



Contemporary Office Design

EXAMPLE

Reading Test

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Student

Time: *Approximately 1 hour*

Two types of lesson

Lesson#1: [Easy] **** * [B2/C1]

1. Predict the content of the text & write down the key terms & ideas.
2. Read the text. Check words & meanings with a dictionary.
3. Answer the questions.
4. Check your answers (pass mark is 70%).

Lesson #2: [Hard] **** * [C1]

1. Read text – no dictionary.
2. Answer the questions.
3. Check your answers (pass mark is 70%).

Teacher

Two types of lesson

Lesson#1: [easy] **** * [B2/C1]

1. Distribute **text 1 (without reference words underlined)** a week before the test. Students read, check vocabulary & meanings.
2. Test day. Distribute **text 2 (with reference words underlined)** & the **questions** (no dictionary or notes).
3. Set 1 hour to read the text & answer the questions.
4. Take in & correct or go through answers in class (pass mark is 70%).
5. Extra activity. Students write the *summary (add 30 minutes to the test).

Lesson #2: [hard] **** * [C1]

1. Test day. Distribute **text 2 (with reference words underlined)** & the **questions**.
2. Set 1 hour to read the text & answer the questions.
3. Take in & correct or go through answers in class (pass mark is 70%).
4. Extra activity. Students write the *summary (add 30 minutes to the test).

*Summary writing: <https://www.academic-englishuk.com/summary>

Contemporary Office Design

by H. Kennedy (2020)

The idea of working in an office once conjured up an image of people sitting at their desks in a cramped cubicle surrounded by [redacted] them. These days, office design has changed significantly with many high-profile companies such as [redacted]. Although it has [redacted] having an open plan office meant “workers were fitter and less stressed” (Counter, 2020 para. 2), in more recent times, the open plan [redacted] on well-being, productivity and teamwork.

Designing an office encompasses many factors including space, light, temperature and layout. Research has shown [redacted] impact on an employee’s health and performance. As stated by Soriano et al. (2018, p. 4), an office worker [redacted] the environmental [redacted] of [that] person to manage them”. Plus, if the activation level, that is to say the mental stimulation needed to be able to carry [redacted] that they cannot control, their performance will suffer. They also report that not only office [redacted] also those who have to interact with more people are most affected (Soriano et al., 2018). It [redacted] carefully consider the design of their offices.

Although the shift towards more open plan offices first appeared over fifty years ago, it has [redacted] felt since the [redacted] plan office for three main reasons. According to Counter (2020), the principal ideas are to increase [redacted] amongst staff, as well as strengthening relationships by removing hierarchies. However, several studies have shown that an open plan office does not come without [redacted] in offices which became open plan, “face-to-face interactions fell by 70%”. This was attributed to the “ [redacted] show they prefer [redacted] and are therefore left alone. However, Taskin (2020) claims that employees have less privacy in [redacted] Morrison and [redacted]. They report that female employees felt it resulted in their feeling as if they were being watched, so much so that [redacted] privacy could also lead to an increase in anxiety and stress, which in turn influences performance and productivity.

Another element of contemporary offices is hot desking. Put simply, it is the idea of moving away from [redacted] a typical desk is [redacted] of the time (Evans, 2020), the idea behind it is to save time. Yet many in the field believe it has had the opposite effect. [redacted] could be successful in smaller offices, in larger companies it can lead employees to waste more time when finding themselves unable [redacted] the group of employees that could be most affected by hot desking are trainees and new members of staff, who at [redacted] an increase in their [redacted] that support is not at an assigned desk. Moreover, Evans (2020) suggests that hot desking could result in an increase in noise levels and [redacted] may

be due to the fact that [REDACTED], this might not be to everyone's benefit.

It is likely that the idea [REDACTED] again, and several suggestions have been put forward by those in the field to be able to adapt offices for the coming years. [REDACTED]", that is, staff from different companies working side by side, which could increase an employee's networks, productivity, and trust in others and reduce [REDACTED] be designed with a "specific performance outcome" in mind (Waber et al., 2014, p. 3), which suggests that only [REDACTED] if required. This is echoed by Bernstein & Waber (2019) who also recommend not necessarily re-designing the whole space but simply making small [REDACTED] communal items. Moreover, they propose that current office managers conduct experiments to discover [REDACTED]

In sum, it is difficult to define what is the most beneficial design [REDACTED] most important [REDACTED] design to their employees to ensure staff well-being and the company's efficiency are at their highest.

References

Bernstein, E., and Waber, B. (2019). The Truth About Open Offices [online]. Harvard Business Review. [Viewed 2 April 2020]. Available from: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] company [online]. Forbes. [Viewed 2 April 2020]. Available from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/simonconstable/2019/06/20/how-hot-desking-will-kill-your-company/#49db398532e9>

Counter, R., (2020). Return to the [REDACTED] 3 April 2020]. Available from: <https://www.macleans.ca/society/life/office-workers-want-a-return-to-the-cubicle/>

[REDACTED] hip office design [online]. *Financial Times*. [Viewed 2 April 2020]. Available from: <https://www.ft.com/content/6990b29e-11d5-11ea-a225-db2f231cfeae>

Morrison, R. L. and Smollan, R. K., (2019). Open plan office space? If you're going to do it, do it right: A fourteen-month longitudinal case study. *Applied Ergonomics* [online]. **82**, 1 – 18. [Viewed 2 April 2020]. Available from [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to Work Performance: The Role of Work Patterns. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* [online]. **15**(8), 1 – 13. [Viewed 2 April 2020]. Available from: [REDACTED]

Taskin, L. et al., (2019). The dark side of office designs: towards de-humanization [online]. *New Technology Work and [REDACTED]* from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336382070> The dark side of office designs towards de-humanization

Waber, B. et al., (2014). Workspaces that move people [online]. *Harvard Business Review*. [Viewed 3 April 2020]. Available from: [REDACTED]

Comprehension Questions

1. Headings: Choose a subheading for each paragraph – one title is not needed.

1	G (Example)	A	Important considerations in office design.
2		B	[REDACTED]
3		C	Suggestions for future offices.
4		D	[REDACTED] as we thought.
5		E	Implications for future managers and designers.
6		F	[REDACTED]
		G	How the contemporary office has evolved.

___ / 5

2. Open questions

i.	Paragraph 1: Why have people become more critical of open plan offices?
ii.	Paragraph 2: What is the [REDACTED] level?
iii.	Paragraph 3: What are the main problems with open-plan offices?
iv.	Paragraph 4: Why is [REDACTED] ?
v.	Paragraph 5: Name one of the suggestions put forward in this paragraph.

___ / 5

3. True / False / Not Given – one question per paragraph

		T / F / NG
Paragraph 1		
i.	Google and Facebook [REDACTED] and less stressed employees.	
Paragraph 2		
ii.	Workers who have more tasks to do but fewer interactions are most affected.	
Paragraph 3		
iii.	The first open plan [REDACTED]	
Paragraph 4		
iv.	Workers are [REDACTED] the day.	

___ / 4

4. Reference Words

Explain what these reference words connect to: (underlined in the text)

Paragraph	Word	Connection
1	Its	<i>Open-plan office (example)</i>
2	They	
3	They	
4	This	
5	They	

___ / 4

5. Stance

i.	How does the writer perceive the overall evolution of the office?
ii.	Why does the writer consider the design of their offices?
iii.	Do you believe the writer is in favour of open plan offices?
Circle the correct answer:	
Yes	No Both types of office space

___ / 3

6. Matching words with definitions

	Word from text		Definition
i.	conjure up (v.)		A result
ii.	detrimental (adj.)		B system in which members of an organization are
iii.	hierarchy (n.)		C be provided with something that is only for you
iv.	allocate; assign (v.)	→	D
v.	outcome (n.)		E harmful

i.	D	ii.		iii.		iv.		v.	
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7. Multiple choice questions

- i. Why do employers opt for an open plan office? (choose only one answer)
- a) To encourage more collaboration.
 - b) [REDACTED]
 - c) To foster more constructive relationships.
 - d) All of the above.
- ii. Where might hot desking have the most success? (choose only one answer)
- a) [REDACTED]
 - b) in smaller offices.
 - c) [REDACTED]
 - d) in neither large nor small offices.
- iii. What does hot desking lead to a reduction in? (choose only one answer)
- a) distractions.
 - b) noise.
 - c) [REDACTED]
 - d) all of the above.
- iv. What did female employees do as a result of open plan offices? (choose only one answer)
- a) worked at home more.
 - b) [REDACTED].
 - c) became more isolated.
 - d) [REDACTED]
- v. What do Bernstein and Waber suggest future offices should do? (choose only one answer)
- a) change the furniture.
 - b) [REDACTED]
 - c) change and move the furniture.
 - d) re-[REDACTED]

___ / 5

8. Summary completion with collocations

The writer describes how contemporary offices have changed (i) _____ over the years. Studies have shown that the [REDACTED] important as (ii) many _____ factors can have a both a positive and negative impact on a worker's performance. Open plan [REDACTED] companies have (iii) _____ but they have not been altogether successful. Hot desking is another element of [REDACTED] complained of it being a (iv) _____ of time. For future office design, some experts believe managers should (v) _____ [REDACTED] office should be designed.

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Overall Score: ___ / 35

Comprehension Questions **ANSWERS**

1. Headings: Choose a subheading for each paragraph – one title is not needed.

1	G	A	Important considerations in office design
2	A	B	The problems of not having an allocated desk
3	D	C	Suggestions for future offices
4	B	D	Why open plan offices are not as beneficial as we thought
5	C	E	Implications for future managers and designers
6	E	F	The best way to organise your office space at home
		G	How the contemporary office has evolved

___ / 5

2. Open questions

i.	Paragraph 1: Why have people become more critical of open plan offices?
	Because of the negative effects on well-being, productivity and teamwork.
ii.	Paragraph 2: What is the consequence of a high activation level?

ALL ANSWERS ARE INCLUDED IN PAID VERSION...