

UNIT 6 **Company Action**



Work misdemeanours

Rank the work-related misdemeanours. Write "S" (serious), "NS" (not serious) or "QS" (quite serious) next to each one.

- Taking a day off when you aren't really sick.
- Bringing office supplies home with you.
- Selling company secrets to a rival business.
- Taking illegal substances whilst at work.
- Taking money out of the petty cash tin and not returning it.
- Taking money out of the petty cash tin and returning it at a later date.
- Giving details of company procedures, systems, objectives, goals, etc. to a rival.
- Unauthorised and personal use of the office photocopier.
- Punching an absent employee's clock card.

- Falsifying of expense claims in order to receive more money.
- Giving false details of employment qualifications or work experience during an interview.
- Telling lies to cover up work errors.
- Setting up a rival business that actually competes with the company where you are working.
- Receiving bribes at work.

Other?

Discussion

1. Which of the actions above are justifiable? Under what circumstances?
2. Which of the above actions are sackable offences? Why?
3. Have you heard any stories of unfair dismissal? What happened?

Vocabulary: The Office

▣ Definitions

Define the following words and terms. Then, make six sentences using any of the words.

1. Petty cash tin
2. Report
3. Clock card
4. Expense claim
5. Bribe
6. Office stationery
7. Disciplinary board
8. Punishment
9. Offence
10. Industrial espionage
11. Lie detector
12. Day off work
13. The sack (to get...)
14. Company secrets

▣ E-mail completion

Complete the e-mail with the words from below.

offence, warning, supplies, dismissal, personal, board, theft, incident

To: **jeffbroke@yahoo.com**
 Subject: **company policy update**

Dear Staff,

We're writing this e-mail to remind all staff of our strict policy toward (1) _____ in the workplace, and in particular the removal of office supplies. As you may be aware, we recently had to let Ms Jones go after an (2) _____ involving the office photocopier. May I just remind you that the office photocopier is for office-related work only. You are not permitted to use it for anything outside work. Anyone caught using the photocopier for (3) _____ use will be taken before a disciplinary (4) _____ and may face either suspension or instant (5) _____, depending on the gravity of the crime.

May I also take the opportunity to remind you that office (6) _____ (pens, pencils, paper, staples, scissors, etc.) are company property and as such they may NOT be taken home. Stealing company property is a serious (7) _____ and will result in instant dismissal. In the past, we have been more lenient with matters such as this, and have even let people off with a (8) _____, but the situation has become so serious that we have to do something about it. So, please bear this in mind for the future.

Yours,
Heather Mathews (Human Resources manager)

▣ Speaking questions – Office honesty

Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions.

1. What are the typical things that people lie about at work?
2. Do you think there's one rule for management and another for employees? Give examples.
3. Do you ever break the rules to get things done? When? Why?
4. Have you ever had to bend the truth a little to protect someone/yourself? Why?
5. What's the worst type of office "crime"?
6. Have there been any cases of people cheating on their expenses? Give details.
7. Should employees be given a second chance if they do something wrong? Why?
8. What typical punishments are there for office "crimes"? Which ones are the most effective?



Language Structures: Modal verbs

We use modal verbs to give our personal impressions of situations and events.

We can use modal verbs for a variety of functions, including making suggestions, giving advice, talking about obligation, etc.

Remember, there is no third-person "s" with "he/she/it", and there is no "to" with verbs following modal verbs.

Ability	<i>I can speak three languages. / They can't juggle.</i>
Past ability	<i>I could ride a bike when I was four. / I couldn't see it very well.</i>
Future ability	<i>I should be able to do it tomorrow. / She will be able to see you later.</i>
Advice	<i>You should go and see a doctor. / They shouldn't go outside.</i>
Suggestions	<i>We should go to the party. / They can stay at our house. / We could go to the cinema.</i>
Obligation	<i>She must tell us about it. / They must arrive early. / They have to finish it on time.</i>
No obligation	<i>You don't have to leave. / You needn't leave.</i>
Prohibition	<i>He mustn't speak like that. / You can't sit there.</i>
Possibility	<i>We might go tomorrow. / It may rain later. / It could be cold in the mountains.</i>
Offers to help	<i>I could lend you some money. / Shall I open the window for you?</i>
Guessing	<i>It could be a book. / It can't be a CD. / It must be Jim.</i>

☑ Sentence completion

Complete the sentences with your own ideas.

- I really think I should...
- My company must...
- We mustn't...
- We can't possibly...
- If I tried hard, I think I could...
- Tomorrow, it may...
- Next summer, we might...
- If I'm lucky, I should be able to...

☑ Helpful advice

Read the situations below (1 to 8) and think of some advice for each one. Use modal verbs.

- I haven't got any money for the train.
- We're going to be late.
- They're making a lot of noise upstairs.
- I'm bored.
- I'm really tired.
- I've got a report to finish for tomorrow.
- I've lost my credit card.
- I ordered a book from an online shop 3 months ago and it still hasn't arrived.

☑ Article completion

Read the article. Then, complete the readers' comments with modal verbs. In some cases, more than one answer may be possible.



News of the Day
Home News Videos Chat Blogs Contact Archive

Business news » TV

Office Thief Jailed
For almost 10 years, Paige Marston lulled her employers into believing she

was a capable accountant. She then exploited that trust to amass a fortune including investments and homes around the world. This is in addition to her collection of cars which included a top of the range BMW, and six Porsches. Marston, 39, was convicted on eight counts of false accounting. Her modus operandi was to gain the trust of her employees, then gradually transfer funds to a dormant company she had set up years earlier. She also made unauthorised withdrawals and wrongful salary payments.

Readers' Comments

This is what our readers think.

They (1) _____ make her pay the money back.
 You (2) _____ trust anyone these days.
 All companies (3) _____ carry out thorough checks on their employees.
 People with positions of trust (4) _____ be checked up on regularly.
 The government (5) _____ keep a database of these types of people, so companies (6) _____ check up on them.
 We (7) _____ stop things like this happening again.
 We (8) _____ let people like her get jobs so easily.

☑ Fluency practice

Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions.

- Is there anything that you can't do that you'd like to learn how to do?
- Is there anything that you should be doing right now?
- What kind of person must you be to work in your job?
- What should we be doing to stop global warming?
- Where might you be in 5 years' time?
- Where can you have a really cheap meal in your city?
- What should you take when visiting your country?
- What should be done about office theft?