

Business English- Describing Your Company and Job- Longer Speaking Games

In small groups, choose one of the short statements/ answers about someone's company and/ or job below and work together to expand it, adding more information and language. You can add any true or (probably mainly) imaginary information that you like, but don't change the information that is there. Your teacher will tell you if/ when you can use the suggested ways of expanding your answer below. Then compare your answer to the model answer below and give yourself points out of ten by comparing it to what is there, e.g. give yourself nine points for an answer which is nearly as good as the model. You can also give yourself more than ten points for answers which are better than the model, e.g. eleven points for an answer which is slightly better than the model.

I'm a sales rep.

I sell insurance to companies.

I work in HR.

I work for an insurance company.

I work for an American company.

My company has a long history.

I have to do admin/ administration/ paperwork.

I use a computer

I work in an office.

I'm based in Tokyo.

I'm developing AI software.

Suggested ways of expanding answers

- giving reasons
- giving examples
- adding information
- contrasting/ looking at the opposite side
- being more or less specific/ being more or less exact/ being vague
- explaining (more)/ clarifying (translating etc)

Model answers

Imagine each answer below is 10 points and give your answer points out of ten (or above) by comparing it to the model answer below.

I'm a sales rep. – I'm a sales rep. I sell travel insurance, mostly through travel agents. I'm responsible for the whole Kanto region around Tokyo, so I have to travel quite a lot to meet my clients.

I sell insurance to companies. – I sell liability insurance etc to SMEs, which stands for small and medium-sized enterprises.

I work in HR. – I work in the HR department of an American insurance company. My main duty is recruitment, particularly choosing which candidates will be selected for interviews from examining their CVs. Apart from that, I mainly deal with employee complaints which are submitted through our anonymous drop box.

I work for an insurance company. – I have worked in the planning department of a large general insurance company for around ten years. Before that, I had more or less the same job in a much smaller company.

I work for an American company. – I work for ABC. Our headquarters are in New Jersey, near New York, but we are a very international company with branches in over 100 countries and we have always had a strong presence in Asia.

My company has a long history. – My company recently had its one hundredth anniversary, and it has been here in Japan for over 50 years. We also took over a Japanese company which has a long history.

I have to do admin/ administration/ paperwork. – I have to do a lot of admin, especially writing proposals and progress reports for new products and ongoing projects. It takes up approximately half of my working time.

I use a computer – I have to use a computer almost the whole day, both for writing documents and for communicating with my customers and colleagues, mainly through instant messaging and Skype.

I work in an office. – I work in an open-plan office on the seventh floor of this building. I have my own desk now, which is great because I didn't like hot desking at all. However, it's quite hot where my desk is and there isn't much natural light.

I'm based in Tokyo. – I'm based in our company's Japanese headquarters, in a place called Kamiyacho, which is in the South of Tokyo, near Roppongi. Before that, I worked in a branch office in the West of Japan for ten years.

I'm developing AI software. – I'm trying to develop AI software to recommend the best insurance policies to customers, because it will help to cut costs and we are likely to have staff shortages in Japan in the future due to the falling population. It's very difficult, though, and I'm already behind schedule!

Practise answering questions from below with the right length of answer (not too short and not too long).

- Do you do much business in Asia/ the UK/...?
- Do you (have to) attend/ participate in/ write/ read/ take part in/...?
- Do you often travel abroad/ use English/...?
- How big is your company?/ How long is your commute?/ How... is your...?
- How has your week been?
- How often do you have business trips?/ How often do you...?
- Is it a big company/ group?
- What are you working on (at the moment)?/ What are you currently working on? (How are you getting on with it?/ Are you making much progress with it?)
- What brings you here (today)?
- What do you do? (How long have you been working there?/ What did you do before that?)
- What does... mean/ stand for?
- What does your company/ division/ department/ section/ team/... do?
- What exactly do you (have to) do (in your job)?/ What does your job involve?/ What do you do there?/ What is your role?/ What are your duties?/ What are your responsibilities?
- What is your workplace like?
- What kind of business are you in?/ What kind of company do you work for?
- What kinds of products do you sell?/ What kinds of documents do you write?/ What kinds of... do you...?
- What's it like, working in/ for/ as...?
- What's your most famous product?
- Where are you based?/ Where do you work?/ Do you work near here?/ Is your office near here?/ Are you based near here?
- Where is your company based?
- Which division/ department/ section/ team/... do you work in?
- Who are your (main) competitors?
- Who do you work for? (What do you do there?)

Ask about any questions which you are not sure how to answer

Roleplay whole conversations in which you meet people and talk about your job (chatting to other attendees at trade fairs/ trade shows/ conferences, meeting new people at a networking party, etc).