

## THE TASK AT HAND. Session 1.- Heading to the office!

### Situation

Read the text and listen to the situation.



**Lourdes** and **Susana** get to the office at 8.00 o'clock like every day. Today they had to run a little bit since, for a change, it was raining. They are quite used to living in London. However, there is still something they are unable to cope with: the weather.

**Susana:** Ugh, look at me! My hair is all **tangled up!** No matter how many hours I spend in front of the mirror trying to make it look nice, it always looks **messy!**

**Lourdes:** Well, don't worry **Susana**, mine looks the same! I believe that's the reason why most women here wear their hair in **buns** or **ponytails!** Maybe we should do the same.

The girls sit down at their desks and they turn on their computers. In the meantime, **Mr. Parker** enters the office with the girls' new task for the week.

**Mr. Parker:** Good morning girls! How are you doing? It seems somebody got a little bit wet this morning! Doesn't it? He, he, he (**Mr. Parker** laughs at **Susana**). Well, here you've got your new task for the week. As you may have heard, working in a comfortable environment does not only make workers happy, but it also increases production. At British Corporation we are very **concerned about** production, but we also want our workers to be happy at work. For this reason, I would like you to **come up with** some ideas about how to create a positive atmosphere at work and how to prevent possible **illnesses** like stress, depression etc. You're doing a great job and I'm sure this new task won't be an exception. Any questions? OK! If you have any problem, I'll be in my office. By the way! **Susana**, don't worry about your hair, you always look beautiful! See you later girls!

**Susana:** Oh thanks! (She answers timidly).

### Think about it

Enter the forum and tell your classmates:

- ✓ Have you ever heard that working on a positive atmosphere increases production at work?
- ✓ What do you think about it? Do you agree with this statement?
- ✓ Name different illnesses that a worker may suffer from working in a negative environment at work.
- ✓ Have you ever suffered a problem of the kind?



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[Aviso Legal](#)

## 1.- What to say: Illnesses at work.

### Quotation

In order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed: They must be fit for it. They must not do too much of it. And they must have a sense of success in it".

*John Ruskin*

### Situation

**Susana:** Did you hear that? Oooh! He's so cute! he thinks I'm beautiful!!!"  
Susana says excitedly.

**Lourdes:** Yeah... let's start to work.

**Susana:** Ooh! Do you think he will fall in love with me someday? **Susana** sighs.

**Lourdes:** Come on, don't be silly **Susana!** It was just a **compliment**, anything else! She answers irritatedly.

**Susana:** OK! I was just dreaming for a second! (she says angrily) where should we start?

**Lourdes:** I think we should do some research on the internet about the topic, learn about possible illnesses and from there we should move on to possible solutions, what do you think?

**Susana:** That you're always right! Look! (**Susana** points at a piece of printed paper) I just printed this article and it seems quite interesting. It's about one of the main reasons of stress at work (She reads aloud):

" **Bullying**. Bullying takes place behind closed doors with no witnesses and no **evidence** (in the traditional sense). When called to account, the bully uses charm and their Jekyll and Hyde nature to **lie convincingly**. Bullies are clever, but you can be **clever** too. Here's how to deal with bullying at work."

**Lourdes:** Yes! It sounds really interesting!



### Think about it

**Give your opinion in the forum:**

- ✓ Have you ever heard about bullying? Have you ever suffered it at work or school?
- ✓ Do you know anyone who suffered it?
- ✓ What would you do to **put an end to** bullying?

## 1.1.- Bullying at work.

Bullying at work takes place when someone tries to **intimidate** another worker, often in front of the rest of colleagues. It is usually, though not always, done to someone in a less **senior position**, creating a constant pattern of destructive behaviour.

The number of people who suffer forms of bullying such as **teasing**, intimidation and physical abuse at work has doubled in the last decade, according to new figures from the big **union** "Unison".

Many employers have introduced **policies** to try to deal with the problem, but now a new law is needed to protect staff against bullies.

Many people think of bullying as a problem **faced** by young people at school, college or on **social networking sites** and expect things to be different when they enter the "professional" world of work.



But the latest research by "Unison" suggests that more than a third of workers have experienced bullying in the last six months.

Lyn Witheridge from the Andrea Adams Trust, the first charity association to deal with work place bullying, has said:

"Bullying is a brutal form of psychological torture. It is to be constantly criticized, openly humiliated, professionally **undermined** and **isolated** day after day."

Jessica, 27, from Southampton says she has experienced psychological abuse from her manager.

"A lot of the stress I was **put under** was mental" she said. "But the boss would also throw office equipment **in anger** because things had gone wrong. Things like **hole-punchers** and staplers, anything that was near at the time."

Being bullied at work may not just affect people's physical and mental health, but it can also affect their personal life. Sarah, who worked in a hospital explained: "I felt really tired, I used to **lose my appetite** and get **headaches** and I didn't have the time to be with my friends or go out because I **was stressed-out** about having to face the next day."

More than 13 million working days a year are lost in the UK because of stress, anxiety and depression, according to recent research.

"If you're bullied, you have difficulties concentrating, making decisions, and become **socially withdrawn**. People who are bullied miss more days at work than people who haven't been bullied," psychologist Carey Cooper explained.

There are laws to protect employees from discrimination covering race, gender and religion. But Hugh Robertson from the union group the "TUC" is just one of the campaigners who don't think they're enough.

"There is a need for a strong **legal framework**," he said. "We'd like to see a specific duty on employers to deal with bullying, and that at the moment it doesn't exist."

The government department which deals with this problem made this statement: "Bullying and **harassment** is never acceptable in the workplace and a change in work culture rather than legislation is key."

Note: Some names have been changed to protect the identity of bullying victims.

Text adapted from The New York Times. March, 24th, 2008.

### A step ahead

For more information about Bullying and its origin check the following link:

[The origin of Bullying.](#)

## 1.2.- Now you put it into practice (I).



### Now it's your turn

Read the previous text again and answer these questions: What is bullying?

- Absence from work.
- A way of intimidating a worker.
- Stress at work.

What is the difference between bullying and aggression?

- There is no difference.
- Aggression is physical.
- Bullying involves a pattern of repeated aggression.

Bullying affects people's ...

- physical and mental health.
- personal life.
- physical health.

How do bullied people feel according to psychologist Carey Cooper?

- They have difficulty concentrating.
- They make quick decisions.
- They are very sociable.

### A step ahead

Who do you think are bigger bullies, men or women? Read the following article and answer the question.

[Some curiosities about bullying. Are men or women bigger bullies?](#)

According to the text, although in different ways, men are just as aggressive as women.

### 1.3.- Saying “no”.

One of the main problems of people being bullied at work is that they are unable to say “no”.

There are times when you want to say “no” politely, times when you have to be more **forceful** in your **refusal**, and times when you really have to **put people in their place**. The degree of **politeness** versus **assertiveness** of a refusal depends not only on your relationship with the person who is asking you to do something, but also on the attitude of the person who is asking. Here you have some useful ways of “saying no”.

To say “no” politely in English, we often begin with what may sound like an **apology** “I’m **sorry**, you’ve come to the wrong person. You’ll have to ask Joseph to do that.” or “I’m **afraid** I don’t have the information you are asking for.”



We can use: “I’m **sorry**” or “I’m **afraid**” followed by the reason why we cannot do something.

#### Ways of saying “no” in English.

1. **The direct “no”.**

Sometimes, saying sorry, then saying no is not necessary or even appropriate. If that’s the case, use the direct ‘no’. For example:

*A: Are you joining us for lunch?*

*B: No, no thank you.*

2. **The reasoned “no”.**

Sometimes you feel it would be polite to offer a reason for your refusal but, on the other hand, you don’t want to **open up** any **sort of** negotiation. In this case, use the **reasoned** ‘no’. Example:

*A: We’re leaving now. Are you coming with us for a drink?*

*B: I can’t come for a drink tonight. I’ve got to get this report out for tomorrow.*

3. **The reflecting “no”.**

You want to acknowledge the request but still want to say “no” quite **firmly**. Example:

*A: Do you have time to go through some things now?*

*B: I know you want to talk to me about the meeting arrangements but I can’t do it today.*

4. **The raincheck “no”.**

This is similar to the reflecting ‘no’. It’s not so much saying ‘no’ as saying this is not a good time. Example:

*A: Could you check through these figures for me?*

*B: I can’t right now, but I could some time tomorrow.*

Be careful! only use this if you really do want to accept the request at a later date. Don’t use it if you really mean ‘no’.

5. **The unwavering ‘no’.**

This is how you have to deal with **pests** – people who don’t hear ‘no’.

*A: Come on let’s go for lunch.*

*B: No, I’m not going out for lunch today.*

*A: Oh, please, it won’t take long.*

*B: No, I’m not going out for lunch today.*

*A: Oh, go on, I’ll pay.*

*B: No, I’m not going out for lunch today.*

1.4.- Now you put it into practice (II).



Now it's your turn

Match these ways of saying “no” to the types 1 – 5 above. There may be more than one answer for some of the expressions. Then, write the numbers in rising order:



Matching exercise

Ways of saying "no"	Match	Types
a. "No I can't do it right now, but what about Tuesday?"	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. The direct 'no'.
b. "That's not possible today. It's my day to get the monthly starts out".	<input type="checkbox"/> , <input type="checkbox"/>	2. The reasoned 'no'.
c. "No, no thank you".	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. The reflecting 'no'.
d. "No, it's not my scene". "No, really, it's not my scene".	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. The raincheck 'no'.
e. "I can see it would be helpful to <b>crosscheck</b> with someone, but I can't put this report aside right now".	<input type="checkbox"/> , <input type="checkbox"/> , <input type="checkbox"/>	5. The unwavering 'no'.

Submit



Now it's your turn

Complete the dialogue below with appropriate words or phrases from the box. Be careful, there are two phrases which do not fit.

Background: Paula is responsible for organising your company's attendance at a trade fair. You have had nothing to do with the arrangements. Paula is prone to offloading work, especially when problems start appearing, and you really want to discourage this.

- a. but that shouldn't be necessary, anyway.
- b. you've asked me to pick up the pieces.
- c. I really must point out that.
- d. Why don't you find out where the problem lies.
- e. but aren't you the best person to deal with that.

**Paula:** I've just been looking at the map of the trade fair and I noticed that our name is not next to our stand. Could you look into it? I'm not sure where the problem lies, with the printers, the trade fair organisers ...

**You:** \_\_\_\_\_ I'm \_\_\_\_\_ sorry,

as you've been in charge of all the arrangements for that trade fair?

**Paula:** Well, I'm really snowed under with work at the moment so could you just chase up what's happened about the map?

**You:** \_\_\_\_\_ Actually, \_\_\_\_\_ Paula, \_\_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_\_\_ isn't \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ first \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_ when things start to go wrong, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_\_ think \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ should \_\_\_\_\_ follow \_\_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_\_\_ up \_\_\_\_\_ yourself. \_\_\_\_\_ and

then take it from there?

**Paula:** Well, OK, but I don't know how I'm going to find time to do everything. (she walks away).

Submit



## 2.- How to say it: Comparatives and Superlatives.

### Think about it

Read the following sentences carefully. What is the difference between them?

- ✔ *My boss is more demanding than Sally's.*
- ✔ *My boss is the most demanding in the world!*



### Translation

[Click here to read the Spanish version.](#)

We use Comparatives and Superlatives to compare two or more nouns, people, things etc. Let's take a look at its Form:

#### 1. One-syllable adjectives.

- ✔ To form the comparative, we add -er to the end of the adjective.
- ✔ To form the superlative, we add -est to the end of the adjective.

#### Comparatives and superlatives

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
Small.	Smaller.	The smallest.
Cold.	Colder.	The coldest.
Light.	Lighter.	The lightest.
Short.	Shorter.	The shortest.

Remember that comparatives are often followed by **than**.

- ✔ *London is **bigger than** Santiago.*
- ✔ *Mike is **taller than** John but James is **the tallest**.*

#### 2. Two-syllable adjectives ending in -Y.

- ✔ To form the comparative, we remove the -y and add -**ier** to the end of the adjective.
- ✔ To form the superlative, we remove the -y and add -**iest** to the end of the adjective.

#### -Y comparatives and superlatives

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
Crazy.	Crazier.	The craziest.
Happy.	Happier.	The happiest.
Early.	Earlier.	The earliest.

- ✔ *It was **the happiest** day of my life.*
- ✔ *My joke was **funnier** than your one.*

#### 3. Adjectives with two or more syllables.

For adjectives with 2 syllables (that don't end in -y) and higher (3, 4 syllables etc), we use:

- ✔ **more** for comparatives.
- ✔ **the most** for superlatives.



### Two or more syllables comparatives and superlatives

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
Handsome.	More handsome.	The most handsome.
Nervous.	More nervous.	The most nervous.
Enthusiastic.	More enthusiastic.	The most enthusiastic.

- ✓ My girlfriend is **more beautiful** than yours.
- ✓ Alex is **more intelligent** than you but I am **the most intelligent**.

Be careful! There are some irregular forms.

### Irregular comparatives and superlatives

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
Good.	Better.	The best.
Bad.	Worse.	The worst.
Far.	Further / farther.	The furthest / farthest.

- ✓ I am a **better** tennis player than you but Marcelo is **the best**.
- ✓ Steve is a **worse** liar than me but Adrian is **the worst**.

## Translation

Click here to read the Spanish translation.



## A step ahead

If you want to have fun, click on the icon below and play to the Comparatives and Superlatives Game.

[Comparatives and Superlatives Game.](#)

## 2.1.- Now you put it into practice (III).



### Now it's your turn

Complete the following sentences using the Comparative and Superlative form of the adjective in brackets:

1. This computer is (new)  than your computer.
2. Lisa is (old)  than George.
3. George is (young)  than Lisa.
4. Lucy is (young)  in the class.
5. That car is (expensive)  than this car.
6. That car is (expensive)  in the market.
7. Your car is (fast)  than this car.
8. Your car is (fast)  in the race.
9. This house is (big)  than my house!
10. This house is (big)  in the neighbourhood.

Submit

### Think about it

Compare and contrast these pictures using Comparatives and Superlatives. Use the adjectives below to help you:

**Tall / Handsome / Ugly / Rich / Attractive / Funny**



### 2.1.1. Now you put it into practice (IV).



## Now it's your turn

Eddie wants to go on vacations. Listen to his conversation in which Christina helps Eddie to choose his vacations and learn a little bit more about comparatives and superlatives.

Watch the video and try to understand the conversation, read the transcript only after that.



### 3.- Words you need: The Bullying Phenomenon.

In this section you will learn some useful vocabulary related to Bullying.

#### Bullying

Words related to Bullying	Translation
Ally.	Aliado, aliada.
Bully.	Matón/matona.
Bystander.	Testigo, transeúnte.
Discrimination.	Discriminación.
Harass.	Acoso.
Hate crime.	Delito motivado por discriminación.
Humiliate.	Humillación.
Prejudice.	Prejuicio.
Respect.	Respeto.
Slur.	Comentario racista, denigrante.
Stereotype.	Estereotipo.
Sympathy.	Compasión, lástima.
Target.	Blanco, objeto de burla.
To bully.	Intimidar, amenazar.
To put someone down.	Humillar, rebajar a alguien.



### 3.1.- Common verbs, nouns and adjectives.

Take a look at these common verbs, nouns and adjectives.

#### Bullying Vocabulary: common verbs, nouns and adjectives.

Common words	Translation
Ache.	Dolor constante, menos severo que "pain". "achaque" o "dolor continuo." (verbo y sustantivo).
Body's immune system.	Sistema inmunológico.
Health.	Salud.
Hurt.	"Doler", "lastimar" y "herir". (verbo).
Ill.	Enfermo / enferma. (adjetivo).
Illness / Disease.	Enfermedad. (sustantivo).
Pain.	Dolor causado por una herida, enfermedad o problemas emocionales. (sustantivo).
Sick.	Malestar. (adjective).
Sore. (E.g: a sore throat).	Irritación. (sustantivo / siempre con el artículo "a"). (Ejemplo dolor de garganta).



### 3.2.- Effects of bullying: Common illnesses and Symptoms.

Take a look at the following words.

#### Bullying Vocabulary: common illnesses and Symptoms

Illnesses and Symptoms	Translation
Anxiety.	Ansiedad.
Backache.	Dolor de espalda.
CFS. (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome).	Síndrome de Fatiga Crónica.
Constant tiredness.	Cansancio continuo.
Depression.	Depresión.
Fatigue.	Fatiga.
Irregular heart beat.	Arritmias cardíacas.
Irritability.	Irritabilidad.
Lack of motivation.	Falta de motivación.
Loss of self-esteem.	Pérdida de autoestima.
Panic attacks.	Ataques de pánico.
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. (PTSD).	Estrés post-traumático.
Severe headaches.	Dolores fuertes de cabeza.
Sleeplessness.	Insomnio.
Stress.	Estrés.
Suicidal thoughts.	Pensamientos de suicidio.



### 3.3. Now you put it into practice (V).



#### Now it's your turn

Bullying may cause different illnesses and symptoms. Classify the ones mentioned above into Physical or Psychological. You must write them in alphabetical order in the correct column.

#### Illnesses and symptoms

Physical	Psychological
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Submit



#### Now it's your turn

What's wrong with you? Complete the exercise with the words given. Be careful, there are more words than you need.

Ache / Health / Hurt / Ill / Disease / Pain / Sick / Sore / Illness.

1. She can't hardly speak . She has a  throat.
2. Alzheimer's  is the most common form of senile dementia.
3. My back  is getting worse. I'll have to go to the doctor.
4. He  her feelings and she doesn't want to see him anymore.
5. He loves eating hearty meals, but afterwards, he often has stomach .
6. Mary is pregnant and she often feels  in the mornings.
7. There are specific departments in hospitals to treat chronic .
8. Mental disorders are quite dangerous for our .



Submit

3.3.1.- Now you put it into practice (VI).



## Now it's your turn

Match the words in A to their definition in B.



### Matching exercise

A	Match	B
Bystander.	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. A person who is on your side or helps you in a situation.
Sympathy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. To threaten or try to scare someone with words or action.
Slur.	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. A feeling of knowing how a person feels.
Target.	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. To deeply embarrass or ridicule someone to make him or her feel lower as a person.
To bully.	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. A combination of people of different backgrounds.
Diversity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. A person picked on or bullied by others.
Humiliate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. An inappropriate word or term used to put someone down.
Ally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. A person who witnesses an act or an event without participating.

Submit

## A step ahead











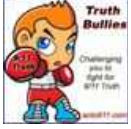




Click on the link below to listen to the pronunciation of the words and definitions in the previous exercise.

[Bullying: words and definitions.](#)



## Appendix.- Licenses of resources.

### Licenses of resources used in session 1. "Heading to the office"

Resource (1)	Resource information (1)	Resource (2)	
	By: MrSchuReads. License: CC by-nc-sa 2.0. From: <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/litandmore/2312869091">http://www.flickr.com/photos/litandmore/2312869091</a>		By: Bullying License: CC From: <a href="http://www.">http://www.</a>
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