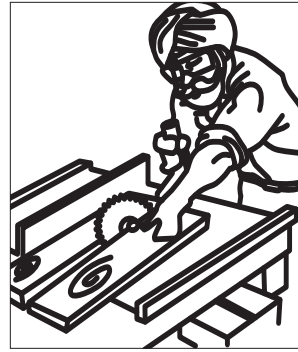
Prod. _____

VP _____

Common Abbreviations Answers: Department, Human Resources, Manager, Assistant, Director, Organization/Organizational, Production, Vice-President

On the job

Dave is a table saw operator at Desks Plus. He spends most of his day cutting large pieces of wood that will be assembled into desks. He works with five other machine operators who report to a machining supervisor. When he sees Gina, the manufacturing manager, come into the plant to talk to his supervisor, Dave usually has an idea that he might be asked to stop what he is doing to work on something else. Gina is usually bringing news from the production director that work priorities have changed.



1. What's Dave's job title?

2. What's his supervisor's job title?

3. Who does his supervisor report to?

On the job

Amy is a store manager for SunGirl, a clothing store located in a large mall. SunGirl is a large company with many different locations throughout the country. A team of sales associates and an assistant manager all report to Amy. Every week, Amy meets with the district manager and the other store managers in the city to learn about new clothing lines and to find out how the company's sales and profits are. Once a year all of the store managers from across the country, plus everyone from head office, get together for a retreat. This year they plan to hold the retreat in Amy's hometown.



1. What is Amy's job title?

2. Who does Amy work for?

3. Who works for Amy?
