

Working with words

- 1 Read these comments from people talking about their places of work. Match the compound adjectives from the list to the comments.

badly equipped run down cramped
 spacious well equipped old-fashioned
 state-of-the-art well maintained

- 1 'I can't even stand up in here. Isn't it time we had bigger offices?' *cramped*
- 2 'The problem is, that we have more people than there are computers.' _____
- 3 'Our new factory has the most modern equipment in the world. They say the design and layout is how all production lines will be in the future.' _____
- 4 'Since we replaced the old computers with laptops, there's so much more room to work in.' _____
- 5 'They employ a lot of staff to keep the building in an excellent condition. Any repair work is done immediately.' _____
- 6 'I have everything I need in my office. A computer, a photocopier, a fax, and a coffee machine.' _____
- 7 'We have to keep calling the technicians out to fix the machinery. And when was the last time the walls were painted?' _____
- 8 'We all sit in rows and the boss sits at the front, watching us. No one is allowed to talk to anyone else unless we ask him first.' _____

- 2 Choose the correct answer from the words in *italics*.

- 1 The colour isn't *exactly* / *very* what I had in mind.
- 2 That's totally out of the question. It's *fairly* / *quite* impossible.
- 3 Sorry, I'm *really* / *exactly* tired. Can we stop there?
- 4 That's *fairly* / *quite* a good idea. Shall we see what the others think?
- 5 The negotiations went *fairly* / *extremely* well. We didn't get everything we wanted, but neither did they. I still think we might get what we want in the end.
- 6 This new software is *pretty* / *not very* easy to use. I learnt all the basic functions in less than an hour.
- 7 We're all *not exactly* / *extremely* happy with your performance this year, so I see no need for you to make any changes.
- 8 She's a *very* / *pretty* effective manager who deserves the huge salary she receives.

Business communication skills

- 1 Rewrite these sentences starting with the words given.

- 1 I'm not sure it's a good idea to do this.
I have a few reservations *about doing this*.
- 2 How about changing the colour?
Why don't we _____?
- 3 Let's ask them to make a better offer.
I think we should consider _____.
- 4 I don't think we'll be able to convince them about our proposals.
It might prove _____.
- 5 Perhaps we could provide some chairs.
Couldn't _____?
- 6 We could always have music in the factory.
Have you thought about _____?
- 7 Do you mind if I don't come?
I'd rather _____.
- 8 I'd recommend looking at this again tomorrow morning.
I'd recommend that _____.

- 2 Complete the words in these responses.

- A What do you think of this idea?
 B Great. I ¹*really* *like* it.
 A It seems like a bad plan to me.
 B No! It's a ²*g*_____ *i*_____.
 A I think we should change the office round so that everyone shares desks.
 B Sorry, but I don't think that ³*w*_____ *w*_____.
 A This new system seems slower than the old one.
 B Yes, and ⁴*o*_____ *t*_____ of that, it's more expensive.
 A What do you think of our new TV commercial?
 B Well, it isn't clear what we're selling and ⁵*i*_____ a _____ to that, it's boring.
 A Let's cancel the order for new desks.
 B Yes, I like the old ones. ⁶*B*_____, we can't afford them.

Language at work | Nouns and quantifiers

Nouns

Form

1 Nouns are either countable or uncountable. Countable nouns have a singular and plural form. Uncountable nouns have one form.

Countable nouns: *chair (chairs), employee (employees), computer (computers)*

Uncountable nouns: *time, money, information, coffee*

2 Most plural countable nouns end in -s but some are irregular.

man men child children

Sometimes a speaker may make an uncountable noun countable.

Would you like a (cup of) coffee?

Language tip

Nouns that are countable in a lot of other languages are uncountable in English.

Do say: *accommodation*

Don't say: *an accommodation, accommodations*

Other examples: *information, advice, equipment, furniture*

Quantifiers

Use

1 Use *some, any, a lot of* with countable AND uncountable nouns.

There are a lot of employees in this factory.

There's a lot of money in my bank account.

2 Use *many* and *a few* ONLY with plural countable nouns.

How many employees are there? Only a few.

3 Use *much* and *a little* ONLY with uncountable nouns.

How much information do you have? Only a little.

4 *Any, much,* and *many* are mostly used in questions or negative statements.

How much money do you need?

Do you have any problems?

He doesn't do much work.

There aren't many employees in this company.

5 *Some* is mostly used in questions or positive statements.

Could you give me some help?

I've got some work for you to do.

6 *A lot of* can be used with questions, negative statements, and positive statements.

He gets / doesn't get a lot of support in his job.

Do you get a lot of emails every day?

7 To make a comparison with countable or uncountable nouns you can use *more*.

I need more time to work on this!

We need more clients!

8 To make the comparative of *little / not much* with uncountable nouns, use *less*.

My new boss has little time for my questions.

My boss has less time for my questions than my old boss.

9 To make the comparative of *few / not many* with countable nouns, use *fewer*.

The company doesn't deal with many clients.

The company deals with fewer clients than it would like.

1 Tick (✓) the correct sentences. Change any incorrect sentences.

1 Do you have any informations about these people?

information

2 How many people do you employ? _____

3 Sorry, I don't have much time. Let's be quick. _____

4 A little customers have complained about the increase.

5 I'm afraid we don't have many paper in stock. _____

6 There isn't much demand for this line anymore.

7 Give him any more time to finish this. _____

8 I've got fewer space in my new office than in my old one.

9 A lot of people said they preferred the taste of this one.

10 I'd like a little help with that, please. _____

2 Two people are checking the store cupboard at work. Complete their conversation with a suitable quantifier.

A So, how ¹ many disks do we have in stock?

B Well, we only have a ² _____, so we probably ought to order some more.

A How about ink cartridges? I don't think there are ³ _____ left.

B Well, there's an extra box of them here, but we'll need ⁴ _____ more sooner or later.

A OK. What about the coffee machine? How ⁵ _____ coffee is there?

B There's a ⁶ _____ of that, but there aren't ⁷ _____ packets of tea.

A Right, so that's disks, ink cartridges, and tea. Anything else?

B Well, we don't have ⁸ _____ at the moment, but a ⁹ _____ people in the office have asked me if we can have biscuits for the tea breaks.

