



APEX ENGLISH

Your voice. Global.

B1 · GENERAL ENGLISH

UNIT 5 · B1·5A

Jobs

Theme · Work & study



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Jobs

Theme: Work & study

B1 · General English



Learning objectives

- Talk about your work experience and what you've done recently.
- Use present perfect vs past simple correctly.
- Describe a job you've had honestly — the good and the bad.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Class Book

Warm-up · Your CV in three verbs

Choose *THREE* verbs that describe your working life so far (e.g. teach, translate, sell, code, wait). Say *ONE* sentence for each: when, where, and one detail.

The first verb — where it started.

The verb that lasted the longest.

The verb that surprised you.

Lead-in · Career myths

Vote *MYTH* or *FACT* for each claim about work. Then reveal the answer.

1. People change careers on average 5–7 times in their lifetime.

2. The best salaries always go to the people who work the most hours.

3. In most European countries, employees have the legal right to disconnect after work.

4. 'Networking' matters more than qualifications for finding a job.

5. Working from home makes you less productive.

followUp: Which of these myths did YOU believe? Which one still surprises you?

Reading · The five-year lie

Almost every job interview includes the same terrible question: 'Where do you see yourself in five years?' Everyone knows the game. The candidate invents a confident, ambitious answer. The interviewer nods politely. Both of them know that the real answer is 'I have absolutely no idea.'

In the last twenty years, the world of work has changed more than in the previous fifty. People have started careers in industries that didn't exist when they were at school. They have quit stable jobs to become freelancers. They have learned skills on YouTube that used to require a degree. The five-year plan is beautiful, but it's a lie almost everyone tells.

A better question is: 'What have I learned in the last twelve months, and what do I want to learn in the next twelve?' That question isn't ambitious. It's honest. And honest questions build better careers than ambitious lies.

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1. According to the writer, what's wrong with the 'five-year' question?
 - (A) It's too short
 - (B) It usually invites a lie
 - (C) It's illegal
2. How much has work changed in the last 20 years?
 - (A) Very little
 - (B) More than in the previous 50
 - (C) Only in tech
3. What is the writer's suggested better question?
 - (A) What have I learned recently — and what next?
 - (B) How much do I want to earn?
 - (C) What is my dream job?

Vocabulary in context

Match the phrase to its meaning.

candidate — a person applying for a job

freelancer — someone who works independently, on projects

quit — leave a job or activity

degree — a university qualification

True / False / Not Given

Based only on the text.

1. The 'five-year' question is a favourite of the writer.
 - (A) True
 - (B) False
 - (C) Not Given
2. Some people have learned skills online that used to need a degree.
 - (A) True
 - (B) False
 - (C) Not Given
3. Freelancing pays more than a stable job.
 - (A) True
 - (B) False
 - (C) Not Given

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4. The writer prefers 'honest questions' to 'ambitious lies'.

- (A) True
- (B) False
- (C) Not Given

React to the text

Answer in 2–3 sentences.

1. How would YOU honestly answer 'Where do you see yourself in five years?' today?

2. What is the biggest thing you've learned in the last twelve months?

Scan for meaning

Find the word or phrase from the text.

1. a person applying for a job

2. someone who works independently on projects

3. leave a job

Vocabulary · Work & careers

colleague — a person you work with

line manager — the person in charge (informal 'manager')

deadline — the latest time by which something must be done

salary — the fixed money you receive for a job (usually monthly)

promotion — a move to a higher position at work

step down — formally leave a job

apply for a job — send your CV to be considered

have an interview — meet an employer to discuss a job

get offered a job — be told the job is yours if you want it

take on responsibility — accept a bigger role

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work overtime — work more hours than your contract

get promoted — move up to a higher position

practice

Complete each sentence with ONE word or phrase from the lists.

1. I've ____ ____ five jobs this month — no luck yet.

2. My ____ is next Tuesday at 10 a.m. — I'm nervous.

3. She ____ ____ last month after 6 years in the company.

4. The ____ for this report is Friday at 5 p.m.

5. He got ____ to team leader in January.

6. I ____ ____ almost every Thursday to finish the weekly report.

Collocations · verbs + work nouns

Match each verb with the noun it usually goes with.

meet — a deadline / a target / a client

hand in — your notice / a report / your homework

run — a meeting / a business / late

attend — a meeting / a course / a conference

handle — a client / pressure / a difficult situation

Odd one out

Choose the word that does NOT belong.

1. salary · wage · pay · pillow

(A) salary

(B) wage

(C) pay

(D) pillow

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2. colleague · line manager · client · flower

- (A) colleague
- (B) line manager
- (C) client
- (D) flower

3. step down · quit · leave · apply

- (A) step down
- (B) quit
- (C) leave
- (D) apply

Word building · verb ↔ noun

Complete each pair.

utility:

1. employ → the person hired: ____

2. employ → the person hiring: ____

3. manage → the person doing it: ____

4. apply → the noun: ____



Grammar · Present perfect vs past simple

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1. Present perfect — experience in your life so far, with no specific time — • I have worked in three countries. (in my life so far) • She has met the CEO twice. (experience, unspecified when) Common: ever, never, so far, already, yet, recently, in the last few weeks.

2. Past simple — a finished action at a specific past time — • I worked in Paris from 2015 to 2018. • Yesterday she met the CEO in the boardroom. Common: yesterday, last week, in 2018, ago, when I was 20.

3. The rule of thumb — If you can say (or add) a specific past time → past simple. If the action is 'in life so far' → present perfect. • Have you ever visited Japan? (ever = at any time in life) • Did you visit Japan last summer? (specific time)

4. 'For' and 'since' with PP — Use present perfect (not past simple) with FOR/SINCE when the situation is STILL true. • I've worked here for 3 years. (still here) • I worked there for 3 years. (finished — I'm not there now)

Exercise A — present perfect or past simple?

Complete each sentence with the correct form.

1. I ____ (work) in three different countries in my life.

2. She ____ (start) her first job in 2019.

3. ____ (you / ever / work) with a difficult boss?

4. We ____ (have) three interviews last week.

5. He ____ (not / finish) the report yet.

6. I ____ (meet) her at a conference two years ago.

Exercise B — ever, never, already, yet, just

Complete each sentence with the correct word.

1. I've ____ finished the report — do you want to see it?

2. Have you ____ visited Japan?

3. I've ____ been to Argentina, but I'd love to go.

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4. She hasn't sent the invoice ____.

5. We've ____ hired two new people this month — very fast.

Exercise C — Find and fix the mistake

Each sentence has ONE mistake.

1. I have started this job three years ago.

2. She worked here since 2020.

3. Did you ever visited Japan?

4. I've saw that film last week.

Exercise D — Rewrite for context

Rewrite each sentence for the new time frame.

1. I work at ABC. (from 2018 to 2020)

2. She quit her job. (in the last few weeks)

3. I don't visit that client. (for six months)

Exercise E — About you

Answer with a full sentence.

1. How many jobs have you had in your life?

2. When did you start your current job or course?

3. Have you ever handed in your notice? What happened?

Exercise F — Complete the mini-interview

Complete each gap with the correct form.

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1. — How long ____ (you / work) here? — I ____ (start) in 2021, so about three years now.

2. — ____ (you / ever / manage) a team? — Yes, I ____ (lead) a team of six in my last job.

Listening · A quick job interview

A friendly 15-minute video interview for a junior marketing role. Notice how the candidate mixes present perfect and past simple.

pre

What is the WORST job interview question you've ever been asked?

What ONE story from your CV do you always tell in interviews?

gist

1. How much experience does Voice A have?

2. Why is Voice A leaving her current job?

3. What is the next step in the process?

detail

1. When did Voice A finish her internship?

2. What has she done at her current job that she's proud of?

3. What is the salary range mentioned?

Third listen — read between the lines

Answer from what is IMPLIED.

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1. Is Voice A well prepared for the interview?

2. Is the interviewer likely to invite her back?

Useful language from the audio

Match each phrase to what it does.

"I've been at my current job for about a year." — present perfect for a state still true now

"I finished my internship in 2023." — past simple with a specific time

"I've grown the account from 800 to 12,000 followers." — quantified achievement in the present perfect

"Have you ever managed a team?" — asks about experience across a lifetime

"Do you have any questions for me?" — signals the end of the interview

Voice A: Hi — good to meet you. Thanks for making time.

Voice B: Of course. So — let's start simple. Tell me about your experience.

Voice A: Sure. I've worked in marketing for about two years. I did a six-month internship at a food delivery start-up in 2023, and I've been in my current junior role for about a year — a small tourism agency.

Voice B: And why are you looking to move?

Voice A: The team is only three people. I've learned a lot, but I've hit the ceiling. I want a bigger team, more responsibility, and honestly — more people to learn from.

Voice B: Have you ever managed anyone?

Voice A: No, not officially. But in my current job I've trained two interns, and one of them has just been hired full-time.

Voice B: Anything you're particularly proud of?

Voice A: I've grown our Instagram from 800 to 12,000 followers in under a year — mostly with short videos of the destinations. It's my favourite thing I've done.

Voice B: That's exactly the profile we're looking for. Salary range for this role is €2,400 to €2,800 gross, plus a small performance bonus. Is that OK to talk about?

Voice A: Yes, that works. Do you have any questions for me?

Voice B: I'd love to send you a short creative task — by Friday. If we like it, we bring you back next week for a final with the CEO. Does that sound good?

Voice A: Sounds perfect. Thank you.

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Fourth listen — fill the gaps

Listen again and complete the exact phrases.

1. I ____ in marketing for about two years.

2. I ____ my internship in 2023.

3. ____ you ever ____ anyone?

4. I ____ our Instagram from 800 to 12,000 followers.

Speaking · Mini job interview

In pairs, run a 3-minute interview. Interviewer: use 3 present-perfect questions and 3 past-simple questions. Candidate: use both tenses honestly. Then swap.

Scene: Interview for a junior role in your dream field

A: You: the candidate. Prepare 1 specific number (like 800 → 12,000).

B: You: the interviewer. Ask about experience, motivation, and one 'why us?' question.

Scene: Internal move inside your company

A: You: applying to another team. Explain why.

B: You: the interviewer. Ask about achievements and what you'd miss.

Scene: Career-change interview after 10 years in one industry

A: You: the candidate. Explain the change positively.

B: You: the interviewer. Ask hard, honest questions.

Discussion · work

Choose 2 questions and speak for 30–45 seconds each.

Have you ever had a boss who really changed you? What did they do?

What is the WORST job you've ever done?

Have you ever regretted quitting a job?

How much of your identity is tied to your job? Honest answer.

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Role-play · Salary conversation

Read your role, prepare, then run the conversation for 2 minutes.

Scene: A meeting with your manager to ask for a raise

A: You: employee. You haven't had a raise for 2 years and you've taken on much more responsibility. Prepare 2 specific achievements.

B: You: the manager. Budgets are tight; you want to keep them, but you also can't offer the number they want. Propose a compromise.

Mini-presentation · 60-second career story

Prepare and deliver a 60-second summary of your working life so far.

Beat 1 (10s) — Your very first job.

Beat 2 (15s) — The biggest thing you've done in your career so far.

Beat 3 (20s) — One job you loved and one you left.

Beat 4 (15s) — What you're focusing on RIGHT NOW.

sample: My very first job was in a small bookshop when I was seventeen — I earned almost nothing and read all the books during my breaks. The biggest thing I've done so far is probably launch a podcast that hit 10,000 downloads in six months. I loved my time as a copywriter at a small agency; I left a corporate marketing job in 2022 because I was working every weekend. Right now I'm focusing on freelance projects — smaller, but I sleep more.

Writing · A short cover-letter paragraph

Write 80–100 words as the opening of a cover letter for a real (or imagined) job. Use at least 2 present-perfect verbs, 2 past-simple verbs, and 1 specific number.

bonus: Bonus — Rewrite the whole paragraph as a LinkedIn 'about me' section (max 40 words).

Wrap-up · What did we cover?

Present perfect = experience so far, no specific time (ever, never, in the last...).

Past simple = a finished action at a specific time (yesterday, in 2018, ago).

'For / since' + a state that is still true → present perfect.

A great CV story is short, specific and has ONE number.

Quiz

1. "I ____ this job three years ago."

(A) have started

(B) started

(C) start

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2. "She ____ here since 2020."
(A) works
(B) worked
(C) has worked
3. "____ you ever ____ a team?"
(A) Have / managed
(B) Did / manage
(C) Are / managing
4. 'Freelancer' means...
(A) a manager
(B) someone who works independently on projects
(C) the boss's assistant
5. "I ____ the report yet."
(A) haven't finished
(B) didn't finished
(C) don't finished



Workbook — home practice



1. Vocabulary recall

Complete each sentence with the best word.

1. Write ONE new word from the lesson and its meaning in your own words.

2. Write ONE collocation from the lesson and use it in a sentence about your life.

3. Write ONE phrase you'd use in real conversation this week.

2. Grammar practice · Present perfect vs past simple

Rewrite each sentence using the target grammar of this lesson.

1. Sentence 1 → rewrite it correctly with the target grammar.

2. Sentence 2 → rewrite it correctly with the target grammar.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



3. Sentence 3 → find and fix ONE mistake.

4. Sentence 4 → complete the gap with the correct form.

5. Sentence 5 → write your own example, true about you.

3. Reading recall

Look back at the class-book reading. Answer briefly in your own words.

1. What was the main idea in ONE sentence?

2. What is ONE opinion of the writer you agree with?

3. What is ONE opinion you disagree with, and why?

4. Listening · a follow-up dialogue

Two voices talk about work & study for about a minute. Notice the target grammar in use.

1. What is the main topic of the conversation?

2. Who sounds more confident and why?

3. Which target-grammar phrase appears TWICE in the audio?

Voice A: So — tell me about your work & study this week. Anything different?

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Voice B: Honestly, yes. I've been trying something new — and it's changed how I feel completely.

Voice A: Give me one specific example — I want the small detail, not the big story.

Voice B: OK: I stopped checking my phone before bed. Just that. And I already sleep better.

5. Writing · a short reflection

Write 70–100 words about the theme of this lesson. Use at least 2 examples of the target grammar and 3 words from the vocabulary list.

6. Reflection

Look back at your notes from class. Answer briefly.

1. What is ONE thing from this lesson you already use naturally?

2. What is ONE thing you'd like to practise more this week? How exactly?

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Answer key — Class Book

Lead-in · Career myths

1. FACT — most large surveys (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, LinkedIn) confirm this, especially for people born after 1980.
2. MYTH — after roughly 50 hours a week, productivity drops sharply. Long hours correlate more with burnout than with high pay.
3. PARTIAL FACT — France, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Ireland have some form of 'right to disconnect' law; many other countries do not.
4. MYTH-ISH — networking helps massively, but qualifications open the first door. Most studies say the combination beats either one alone.
5. MYTH — most large studies (Stanford, MIT) show equal or slightly higher productivity from home, though creativity and mentoring often suffer.

Reading · The five-year lie

1. (B) It usually invites a lie
2. (B) More than in the previous 50
3. (A) What have I learned recently — and what next?
1. (B) False
2. (A) True
3. (C) Not Given
4. (A) True
1. Model: honestly? I have no idea. I hope I'm still curious, working with people I respect, and speaking better English than I do now.
2. Model: I've learned to say no to projects I don't have time for — much harder than it sounds, and it's changed my whole year.
1. candidate
2. freelancer
3. quit

Vocabulary · Work & careers

1. applied for
2. interview
3. step downed
4. deadline
5. promoted
6. work overtime
1. (D) pillow
2. (D) flower
3. (D) apply
1. employee
2. employer
3. manager
4. application

Grammar · Present perfect vs past simple

1. have worked / 've worked
2. started
3. Have you ever worked
4. had
5. hasn't finished
6. met
1. just / already
2. ever
3. never
4. yet

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



5. already

1. I started this job three years ago. (past simple + ago)
2. She has worked / She's worked here since 2020.
3. Have you ever visited Japan?
4. I saw that film last week.
1. I worked at ABC from 2018 to 2020.
2. She has quit / She's quit her job in the last few weeks.
3. I haven't visited that client for six months.
1. Model: I've had four jobs so far — three in Brazil and one in Portugal.
2. Model: I started my current job in March last year.
3. Model: yes — I handed in my notice in 2022 after two very difficult years, and I've never regretted it.
1. have you worked / started
2. Have you ever managed / led

Listening · A quick job interview

1. About two years — one internship and one full-time junior role.
2. She wants a bigger team and more responsibility; her current company has only three people.
3. A short creative task by Friday, then a final interview with the CEO next week.
1. In 2023 — a six-month internship at a food delivery start-up.
2. She has grown their Instagram from 800 to 12,000 followers in just under a year.
3. Between €2,400 and €2,800 gross per month, plus a small performance bonus.
1. Yes — she gives specific numbers (800 → 12,000), remembers exact dates, and has a question ready at the end.
2. Very likely — the tone is warm, she calls Voice A 'exactly the profile we're looking for', and she sends the task the same afternoon.
1. have worked / 've worked
2. did / finished
3. Have / managed
4. have grown / 've grown

Quiz

1. (B) started
2. (C) has worked
3. (A) Have / managed
4. (B) someone who works independently on projects
5. (A) haven't finished

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Answer key — Workbook

1. Vocabulary recall

1. Open answer — check with your teacher.
2. Open answer.
3. Open answer.

2. Grammar practice · Present perfect vs past simple

1. Model answer — see class notes.
2. Model answer — see class notes.
3. Model answer — see class notes.
4. Model answer — see class notes.
5. Open answer.

3. Reading recall

1. Open answer — around 15 words.
2. Open answer.
3. Open answer — 2 sentences.

4. Listening · a follow-up dialogue

1. Model: both speakers compare their own experience of work & study.
2. Open answer — look for specific detail and full sentences.
3. Open answer — see transcript.

6. Reflection

1. Open answer.
2. Open answer — be specific: what, when, how often.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class