

## Advice for the modern boss

**Level:** Advanced (C1–C2)

**Time:** Up to 90 minutes

**Business topic:** The modern boss

**Business language focus:** Language associated with managing a company

**Activities:** In this lesson, students will:

- read a business article first published in a trusted news source and look at the language necessary to understand and talk about the article;
- use key language from the text in context;
- learn or revise some business idioms;
- learn or revise some business collocations;
- answer questions and give personal opinions using the business idioms and collocations;
- discuss ideas from the article in greater depth;
- take part in a role-play discussion between a boss and their staff.

**Materials:** One copy of the worksheet per student, possible internet access for exercise 7

**Group size:** All of the tasks can be completed in pairs or groups, so that as much communication as possible takes place in the class. This is also possible if you are delivering the lesson online. The lesson plan can also be used in a one-to-one teaching situation both face-to-face and online.

**Teaching online:** Ensure that all students (either in a group or in a one-to-one online teaching situation) are sent the worksheet well in advance of the lesson. This will give them time to print out the document if necessary. When the lesson starts, work through the various activities in the order presented but always ensure that you allow sufficient time for feedback and discussion after each activity.

**Overview:** This lesson is based on an authentic article from a trusted news source, republished here with its full, original text. The article discusses how the expectations of a boss have changed over time.

### 1. Warmer

The warmer focuses on some characteristics that are often held to be the qualities of a good boss. Students should read the list carefully and then decide which of the qualities is the most important and which is the least, ranking the qualities in order from 1 to 5. You could extend the activity by asking students to contribute further ideas of their own (e.g. someone whose behaviour sets a good example, someone who is always punctual, etc.).

### 2. Key words and expressions

Students search for words and expressions in the text and use them to complete the sentences or questions. Students should answer the questions using their own ideas. Note that the word in #1 needs to be entered in the example sentence in the plural. Note too that the word in #2 is used here ironically and is potentially insulting. A good boss would talk about employees and never about 'underlings' as this word has a negative connotation. The word in #3 is slightly more commonly spelt as 'impostor', although 'imposter' is used in the article. In #12, the tense of the verb is different in the example sentence from the one used in the text.

**Key:**

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. <i>peers</i>      | 7. <i>micromanager</i>     |
| 2. <i>underlings</i> | 8. <i>fad</i>              |
| 3. <i>imposter</i>   | 9. <i>crave</i>            |
| 4. <i>doer</i>       | 10. <i>incompetent</i>     |
| 5. <i>stamina</i>    | 11. <i>oath</i>            |
| 6. <i>downtime</i>   | 12. <i>thrown together</i> |

## 3. Understanding the article

Students work individually to read the article again and choose the best answers. If you are working with a group, students can compare their answers with other group members before you check them with the group.

**Key:**

1. *b*
2. *a*
3. *b*
4. *c*
5. *a*
6. *a*

## 4. Business language – idioms

Students work individually to match expressions 1–5 with definitions a–e. Encourage them to check their answers by looking in the text and seeing the expressions in context as this will help them to see how each phrase is used. They then use the phrases by answering the questions according to their personal experience. In a classroom situation, this can be done in pairs or small groups. Teaching online, you could use breakout rooms so students can share their ideas.

**Key:**

1. *c*
2. *e*
3. *d*
4. *a*
5. *b*

## 5. Business language – collocations

If students need help, encourage them to look in the text to locate the answers. When they have completed the questions, ask them to answer them using their own ideas. As above, they could compare their answers in pairs or small groups.

**Key:**

1. *motivate*
2. *come across*
3. *deliver*
4. *do*
5. *set*

## 6. Discussion

In small groups, students discuss the statements which pick up on some of the ideas in the article. Hold a short whole-group feedback session and compare and contrast each group's answers and input. If you are delivering an online one-to-one lesson, give the learner plenty of time to consider their responses to each of the discussion questions, including reasons.

## 7. Wider business theme – role play

This role-play activity can either involve one or more pairs or can be done as a small group activity with one member taking role A and the other members taking role B. Give students time to prepare their arguments and encourage them to include their own ideas before presenting their views in the role play.



### One-to-one teaching

This task can be adapted so that the student takes one of the roles and you take the other. Deal with any errors in the same way as noted for the group presentation above.