

In episode 8, Mei writes home about her first day at work. Do you think she likes her new job?

Before listening

Do the preparation task first. Then listen to the audio and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. a shared working area
2. a cubicle
3. to engage
4. collaborative
5. buy-in
6. a project description
7. to get used to something
8. an audition

Definition

- a. a small space with walls around it, separate from the rest of the room
- b. to become familiar with something
- c. to be interested in and involved with someone or something
- d. active support and participation in something
- e. involving two or more people working together for a special purpose
- f. an area of an office where colleagues can work together
- g. a test to see if an actor, singer or dancer is good enough for a play, film, show, etc.
- h. a document which explains the goals, plans, etc. of a project

Tasks

Task 1

Write a number (1–6) to put the events in the order they are mentioned.

- _____ Mei meets Milton on the stairs.
- _____ Steve tells the boss that he has some better ideas for the project description.
- _____ Mei's boss, Steve, shows her around the office.
- _____ Milton tells Mei that he has a job delivering pizzas.
- _____ Mei tells her parents that she was nervous before her first day at work.
- _____ Mei meets a member of her team, who is also called Steve.

Task 2

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. Mei is working for an IT company.	True	False
2. In Mei's new company, people work in individual offices.	True	False
3. Mei finds it easy to understand the words that her boss uses.	True	False
4. The boss expects his staff to work hard all the time.	True	False
5. Mei thinks it's quite different to a Chinese company.	True	False
6. Mei thinks that she will get used to the new company quickly.	True	False
7. Mei thinks Milton has been to an acting audition.	True	False
8. Milton would prefer to be an actor than a pizza delivery person.	True	False

Discussion

What was your impression on your first day of work?

Transcript

Mei: Hello, Mum and Dad. Well, I did it! First day at work in a new office, a new city, a new country. I hope you're proud of your daughter! I'm proud of myself. I was sooo nervous, but I tried hard not to show it. Today was just an introduction, really – I didn't have much to do, but I met the team I'll be working with and saw some of the apps that they've designed recently. They're friendly people and the work will be interesting – I think. The office boss is called Steve – he's ... , well, he isn't really a traditional boss ...

Steve (boss): So, this is the shared working area. We don't believe in cubicles here – we want people to engage.

Mei: Engage ... I see. OK.

Steve (boss): Shared workspace adds to the collaborative vibe, don't you think? Everyone feels they have buy-in.

Mei: Um, yes, I think so.

Mei: I don't understand anything he says!! 'Shared workspace adds to ... something collab ... , something "buy-in".' Oh dear. I'll have to work hard on my English now. And then ...

Steve (boss): And here's the games area. Table tennis table, billiards table. It's a fast-paced environment and these guys need to play sometimes – we all do. And here's one of your team members. Steve, this is Mei – she's joining your team.

Steve (colleague): Hey, Mei!

Mei: Hello. I'm pleased to ...

Steve (colleague): I hope you play table tennis. Welcome to the team. Hey, Steve ...

Steve (boss): Yep?

Steve (colleague): That project description you gave us yesterday ... I think I've got some better ideas. Can I come and talk them over with you?

Steve (boss): Sure, Steve! You know where I usually sit! See what I mean by 'buy-in', Mei? Now, through here we've got the kitchen area. You can ...

Mei: So I think you can see it's a bit different from an office in China! Ping pong and billiards! And a kitchen area? And telling your boss his ideas aren't very good and you've got some better ones! Remember your boss, Daddy, Dr Chen? He wouldn't be very happy if you did that! I think it's going to take a while for me to get used to this. Anyway, I'm sure it will all be OK. It's a good job, and I'm very happy here in London. I like my flat and my crazy neighbour. I saw him again last night on the stairs ...

Milton: Oh! Hello, Mei.

Mei: Hello. Oh! So you've got a part in a play! Congratulations!

Milton: Well, no ... I mean, I went to another audition yesterday, but I don't think they want me. They said I was too old. Imagine!

Mei: But you're wearing funny clothes. Isn't that a ... how do you say ... custom ... costume? For the play. Is it about a hotel?

Milton: Ah, this? This jacket and trousers? No, Mei. Ha! I wish it was a costume for a play about a hotel! No, it's my uniform – for when I deliver pizzas. That's my job. I'm a pizza delivery boy – well, man – well, person. That's what I do every evening. I didn't want to tell you.

Mei: Why not?

Milton: Because I want to be an actor – that's my job, not delivering pizzas. But now you've caught me! It's quite funny really, I suppose.

Mei: Yes, it is.

Milton: Oh well. What about you? Have you started the new job yet?

Mei: Oh, yes.

Milton: And?

Mei: It's OK. Let's say it's different for me. What does 'buy-in' mean?

Milton: 'Buy-in'? Something to do with buying a company, I think. I'm not sure. Why?

Mei: My boss uses it a lot. I think he means he wants people to share ideas, be involved – but I'm not sure. Anyway ... Do you ever bring pizzas home?

Milton: Just let me know when you want one – I'm very good at delivering them.

Mei: OK. Good night, then.

Milton: Night.

Mei: So that was funny. Milton delivers pizzas and he didn't want to tell me. So, Mum and Dad, I'm fine, the job is fine – so I don't want you to worry about me at all. Give my love to Jiang if you see her and tell her I'll speak to her soon ...

Answers

Preparation task

1. f
2. a
3. c
4. e
5. d
6. h
7. b
8. g

Task 1

- 5 Mei meets Milton on the stairs.
- 4 Steve tells the boss that he has some better ideas for the project description.
- 2 Mei's boss, Steve, shows her around the office.
- 6 Milton tells Mei that he has a job delivering pizzas.
- 1 Mei tells her parents that she was nervous before her first day at work.
- 3 Mei meets a member of her team, who is also called Steve.

Task 2

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. False
5. True
6. False
7. True
8. True