

You be the judge: should my partner use a co-working space so I can have our flat to myself?

## Level 3: Advanced

### 1 Warmer

a. Discuss the following questions in pairs.

- Do you, or anyone you know, work from home?
- What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of working from home?
- Do you think you would be able to live and work with someone you were in a relationship with? Why or why not?

### 2 Key words

a. Find words and phrases in bold in the article to match these definitions.

1. a shared office environment where people from different companies or professions work alongside each other \_\_\_\_\_
2. living or working together, often causing stress or tension \_\_\_\_\_
3. in the same way or to the same degree over a period of time, without change  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. a relationship situation where two people focus so much on each other that they isolate themselves socially or emotionally \_\_\_\_\_
5. feeling upset or insulted because of something someone said or did \_\_\_\_\_
6. to set personal limits to protect your time, energy or emotional well-being \_\_\_\_\_
7. delayed taking action because of unwillingness or lack of enthusiasm \_\_\_\_\_
8. do your job from a location outside the main office, usually using the internet  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. relating to large companies or business organisations, especially in terms of culture and/or structure \_\_\_\_\_
10. reduces the value, quality or effectiveness of something \_\_\_\_\_
11. time spent alone away from other people for rest or personal activities \_\_\_\_\_

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12. a specific condition or requirement that is officially part of an agreement or arrangement \_\_\_\_\_

13. feeling slightly angry or annoyed, often because of something inconvenient \_\_\_\_\_

14. able to exist, work or be used together without causing problems \_\_\_\_\_

15. formally suggested a plan or idea for consideration \_\_\_\_\_

16. deliberately holding back an emotion or reaction \_\_\_\_\_

### b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity.

1. Adina decided to \_\_\_\_\_ yesterday instead of going into the office.

2. Sadie's constant complaining really \_\_\_\_\_ the team's hard work and motivation.

3. I was a little \_\_\_\_\_ and hurt by Brian's comments about my presentation skills.

4. Lilian spent the afternoon enjoying some \_\_\_\_\_ pottering around her garden.

5. Successful therapists know they have to \_\_\_\_\_ with their clients to maintain professional integrity.

6. Mohammed \_\_\_\_\_ a comprehensive strategy to enhance customer experience across different departments.

7. Our marketing team utilises a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ located in the central business district.

8. Clara \_\_\_\_\_ exceeds her teacher's expectations and is expected to do very well in her end-of-year exams.

9. Although I had a looming deadline, I still \_\_\_\_\_ and only got started on my dissertation three days ago.

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10. Living \_\_\_\_\_ in such confined quarters could have a negative effect on any relationship.
11. The contract contains a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ that delayed payments will result in a steep fine.
12. Their constant focus on each other created a(n) \_\_\_\_\_, making it difficult for them to maintain friendships outside the relationship.
13. This software is \_\_\_\_\_ with a wide range of operating systems.
14. I had to \_\_\_\_\_ my amusement during the otherwise highly formal board meeting.
15. The \_\_\_\_\_ hierarchy often stifles creativity and doesn't foster a culture of innovative thinking.
16. Alma was clearly \_\_\_\_\_ by the journalists petty questions and only gave a series of one-word answers.

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*When Xavier moved into Claire's flat, he agreed he wouldn't work there – but would still prefer to WFH. You decide if Claire's right to play the boss*

**Interviews by Georgina Lawton**

**07 August, 2025**

#### The prosecution: Claire

- 1 *"I want him to work away from the flat so we keep a healthy relationship and avoid a couple bubble. Luckily, there are no issues between us when it comes to living together apart from this".*
- 2 Before Xavier moved into my flat in a sunny European city, I lived alone for three years. Ahead of him moving in, I said we could live together but that he needed to find somewhere else to work so we weren't **on top of each other**.
- 3 We'd both moved here from other countries, and I think it's healthy to carry on meeting people and not just live in a **couple bubble**. I asked him to find a co-working space to help us keep a balanced, healthy relationship.
- 4 Also, when I wake up, I don't want to speak for a while. Because I **work remotely** for a client who doesn't need me until 1pm, my mornings are my **solo time**. Having Xavier in my flat all day every day isn't an option.
- 5 My job is 90 per cent calls, so it had to be him that left. Also, it's my flat, and he was the one who **proposed** moving in. Luckily, we are super **compatible** as flatmates, but this was my condition.
- 6 I like to have different spaces for work, sleep and socialising, but Xavier doesn't think like that. He can get up, start work straight away at the kitchen table and then leave the house when he's done. He likes to do all his work-related activities indoors, then socialise outdoors.
- 7 It took Xavier a while to commit to a **co-working space**. Before that, he was hanging around at home. One day, a month after we started living together, he wanted to take a call at the flat. I said it was fine, but actually it was annoying. Later, we had to have a conversation about why I was **irritated**, and he joined a co-working space right after that.

8 I like to talk about issues that arise right away, whereas Xavier will avoid things and hope they'll disappear. I need to be understood, whereas he can just **suppress** things. Luckily, there are no other issues between us when it comes to living together. But I think it's important to **have boundaries**.

9 Xavier can work from home occasionally, but I'd prefer it if he stuck to the routine and came back in the afternoon while I'm working and not when I want to relax alone in the morning. It's important to have separation as a couple.

#### The defence: Xavier

- 10 *"I'm more productive working from home. I wake up, have a coffee and start straight away. I have managed to find a more corporate, soulless co-working space that is less sociable and suits me."*
- 11 About a month after I moved into Claire's flat, she told me I needed to go to a co-working space. We both work remotely, and when I moved in she did mention this **stipulation**. We've only been dating a year, and she didn't want us to be on top of each other.
- 12 I **dragged my heels** because I'd never been to a co-working space; I'd always worked at home. I'm more productive that way. I wake up, have a coffee and start work straight away. I like starting early and finishing by 2 or 3pm, and having my own space, with my food, snacks and a toilet all close by.
- 13 Claire starts at 1pm, so I originally thought: great I'll work in our flat until she needs the office, and pop into a co-working space now and again. But then, about 10 days into this routine, she sat me down and said it wasn't working, that she wanted me to work outside of the flat **consistently**.
- 14 So now I have to pack my bag, walk to a co-working space, and speak to people, all because Claire wants me out. I don't like it. I get up at 7am and my productivity starts at 100 per cent. Every little thing I do before working **deducts from** that – it drops off bit by bit.
- 15 Claire said she wanted her space in the mornings. She doesn't talk much, whereas I am a morning person. I didn't think I was disturbing her, but she said it was more about having space to just exist away from me in the day. I wasn't **offended**, but I didn't like having to find a co-working spot right away. I needed to work out what I liked and what I wanted out of one – it's not easy.

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- 16 I tried one place and it was way too social. Everyone said "hi" every five minutes, and my productivity was affected.
- 17 Claire is a very open communicator, and I'm glad she told me she wanted me out of the flat. And I have managed to find a more **corporate**, soulless co-working space that is less sociable and suits me.
- 18 In some ways, my working there makes our lives more interesting, because I come home with news about my day. But sometimes I wish I had a bit more freedom to be in the flat because it's my home, too.

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### 3 Comprehension check

a. Read the statements below and choose who has said the opinions.

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. It's vital for couples to maintain social connections beyond their romantic relationship. | Claire / Xavier |
| 2. My efficiency peaks the moment I get up, before any disruptions happen.                   | Claire / Xavier |
| 3. I prefer addressing conflicts immediately rather than letting them go unresolved.         | Claire / Xavier |
| 4. The daily need to relocate significantly undermines my professional performance.          | Claire / Xavier |
| 5. I like my partner to acknowledge my feelings, whereas they tend to internalise things.    | Claire / Xavier |
| 6. The overly friendly atmosphere constantly affected how much work I got done.              | Claire / Xavier |
| 7. Physical distance during working hours strengthens romantic partnerships.                 | Claire / Xavier |
| 8. I occasionally resent the restrictions placed on my access to our shared living space.    | Claire / Xavier |

### 4 Key language

a. Find the phrasal verbs below in the article. Then match them to the correct definition.

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. ahead of       | a. visit a place quickly and briefly                  |
| 2. comes to       | b. decreases or declines gradually                    |
| 3. drops off      | c. continued to follow or maintain a plan or decision |
| 4. hanging around | d. staying in a place without any particular purpose  |
| 5. pop into       | e. regards or deals with (a particular topic)         |
| 6. stuck to       | f. before; in advance                                 |

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**b. Complete each sentence with a phrasal verb from the previous activity in the correct form.**

1. I decided to \_\_\_\_\_ my GP's clinic on my way home from work to make an appointment for a flu jab.
2. When it \_\_\_\_\_ raising bilingual children, many parents struggle with maintaining the minority language at home.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ the documentary's release, the production company conducted extensive interviews with survivors of the tragedy.
4. Brooke's motivation to learn the violin \_\_\_\_\_ dramatically after she started secondary school.
5. Despite her family's objections to the unconventional career path, Ella \_\_\_\_\_ her decision to become a professional dancer.
6. Large groups of bored-looking teenagers tend to \_\_\_\_\_ in the shopping centre in the evenings.

## 5 Discussion

**a. Discuss these questions.**

- Do you think Claire was right to ask Xavier to work outside the flat? Why or why not?
- Xavier says he is more productive working from home, but Claire needs her space in the mornings. How could couples solve this kind of problem when they both work remotely?
- Have you ever had to share your living space with someone (flatmate, partner, family)? What rules or agreements did you make to live together?

## 6 In your own words

- Go to the original article on The Guardian website and read the comments that people have posted about the dilemma between Claire and Xavier. Then write your own comment. Remember to give your personal opinion and offer any suitable advice that you think might help the couple resolve the issue.**
- Share your comments with your classmates. Decide whose advice you think is the most useful.**