

# LESSON 4

# READ ABOUT WORK FRIENDSHIPS



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How important is it to have friends at work? Check out this article. You might be surprised!

## 1 BEFORE YOU READ

- A PAIRS** Do you or did you have friends at work? Were they important to you? Talk about them.

*I had a few friends at my last job. My friend Amy was...*



- B VOCABULARY** ▶ 01-20 Listen. Then listen and repeat.



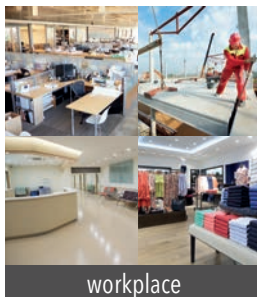
friendship



research



employees



workplace



encourage

>> FOR PRACTICE, GO TO PAGE 155

## 2 READ

- A** Read the Reading Skill. Look at the title. Which answer best describes the topic?
- a. how to find a job
  - b. making new friends
  - c. friendships at work

- B** ▶ 01-21 Listen. Read the article.

### READING SKILL Find the topic

The *topic* is what an article is about. When you know the topic before you begin reading, it is easier to understand the article. One way to find the topic is to think about the title.

# DO FRIENDSHIPS WORK AT WORK?

Many people around the world spend a lot of time at work. In fact, they spend more time with co-workers than with friends and family. With all the time we spend at our jobs, does it make a difference to us or to our employers if we become friends with our co-workers?

Research shows that employees are 50 percent happier with their jobs when they have friends at work. And for that reason, they're more likely to work harder and be loyal to their companies. A recent article in the *Harvard Business Review* highlights the importance of friendships in the workplace. According to the article, "Friendships at Work," these friendships help to create "a common sense of purpose and the mentality that we are in it together."

Many companies are starting to see the value of friendships in the workplace and have thought of some interesting ways to help build these friendships. For example, Zappos, the online shoe company, has a very special way to make sure its employees think about friendship. Every time employees log on to their computers, they see a picture of another employee. Then they are asked some questions. *How well do you know this person? Do you just say hello? Do you spend time together after work? Are you really good friends?* In

this way, Zappos asks employees to think about the other people in the office. "My hope," says Zappos owner Tony Hsieh, "is that we can have more employees who plan to be close friends." The company also encourages everything from cookouts to bowling parties. They believe that people who know each other better will work together better.

Other companies also work hard to help their employees make friends. Google is famous for encouraging friendships at work. The company has game rooms, a rock climbing wall, a gym, and a swimming pool. They even have restaurants with free food so that employees can spend time together. Employee Camille James moved from Tokyo to California to work for Google. She belongs to a bowling team and a salsa dance group at the company. She says that they help "break down the walls" that can happen in a large organization.

Research shows that people stay longer at companies and are better employees when they have friends at work. So, when you're looking for your next job, look for a company that encourages people to have friends at work. You will probably like your job more, and you'll be a better employee!



### 3 CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

**A** Read the article again. What is the article mainly about?

- a. how all tech companies are helping employees to be better workers
- b. the importance of friendships at work and what some companies are doing
- c. which companies are the best to work for if you're looking to make new friends

**B** Read the article again. Circle the correct answers.

1. People are more loyal to their companies when they have \_\_\_\_ at work.
  - a. friends
  - b. free food
  - c. more vacations
2. Research about friendships at work shows that people \_\_\_\_ .
  - a. aren't interested in having friends at work
  - b. feel more involved when they have friends at work
  - c. don't work hard when they have too many friends at work
3. Zappos asks its employees if they know each other so that \_\_\_\_ .
  - a. they think about who they know at work
  - b. the company can learn more about their employees
  - c. managers know about friendships at the company
4. Camille James joined the bowling team to \_\_\_\_ .
  - a. get more exercise
  - b. get to know people
  - c. learn a new sport
5. Zappos and Google encourage friendships at work by \_\_\_\_ .
  - a. giving away free food
  - b. providing a gym where people can meet
  - c. planning fun events for employees

**C** **FOCUS ON LANGUAGE** Reread lines 34–43 in the article. Think about the phrases *famous for* and *break down the walls*. Circle the correct answers.

1. The expression *famous for* means \_\_\_\_ .
  - a. well-known for
  - b. loved for
  - c. not known for
2. The expression *break down the walls* means to \_\_\_\_ .
  - a. change offices to make them more open
  - b. help people get to know each other
  - c. help people find new jobs at other companies

**D** **PAIRS** What was the article about? Retell the most important ideas. Use your own words.

### 4 MAKE IT PERSONAL

Find other companies that encourage friendships at work.



**A** Think about your friends. Where did you meet them? Was it at school, at a job, or somewhere else? How did you meet? Complete the chart.

Friend's name	Where did you meet?	How did you meet?

**B** **PAIRS** Compare your charts. Did you meet your friends at the same kinds of places?

☐ I CAN READ ABOUT WORK FRIENDSHIPS.