

CHAPTER SEVEN

WORKING



Is working in Korea the same or different from working in the West?
What general characteristics do we find in the traditional Korean office which make it different from the typical office abroad?

IN THIS CHAPTER, STUDENTS WILL

- 1. EXAMINE THEIR OPINIONS ABOUT THE WORK ENVIRONMENT.**
- 2. LEARN ABOUT THE KEY CONCEPTS IN THE CHAPTER—*HIERARCHY, MERIT, POWER DISTANCE AND SENIORITY.***
- 3. READ THE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ABOUT WORKING IN KOREA.**
- 4. REREAD THE DISCUSSION AND ANSWER READING TASKS.**
- 5. TAKE THE READING COMPREHENSION TEST.**
- 6. DISCUSS THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE AND INTERVIEW WORKING PEOPLE.**
- 7. ACT OUT ROLE PLAYS AND DO A LISTENING EXERCISE.**
- 7. DO EXERCISES ON THE PASSIVE VOICE.**
- 8. DO A CROSSWORD PUZZLE BASED ON THE WORDS IN THE CHAPTER.**

LET'S START WITH YOU

Rate the following statements according to this scale:

- 5—strongly agree
- 4—agree
- 3—neither agree nor disagree
- 2—disagree
- 1—strongly disagree



1. ____ In order to make money, a company needs to give special awards to its best employees.
2. ____ Group harmony is best maintained when no individuals stand out and everyone is just a member of the group.
3. ____ Going out drinking with colleagues after work is an important way of establishing good relationships.
4. ____ Because people of different ages have come to the workplace at different points in Korean history, their expectations are very different.
5. ____ Older employees deserve to have a higher position than younger employees, even if they're not particularly good at what they do.
6. ____ In order to have the job done properly, you need the right person doing it.
7. ____ In order to do a job properly, you need to use careful, logical methods and keep track of what you're doing.
8. ____ It is important to have open lines of communication from the top to the bottom and the bottom to the top of a company.
9. ____ Connections like family, regional, school or military ties should not affect people's working relationships with their colleagues.
10. ____ The people who do the work often have a better idea of how it should be done than the people on the top.

LET'S LOOK AT KEY CONCEPTS.

A **hierarchy** is an arrangement of people by rank and authority; it creates a distinction between **superior** or **supervisor** and **subordinate**. (neutral connotation)

The company has a **strict hierarchy** where all decisions are made at the top and just sent down to the employees. (neutral or negative)

In this **hierarchy**, you really have to go through channels. (neutral)

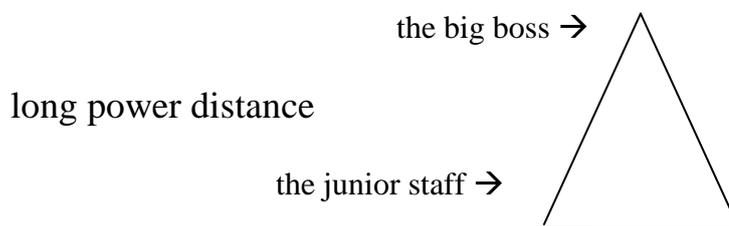
Merit is superior quality or excellence. On the job, merit includes the training, education and productivity of an employee. (neutral or positive)

The top science student received an award for **outstanding merit** and research potential. (positive)

The judge felt the lawsuit **had no merit** and should be dropped. (neutral or negative)

All the job candidates were **chosen on merit**, with no special consideration given to anyone. (neutral)

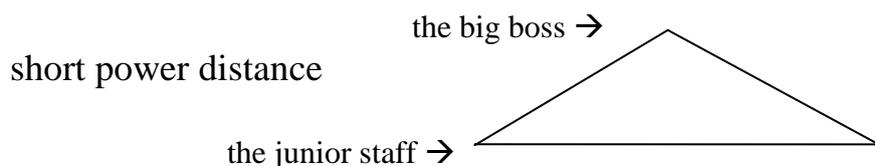
Power distance* goes from the people on the top to the people on the bottom of the hierarchy. The length of power distance in an organization is determined by how much distance the people on the bottom will tolerate. A company hierarchy with a **long power distance** tends to have more decisions made at the top and handed down to subordinates. There is little sense of equality among people of different levels, and people on or near the bottom have little opportunity to work independently. To get to one level from another, particularly to talk to people in positions above you, it is necessary to “go through channels,” or use the official routes of communication.



A company with a **short power distance** tends to have more of a feeling of equality. The flatter structure allows more horizontal interaction—that is, work among people on the same level, and decisions are made below the top level. More authority is delegated—that is, more responsibility is given to people on a lower level. The structure is likely to be more flexible, and it is probably less necessary to observe the official routes of communication, meaning

* Note: The concept of power distance comes from G. Hofstede, “Cultural differences in teaching and learning,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 10, 1986.

that, if you see the big boss waiting at the elevator, it is more acceptable to go over and start a conversation.



Seniority is rank or position based on length of service. For example, if a company needs to lay off a certain number of workers, seniority should protect the jobs of the long-term employees. The saying goes, “Last hired, first fired.” (neutral)

The foreman has **twenty-five years’ union seniority**. (neutral)

Last year the company began promoting employees **without regard for seniority**. (neutral)

We’ll do it my way. I have **more seniority** than you do, and I’m certainly not stupid. (neutral or positive)

LET’S TEST OURSELVES.

Without looking at the previous section, fill in the blanks to complete the sentences:

1. If the money and position an employee gets is based on merit, that means he or she needs to _____ in order to make more money and rise in the company.
2. If the money and position an employee gets is based on seniority, that means he or she needs to _____ in order to make more money and rise in the company.
3. Power distance is _____. If an organization has a long power distance, it means that _____ and _____.
4. The length of power distance is determined by _____.

LET'S JOIN THE ROUNDTABLE.

Reading tasks:

1. What happened when Scott tried to institute special recognition awards?
2. Could the problem be a reflection of the difference between individualistic and collectivist cultures? Explain.

Special recognition

Byoung-ok puts down his coffee cup and looks at the others. "I'd like to get your opinion on something," he says. "As you know, many Korean companies are borrowing ideas from foreign companies, which have the reputation of being more efficient. However, I know you people don't agree that Western ways are always the best."

"Right. What do you think of offering special recognition to employees so they will work harder?"

Scott laughs and says, "I made a lot of problems for myself when I first came to Korea three years ago. I didn't know any better. I read all the books on Korea and on Asia I could find, but nothing really prepared me for what I found here. I was sent to Korea to increase company profits. So shortly after I arrived, I announced that every month we would honor one employee for outstanding service to the company. That employee would be honored in a little ceremony and would receive a certificate and a cash award. Fine. When I announced this, no one said anything. Almost a month later, the employee had been selected, the ceremony was set for the following day, and people started coming to my office saying, 'You can't do this. This is Korea.' And I said, 'I know this is Korea. But these employees need to be motivated to work harder.' 'But you can't single out just one person.' It was very clear that people did not want this ceremony to happen. So I canceled it."

"Of course," Tom interrupts. "In Korea it's not about standing out, it's about fitting in."

"Exactly," Scott says, returning to his story. "I found out that we had to make changes more slowly and we had to consider people's feelings."

"Do you think Westerners often don't consider people's feelings?" Anne asks.

"Sometimes," Scott admits. "That was the big mistake I made here. I didn't understand how important it is to maintain what the Koreans call 'group harmony,' or *inhwa*, at work. No one must be left out. Everyone must feel that they fit in. You can't pick out one person either for praise or criticism. It just embarrasses everyone."

"So what happened?"

"Well, I canceled the ceremony. I had no choice. But then I discovered that it would be possible to honor a team. So, instead of having an Employee of the Month, we had a Team of the Month. People accepted that. Gradually people discovered that if they worked harder in the office, instead of sitting around talking or reading the newspaper, they would make more money. Productivity improved."



Reading tasks:

3. What are the differences between the merit system and the seniority system?
4. According to Anne, which system is used in the teaching profession?
5. What is a possible effect of long working hours?

The merit system versus the seniority system

“Well, I’m beginning to think I should give merit bonuses to productive employees,” Byoung-ok says, “maybe set up a merit system for promotions. I suppose I’m even a bit behind the times because I haven’t done it already. It does bother me when a productive, hard-working employee is passed over for a promotion which goes to a lazy employee who just plays politics.”

“Personally,” Tom says, “I’m not that crazy about merit bonuses. I worked for a company in the States that placed a great emphasis on turning a profit. It offered merit bonuses which could be very large—over 100% of the employee’s salary, maybe even 200%. In that company, for example, it was OK to be greedy if it resulted in your getting the job done. So I heard people with very large bonuses say they should have gotten more. People with small bonuses were disappointed, and people who get no bonuses at all often became bitter and unhappy. However, I’ve noticed in my Korean work environment very strong taboos against expressing greed.”

Anne shakes her head. “But wait a minute, Tom. Don’t you think that sort of situation, with those huge bonuses, applies to only a few occupations—like various sorts of sales jobs? I can’t imagine that’s typical of a very large segment of the population.”

“Well, I don’t know.”

“The type of organization makes a big difference,” Byoung-ok points out. “Non-profit organizations are a lot different than the sort of business you’re talking about.”

Anne nods vigorously. “In a lot of professions—teaching, for example—we use a combination of the merit system and the seniority system. Before you apply for a job, you can probably get the salary schedule from the Internet and see how much money you’ll make with your academic degrees and years of teaching experience.

Scott looks a little irritated. “Tom, you may object to the merit system,” he says, “but there are also problems with treating everyone about the same, particularly with promoting someone just because he’s reached a certain age. For example, I work with a traditional Korean company. One of the employees has just been promoted to manager. His duties are fairly restricted. In fact, all he does is deal with outside suppliers. But because he has reached a certain age, he has to be promoted, and someone has to be placed under him in an assistant manager position. His duties will not be increased. He will still just deal with outside suppliers, and now he has an assistant to share the work. Unless one of them has to go to the hospital or something, we’ll have two people sitting around reading the newspaper instead of just one. I don’t see it.”

“Oh, I don’t know,” Tom responds. “This man is part of the company. Why shouldn’t he be allowed to advance up the ladder and provide for his family in the same manner as others who came in the company with him? The business of having him only deal with outside suppliers is a separate issue.”

Working hours--less is more

Scott shakes his head. “In the United States you can’t sleep at your desk or just stand around talking all the time, and we don’t have people in the office who do nothing but run errands for the others—picking up dry cleaning or going to the bank. But here it’s because

people spend such terribly long hours at work—often six days a week—and then have to go out drinking with colleagues after work.”

“So if people spent less time in the office, they would get more done?” Anne asks.

“Yes, because they would be actually working the whole time they’re in the office,” Byoung-ok says. “We are making changes, but it takes time. For example, we have quite a few people in my company—particularly young people—who’ve worked abroad. They would welcome the opportunity to work from nine to five on weekdays and not at all on Saturdays. They don’t necessarily want to go out drinking with the same people they see all day long. They want to spend more time with their families. But the older people don’t really want shorter office hours. What will they tell their wives? Their wives may think of them as ‘good providers’ because they spend so much time at the office. Also, in many ways the office is more comfortable. At home maybe the children run around with their friends and the neighbor women come over to make *kimchi*. It’s too noisy and too crowded.” He pauses. “So changing the working hours will take time.”

Reading tasks:

6. What does Tom think about the hierarchy in his traditional Korean company?
7. What does Anne say about Westerners’ reactions?

The traditional hierarchy

“As you know, another cause of low productivity is the strict vertical hierarchy,” Tom says. “Typically, the chairman gets an idea. He has a meeting with the directors and tells them about it. They meet with the managers. The managers talk to the people who do the actual work. Work gets done and is handed to the managers. The managers look at it and say, ‘I don’t think this is exactly what’s needed. Why don’t you make some changes?’ The changes are made, and the work is passed on to the director. The director also interprets the chairman’s wishes, and more changes are made. Finally, the work arrives at the chairman’s desk. He looks at it and says, ‘This isn’t what I wanted at all!’ So then everything has to be done all over again.”

“Why can’t the chairman talk directly with the person who does the work?” Anne asks. “That way fewer things would be lost in translation.”

“The hierarchy won’t permit that,” Byoung-ok asserts. “Believe me, we all know this is a problem. But you can’t go stepping over people on various levels. It’s not done. You’d offend people.”

“That was another mistake I made when I first came here,” Scott admits. “A job had to be done. It was agreed that a particular person should do it. I thought everything was understood. The details of what had to be done were very complicated—in addition to the language problem. So instead of going through channels, I went directly to the desk of the person we selected to do the work. He was embarrassed, and his manager’s feelings were hurt.”

Anne nods in agreement. “So again, the Korean system places priority on the relationships of the people in the office, and the Western instinct is to think mostly of getting the job done efficiently.”

“Yes,” Tom says. “I sometimes think Westerners are too focused on getting the job done. On the other hand, Westerners have a very strong taboo against letting personal feelings interfere with professional work, and that has its advantages.”

“Another potential problem,” Anne points out, “is the different perception of hierarchy. Westerners in general respect someone’s ability and maybe also their credentials. We’re mostly interested in what the person can do. Koreans in general have more respect for rank than we do and are much more tolerant when the boss isn’t so good at what he or she is supposed to be doing.”

“That’s a bad combination,” Scott agrees.

“So the Koreans don’t understand these arrogant foreigners who don’t defer to their rank and authority, while Westerners—like English teachers, maybe with good credentials and experience, maybe not—are frustrated by watching the person at the top make a lot of apparently bad decisions without knowing what she or he is doing.”

“That’s something else that’s changing very rapidly,” Byoung-ok says. “After the economic crisis and the IMF controls, it was really brought home to us that we need to be more efficient. So the chairman doesn’t control everything directly anymore.” He smiles and says wryly, “Even I am learning to delegate authority.”

“The best management knows how to hire good people and then get out of the way and let them do their work,” Scott agrees.

Reading tasks:

8. How does the military influence the Korean workplace?
9. What did Byoung-ok most admire about his German colleagues?

The influence of the military

“One thing I suspect Westerners don’t fully appreciate,” Byoung-ok says, “is the influence of military service in the Korean workplace. The military mind-set and hierarchy has a way of spilling over into business. Since the military is very rigid in Korea, and almost all men have to serve, it’s a very strong force. Also, when they’re in the service, people establish relationships which may have an effect on their relationships inside the company, particularly if they work with men they served with.”

“That’s true,” Anne says, “that’s an influence we probably do underestimate. It also tends to reinforce the workplace as a sort of men’s club which excludes women. Some years ago in the U.S., women complained about the privileges given to veterans—which some Korean women are doing now—but there are fewer complaints now that we have an all-volunteer army.”

Working with others—while minding your own business



“Years ago when I worked in Germany,” Byoung-ok says, “I was quite impressed with the way colleagues from different departments worked together. There was much more communication going on—not just between people on different levels of the hierarchy, but horizontally, between people on the same level in different departments. You might have three people working together—someone who deals with contracts with other companies, someone in long-term planning and someone in sales. They could do their work together without much contact with the people upstairs.”

“I think that’s the rule, rather than the exception,” Anne interjects.

Byoung-ok nods and continues, “I was particularly

impressed with the way they worked with people outside the company. Even though each of these three colleagues might have the authority to represent the company, people did not offer any opinion relating to someone else's area. People knew how to keep their mouths shut. Unfortunately, Koreans don't always do that—even when they clearly don't have the authority to speak for the company."

"Or they'll call an old school chum who works for a competitor and describe their company's new product," Anne remarks. "It's really hard to compete with that going on."

Scott nods. "Tell me about it!"

Reading tasks:

10. Why does Byong-ok think it would be a good idea to hire a consultant to look at his company?

11. What does Byong-ok see as a different perception of time in Korea and in the West?

Job descriptions

"You think there's more specialization of tasks in Germany?" Tom asks Byong-ok. "I would have thought the opposite. I think sometimes the job assignments here can be too rigid. What if a person assigned to a job is not necessarily the best one to do it? For example, at my company, there's a man whose German is very good. He worked in Germany for several years and knows a lot about how things are done there. Recently, we had a delegation of German business people visiting. Because he wasn't on the German desk at the time, he had nothing to do with this delegation. He wasn't even consulted. It seems to me that the company is overlooking a valuable resource in him."

"But think about this a minute," Anne interjects. "What about the guy who is at the German desk right now? How would he feel?"

"I think there'd be more horizontal discussion," Byong-ok says. "But I also think there would be more of a detailed study of the work each person does so that job descriptions could be very specific. That's something else I'd like to do. I'd like to have an independent consultant come in and analyze the work each person does, then break it down into specific tasks and put them together into specific job descriptions for each employee. That way everyone knows exactly who's responsible for what—without having people sitting around doing very little."

"Like my guy with the outside suppliers," Scott remarks.

"Right. One of the things I've noticed in my travels is that people from the advanced countries are often very well organized. People from the developing countries I've visited often don't seem to know what they're supposed to be doing. So when I go on a business trip I may have to find a diplomatic way of asking them first to do this, then to do that. I think that, in Korea, with some thought and careful writing and revision of job descriptions, our productivity would improve."

The time factor

"What are some of the other cultural differences you've noticed?" Anne asks Byong-ok.

"One of the things I realized many years ago was that Koreans are quite impatient. We'll contact a potential client, and if he doesn't respond in two or three days, we'll call him back. The Germans would do everything logically and methodically by mail, and they would expect to wait two or three weeks."

“Of course,” Anne comments, “writing letters means you also have a record of your contact with the client.”

Byoung-ok nods. “Exactly. Whereas in Korea people often don’t even keep records of their phone calls. I’m trying to get the people I work with to change that.” He pauses for a moment. “Koreans work comparatively fast, and we’re comparatively flexible. So, for example, when I was in Germany I might get a phone call from the home office telling me to drop what I was doing and do something else. I might complain about it, but I could do it because someone else could pick up the ball I dropped.”

“Differences in the perception of time is a potential problem in the English-teaching field in Korea,” Anne says. “The Westerners may want to map out the entire program over a matter of months, while the Koreans don’t see the need for all this planning. They want to throw something together quickly and see if it will fly. Then it’s like building an airplane in mid-air.”

“Speaking of which, Byoung-ok says, “I have to fly back to the office. Senior management puts in long hours at my company. But some day I’d like to take you all to lunch.”

“Great,” says Anne. “We’ll look forward to it.”

	BA +0	BA+15	BA+30	BA+45	BA+90	BA+135	MA+0	MA+45	Ph.D
Years									
00	27,467	28,209	28,748	29,745	32,219	33,811	32,210	35,403	36,906
01	27,836	28,588	29,366	30,171	32,688	34,252	33,297	35,793	37,377
02	26,464	29,231	30,025	30,900	33,414	35,177	33,995	36,509	38,124
03	29,401	30,192	31,009	31,931	34,490	36,177	35,027	37,585	39,273
04	30,063	30,896	31,727	32,689	35,290	37,007	35,755	38,355	40,072
05	30,750	31,595	32,443	33,458	36,095	37,853	36,503	39,121	40,889
06	31,147	31,595	32,443	33,468	37,007	38,853	36,503	39,121	40,889
07	32,164	33,010	33,909	35,055	37,724	39,589	38,031	40,700	42,546
08	33,195	34,088	35,055	36,248	38,531	40,867	39,225	41,930	43,843
09		35,205	36,169	37,455	40,223	42,201	40,430	43,200	45,177
10			37,344	38,724	41,529	43,572	41,700	44,505	46,549
11				40,029	42,895	44,979	43,005	45,872	47,956
12				41,293	44,298	46,446	44,362	47,275	49,422
13					45,735	47,947	45,765	48,712	50,923
14					47,181	49,505	47,212	50,251	52,481
					48,408	50,792	48,439	51,557	53,846

Annual salaries in US dollars (2000)

Years ago, before salary schedules became interactive, an annual salary schedule for teachers in the public schools might have looked something like this. Merit, in terms of college degrees and college credit earned, is given on the horizontal axis, and seniority, in terms of years taught after teacher certification, is given on the vertical axis. Teachers without master’s degrees must continue to take college courses, which is why there are no salaries listed in the lower lefthand corner. Nowadays salary schedules are posted on the Internet. Previously they were just shown to job applicants. The idea is to make the whole process of allocating salaries as transparent as possible in order to avoid unfairness or corruption.

LET'S TEST OURSELVES.

1. **According to Chapter Seven, Korean and Western companies differ in**
 - a. the amount of attention given to an individual's job description.
 - b. the extent to which people keep personal and professional life separate.
 - c. the importance placed on productivity.
 - d. the amount of decision-making done on the lower and middle-management levels.
 - e. the influence of the military.
 - f. the importance placed on relationships within the company.
 - g. all of the above.

2. **Scott says he wanted to establish an Employee of the Month award in order to**
 - a. establish Western norms.
 - b. motivate people to work harder.
 - c. keep up with modern trends.
 - d. all of the above.

3. **Scott feels that the employees in his company are unproductive because they**
 - a. spend too much time at the office
 - b. go out drinking after work
 - c. waste time at work
 - d. all of the above.

4. **According to the people at the table, the hierarchy is inefficient if it**
 - a. requires that directions go through too many people.
 - b. places too much importance on titles.
 - c. gets people caught up in office politics.
 - d. all of the above.

5. **Byong-ok adds that Westerners often don't appreciate**
 - a. how hard people work.
 - b. the fact that Koreans are aware of these problems.
 - c. the influence of the military.
 - d. all of the above.

6. **Tom feels merit bonuses would be a mistake because in his American company**
 - a. people with large bonuses wanted more
 - b. people with small bonuses were disappointed
 - c. people with no bonuses were bitter and unhappy
 - d. all of the above

7. **In a Western office there would probably be**
 - a. more discussion between people on the same level.
 - b. less direct involvement by people at the top.
 - c. more concern with having the best person do the job.
 - d. all of the above.

8. **Throughout the discussion, Anne maintains that**
- Westerners are often too focused on the job and not on people's feelings.
 - Westerners too often think they do everything better.
 - Westerners don't understand the lack of communication among levels in Korean offices.
 - all of the above.
9. **Anne feels that in English programs in Korea, conflict between employer and employees arises from the fact that**
- Koreans expect to be respected because of their position.
 - Westerners respect people for their ability to do the job.
 - Koreans and Westerners have very different ideas about how to set up a program.
 - all of the above.
10. **You are a Westerner working in Korea. According to your contract, your employer has to release you from your ties to the company provided that you tell the company (give notice) a month before you plan to leave. That will give your employer a month to find a replacement for you. You have just given notice. During the meeting with your boss, he became very angry and upset. He told you he was very disappointed with you and would not release you from your contract. You are amazed at his behavior, partly because in the West**
- nobody cares about the employees.
 - it is easier for employers to hire new employees.
 - there is a strong taboo against letting personal feelings interfere with your business or professional life.
 - all of the above.
11. **You are working for an American automobile manufacturer. You have just discovered that, because of a design flaw, the wheels of the company's new model may come off after 40,000 miles. You**
- immediately inform your boss so the mistake can be corrected as soon as possible.
 - keep quiet so that no one will be blamed for the mistake.
 - figure that you're safe—no one drives an American car for 40,000 miles anyway.
 - all of the above.
12. **You are working for a Western company. Two months ago, you were having lunch with an old college classmate, who works for a competitor. You told him or her about one of the new products your company was developing. Recently the competition started developing a similar product, and the leak of information has been traced back to you. Now the big boss wants to see you. You expect that**
- you'll be asked to find out more about the competition's product..
 - you'll be severely criticized and perhaps fired.
 - you'll be asked to pass misinformation on to your classmate.
 - all of the above.

13. **You are part of a Western consulting team. During a meeting with a client, you have a great idea, so you mention it. The client seems to be impressed. Afterwards, the head of the team tells you privately that you**
- did good work.
 - should not think aloud with a client in the room.
 - will receive special recognition for your idea.
 - all of the above.
14. **Your company is holding a special seminar, and you would like to invite American businesses and diplomats to attend. According to the book, you need to consider the fact that**
- the Americans will need interpreters.
 - Americans spend less time talking about things and more time doing them.
 - the Americans will probably want to be invited early so they can fit the seminar into their schedules.
 - all of the above.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT.

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of showing special recognition to individuals? Why is it better—in Korea—to recognize groups? Or is it? Why do you think the West is different?
- Which do you favor, the merit system or the seniority system? Why? How can merit bonuses contribute to a company's productivity? How can the seniority system contribute to a sense of job security and group harmony?
- What are some of the other differences in viewpoint and expectations between employees in their twenties, thirties, forties, fifties and sixties?
- How is the strict vertical hierarchy you see in many traditional Korean companies reflected in society as a whole? Explain.
- What are some similarities between military and company structure? Is this more true of some companies than others? Explain.
- Imagine your ideal job. Make a list of all the things you would like to do in order to put together a complete job description. (You might find it helpful to write another list of the tasks you wouldn't want to do.) How would you like to be able to negotiate your job description when you are applying for a job? Explain.



LET'S ACT IT OUT.

Taking shortcuts

A: You are the new foreign vice-president of the company, and you have a lot of work to get done in a very short time. You suspect this company is in bad shape because the complicated hierarchy makes it so inefficient. After discussions with a department manager, you decide which assistant manager should be given an important assignment. Since it is very complicated, you go to talk with the assistant manager directly instead of going through the manager, whose English is not as good as the assistant manager's is.

B: You are an assistant manager working for a company which has recently been taken over by a senior-level efficiency expert who has come directly to your desk with an assignment. You are pleased that s/he has trusted you with this job, but you suspect that the manager's feelings might be hurt. You need to politely tell the big boss how awkward it is when people don't go through the established channels.

Generation gap

A: You are in junior management at a company which is making changes. You are having lunch with your boss. You very politely suggest to him/her that some changes—for example, merit bonuses and shorter working hours—would be good for both the employees and the company.

B: You feel annoyed and grumpy about these changes. Although you hate to admit it, you are afraid that the younger people will be promoted over you.

LET'S LISTEN.

Taking shortcuts. (Ms. D'Amato has come to Ms. Park's desk with a folder.)

1. The first time the dialogue is played, do not look at your book. Just listen and try to pick up the main idea of the dialogue.
2. Before the dialogue is played a second time, read over these questions.
 - a. How would you describe Ms. D'Amato's language to Ms. Park—for example, rude, straight-forward, polite?
 - b. How would you describe Ms. Park's language? What phrases does she use?
 - c. How does Ms. Park steer Ms. D'Amato to the obvious solution?
 - d. Would you describe Ms. Park as deferential, respectful or polite? Explain.
3. Listen to the dialogue a second time. Then discuss the answers to the questions with your partner.
4. Listen a third time. Be prepared to discuss the answers with the class.

Generation gap.

1. The first time the dialogue is played, do not look at your book. Just listen and try to pick up the main idea of the dialogue.
2. Before the dialogue is played a second time, read over these questions.
 - a. How does Charlie bring up the topic?
 - b. How would you describe Charlie's language?
 - c. How would you describe the boss's language? What does "just between you and me" mean?
 - d. Why does he say "just kidding" at the end?
 - e. How does Charlie state his opinion without being rude? What are some of the phrases he uses?
 - f. Throughout the dialogue is Charlie deferential, respectful or polite? Explain.
 - g. How is the relationship of the two men reflected in the terms of address they use to each other?
3. Listen to the dialogue a second time. Then discuss the answers to the questions with your partner.
4. Listen a third time. Be prepared to discuss the answers with the class.

Generation gap (This is a Korean situation.)

Charlie: What do you think of the changes they've been making in the workplace, sir?

Boss: You mean the merit bonuses and shorter working hours?

Charlie: Yes, sir.

Boss: Well, just between you and me, Charlie, I can't say that I agree with them.

Charlie: No, sir?

Boss: No. The place was very orderly and well-run before they started disrupting everything. People were all in their proper places. Everyone could count on being promoted at a steady rate. Everyone could feel secure.

Charlie: Except for the women, sir.

Boss: Of course, man. That's another thing. It's too much too fast, if you ask me—which you did. I suppose your opinion is different entirely.

Charlie: Yes, sir. I rather like the idea of rewarding people for the work they do, encouraging people to be productive. Personally, I'm looking forward to spending more time with my wife and kids.

Boss: That's what Sundays are for.

Charlie: But don't you feel, sir, that if we spent less time in the office we'd get more done while we're there?

Boss: Now how would we do that? That doesn't make sense.

Charlie: When we leave the office at a reasonable hour, have dinner with the wife and kids, relax, get a good night's sleep, then we'd be rested and focused in the morning. As it is, we never really leave the place—psychologically, I mean. We're tired when we show up in the morning. There's no motivation. At least that's my feeling, sir.

Boss: I suppose that's something you worked out for yourself when you were abroad.

Charlie: Yes, sir.

Boss: Well, when you get your big bonus and get promoted over me, don't forget who taught you all you know.

Charlie: No, I won't—just kidding, sir.

LET'S FIND OUT.

Interview four people who are working full-time, preferably people who have been working at this job for three years or more. Their work experience could be in a traditional Korean company or a joint venture, a big company or a little one. Do each interview privately and face-to-face. Ask these questions and listen attentively while people talk as long as they want to. Ask for specific details—examples or explanations. Take notes so you can share your findings later with your classmates.

1. What do you like best and least about your job?
2. What benefits do you find most important? (Examples are worker compensation for job related-injuries, hospitalization insurance, unemployment benefits, retirement benefits, maternity leave and support for continuing education.)
3. What channels of communication are there?
4. How are changes and decisions made and who makes them?
5. How much equality is there between male and female employees?
6. What changes has your company made because of the changes in the economy?
7. How is your company helping Korea recover economically?

LET'S LOOK AT THE PASSIVE.

What you can learn from this chapter

If you use a computer program with the grammar check turned on, you may find lines appearing under every passive sentence that you write. The grammar check will then suggest that you rewrite the sentence in the active voice. The active voice has the reputation of being more effective because it's more direct. However, often indirectness is more polite and therefore more effective.

Consider this situation. You are in a work situation, and you have a problem requiring negotiation with your employees, your client, your partner or your boss. Which is preferable?

Mistakes were made.

Somebody (we don't know who/we all know who) made a mistake.

You made a mistake.

You might decide to use the passive because you're being polite and don't want to point the finger at anyone or because it's understood which person or organization made the mistake.

There are several other good reasons for choosing the passive as well. However, before we examine them, let's review the grammatical forms of the passive.

What should we remember about passive forms?

- Only a sentence with a transitive verb can be made passive. Transitive verbs take direct objects (patients), that is the noun referring to a person or thing which the action affects, relates to, or produces. These sentences may take the form

Noun phrase + verb phrase [verb + noun phrase]

The boss promoted the new employee.

- If the verb is intransitive—that is, takes no direct object—then it can't be made passive.

He died. [Noun + verb]

I came to Korea. [Noun + verb + adverbial prepositional phrase]

- English has both active voice, where the subject of the sentence is also the agent (do-er) of the action, and passive voice, where the subject of the sentence is the “patient,” or direct object. If it is still necessary for the meaning of the sentence, the former subject (agent) is moved to the end after the preposition *by*. It is now in the “oblique” or indirect position—that is, not subject.

Active: **A crowd of angry employees** met the boss.
agent patient

Passive: **The boss** was met by a crowd of angry employees.
patient agent (now oblique)

	a crowd of angry employees	met	the boss
Active	 agent		patient 

	the boss	was met	by a crowd of angry employees
Passive	patient 		 oblique agent

- Notice that in this sentence the oblique agent remains in the sentence. In fact, the reason for using the passive may have been to emphasize the agent by putting it at the end where new or important information often goes.
- In most cases, however, the oblique agent is omitted.

We only have two weeks vacation? That's not what the **interviewer** told me.
agent

We only have two weeks vacation? That's not what I was told. [by the interviewer]
→ **omit.**

- Some verbs take an indirect object. This object may be called either the recipient (the one who receives the direct object or patient) or the beneficiary (the one who benefits).

I already gave it **to you.**
recipient

I did it **for you.**
beneficiary

- In some cases, the recipient may become the subject of a passive sentence.

Active: The company gave a raise to all **employees.**
 agent patient recipient

The company gave all **employees** a raise.
agent recipient patient

Passive: All **employees** were given a raise.
 Recipient patient

	the company	gave	to all employees	a raise
Active				patient
	agent		recipient	

	the company	gave	a raise	to all employees
Active			patient	
	agent			recipient

Passive	all employees	were given	a raise
	recipient 		patient 

- A more casual form of the passive uses a form of *get* instead of a form of *be* with the past participle of a limited number of verbs. Some combinations are very common, like *get married* and *get divorced*.

In most parts of the West, people would really be insulted if you ran into them like that. In some places you might **get killed**.

Exercise 1: With each sentence, underline the element given parentheses.

1. American women were given the right to vote in 1920. (recipient)
2. He was given a great deal of special recognition. (recipient)
3. I don't want to be ordered around by every Tom, Dick and Harry. (oblique agent)
4. I had to leave the extra work in the office. (agent)
5. My boss read your letter while singing in the shower. (patient)
6. My sister wanted to go to China. (agent)
7. The right to vote was given to American women in 1920. (patient)
8. You don't want the brownies? I made them for you! (beneficiary)

Exercise 2: Change the following sentences to the passive. Omit the oblique agent.

1. We went to see the priest. He married us on August 25.

2. When will the voters elect a woman president?

3. The company doesn't promote women beyond the level of assistant manager.

4. They always seem to turn off the water when I'm washing my hair.

5. The writer wrote all of his short stories in an old-fashioned style.

- Here are some uses of formal passive.
 1. The agent is already understood or previously mentioned.
Example: A raise was given to all employees.
 2. The speaker wants to emphasize the patient, recipient, or action of the verb.
Example: Not one police detective was called in to investigate.
 3. The speaker wants to make the statement sound objective without revealing the source—like a news reporter.
Example: At midnight the mayor was seen leaving his office building carrying a large briefcase.
 4. When the speaker wants to be polite or evasive.
Example: Mistakes were made.
 5. When the speaker wants to keep the same subject in successive clauses.
Example: *I* did what *I* had to do. After all, *I* was sent into the jungle to find the gold.
 6. When the speaker wants to contrast the subjects of successive clauses.
Example: *I* was the one who discovered the woman's body. *The husband* wasn't even informed until well after the police arrived.
 7. When the agent should come at the end of the sentence because it contains new information or is a long sentence element.
Example: We were delayed by forces beyond our control, first high winds and then a blinding snowstorm.
 8. When two elements need to be closer together for cohesion (for a better fit) because one refers to the other.
Example: Students need to consult the writing clinic about proper formatting for their papers, which should always be typed, double-spaced, and checked with a word processor for spelling errors.
 9. When the speaker feels that something is customary or universally accepted in society.
Example: Forks are placed to the left of the dinner plate, left to right in order of use—salad fork, dinner fork, desert fork.

Exercise 3: Rewrite the sentences in the passive. Notice that the reason for the passive voice is given in parentheses.

1. After the earthquake, people flew flags at half-mast. (agent understood)

2. Somebody fired shots. (emphasis on the patient)

3. One of the students reported that students were cheating during the exam. (hide the source)

4. I don't think you've cleaned the bathroom in a month. (slightly more polite)

5. If you don't get out of the street, someone will run you over. (same subject)

6. I paid all the bills because my roommate's boss fired her. (contrast of subjects/logical connection)

7. Rising unemployment, high interest rates, and company failures have hurt a lot of people. (long element at the end)

8. The younger employees are in favor of the merit system. + *which*
Companies brought in the merit system after the economic collapse of 1997. (cohesion)

9. Nobody does that. (social rule)

Exercise 4: Why is the passive used in the following underlined clauses? Give each item with a letter to explain why the passive was used. In several cases there is more than one possible answer. After you complete this exercise, you should reread the roundtable discussion.

- 1) The agent is understood or previously mentioned.
- 2) The speaker wants to emphasize the patient, recipient, or action of the verb.
- 3) The speaker wants to make the statement objective without revealing sources.
- 4) The speaker wants to be polite or evasive.
- 5) The speaker wants to keep the same subject in successive clauses.
- 6) The speaker wants to contrast the subjects of successive clauses.
- 7) The agent contains new information or is a long sentence element.
- 8) Two elements need to be closer together for cohesion because one refers to the other.
- 9) The speaker feels that something is customary or accepted.

1. _____ I read all the books on Korea and on Asia I could find, but nothing prepared me for what I would find here. I was sent to Korea to increase company profits.
2. _____ I announced that every month we would honor one employee. That employee would be honored in a little ceremony and would receive a certificate and a cash award.
3. _____ Almost a month later, the employee had been selected, the ceremony was set for the following day, and people started coming to my office saying, “You can’t do this.”
4. _____ I didn’t understand how important it is to maintain what the Koreans call “group harmony,” or *inhwa*, at work. No one must be left out. Everyone must feel that they fit in.
5. _____ Typically, the chairman gets an idea. He has a meeting with the directors and tells them about it. They meet with the managers. The managers talk to the people who do the actual work. Work gets done and is handed to the managers. The managers look at it and say, “I don’t think this is exactly what’s needed. Why don’t you make some changes?” The changes are made.
6. _____ You can’t go stepping over people on various levels. It’s not done. You’d offend people.
7. _____ A job had to be done. It was agreed that a particular person should do it. I thought everything was understood.
8. _____ Some years ago in the US, women complained a lot about the privileges given to veterans.
9. _____ In my company, one of the employees has just been promoted to manager. His duties are fairly restricted, but because he has reached a certain age, he has to be promoted, and someone has to be placed under him in an assistant manager position. His duties will not be increased.
10. _____ He has been making all the arrangements for months, and now someone else from another part of the office is being brought in to take the credit.
11. _____ How would this situation be handled in the West?
12. _____ That’s something President Obama was often accused of.
13. _____ In Korea, if you have a certain position and you don’t behave in what people consider a dignified manner, you won’t be taken seriously.
14. _____ Back in the States, my place in society is determined by my profession, sex, age, social class, race, lifestyle, the region I come from. I can also be boxed in by these things.
15. _____ An authoritarian ruler makes a decision based on whatever he—it’s usually he—wants. It can be based on logic, or it can be based on pure whim.

16. ____ In your guilt culture, everyone is by nature guilty and carries this guilt around all the time. You punish yourselves. We were taught to be embarrassed in front of others.
17. ____ If a mistake is made, it's taken very seriously here.
18. ____ In the African American culture, it's considered the right of the individual person to decide whether or not to share personal information. People who ask direct questions are viewed as either very stupid or very inconsiderate.
19. ____ I think most families are patriarchies because this is the family order [which is] given to us by God.
20. ____ When you apply for a job, you may even be shown a salary schedule with your degrees and rank plotted out on one axis and your years of teaching experience on the other.

Exercise 5: Can you fix these sentences? You should check to see whether the verb is transitive, whether the passive is formed correctly and whether the passive should be used at all. You may want to completely rewrite the sentence.

1. She got puzzled to see that.

2. This office located in Kangnam.

3. Each book classified according to the place it was from.

4. Specialists we will probably need more as the crisis continues; at the moment there are only two specialists in the country.

5. They realize they not being set free from their duty.

6. Some university graduates can't find jobs, and others compete with each other not to fire.

7. My brother injured that he had to stay in the hospital for a few weeks.

8. I waited for him to be awoken again.

LET'S DO A CROSSWORD PUZZLE.

ACROSS

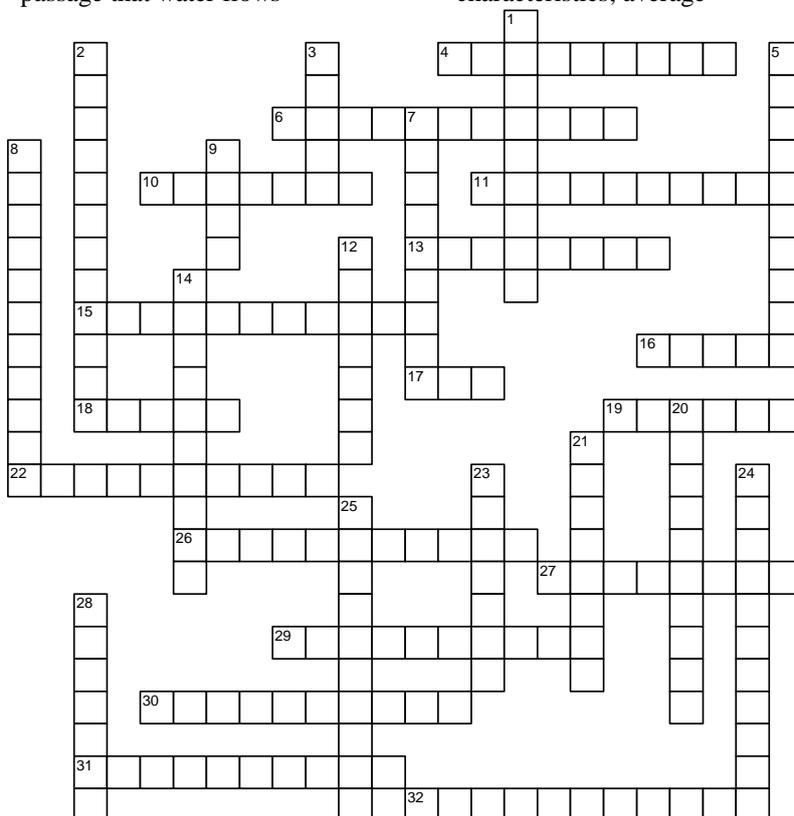
- 4 System of organizing people by rank
 6 Your previous achievements, training and background
 10 Give someone a higher rank
 11 If you are this, you get a lot of work done
 13 Legal agreement between companies or between a company and an employee
 15 Someone with a lower position in the organization
 16 Extra amount of money added to someone's pay, usually for good work
 17 Not bottom
 18 Control over people and activities
 19 Amount of money that you gain when you are paid more for something than it cost you to make it
 22 Knowledge you have because you have done a job for some time; length of time on the job
 26 From 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (two words)
 27 Space between two points; power _____
 29 Flat and parallel to the ground; not vertical
 30 Control and organization of a business; opposite of labor
 31 Task or piece of work you are given to do in school or in the workplace
 32 Acknowledgement of the value of someone's work; special _____

DOWN

- 1 Length of time you have worked at a place
 2 Tie between people; way they feel about each other
 3 Good or worthwhile qualities
 5 Co-workers
 7 Able to work successfully without wasting time or energy
 8 An official document you receive for course work or as a prize
 9 Person in charge; your superior
 12 System of communication; passage that water flows

through

- 14 Company which is trying to sell goods or services to the same people that you are
 20 Job, profession, work
 21 Bending easily, not rigid
 23 If you have this, your situation is peaceful; combination of musical notes played at the same time
 24 An account explaining what something is or what it looks like; job _____
 25 Section of an organization; "part" in Konglish
 28 Having the usual characteristics; average



www.CrosswordWeaver.com