

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

Level 2: Intermediate

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 it's easy to live and work with someone you are 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. describes someone who likes spending time with people and talking to them

2. living and working together that often causes stress _____
3. to do your job from home or another place outside the office _____
4. to say something briefly without giving many details _____
5. a person or company that pays for services _____
6. immediately, without waiting _____
7. people who share the same apartment or flat _____
8. able to get a lot of useful work done in a period of time _____
9. the ability to do what you want _____
10. a shared office where different people or companies work together

11. sometimes; occasionally _____
12. to stay away from something or try not to do it _____

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

1. Adina decided to _____ yesterday instead of going into the office.
2. The new employee was very _____ and quickly made friends with everyone in the department.
3. I need to _____ that the meeting is now on Thursday, not Wednesday.
4. Living with _____ can be fun, but sometimes you need to talk about things like cleaning.
5. We should contact the _____ before we make any changes to the project.
6. Living _____ can have a negative effect on a relationship – it's best to have time apart.
7. Having the _____ to choose your own working hours makes the job much more enjoyable.
8. I felt much more _____ after organising my desk.
9. Our team uses a large _____ in the centre of the city.
10. We visit our grandparents _____, usually once every few months.
11. I always try to _____ driving during rush hour because the traffic is terrible.
12. When the fire alarm went off, everyone left the building _____ without taking their bags with them.

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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 Before Xavier moved into my flat, I lived alone for three years. Before he moved 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**. I asked him to find a co-working space to help us keep a healthy relationship.
- 2 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 own. Having Xavier in my flat all day every day isn't an option.
- 3 My job is 90 per cent phone calls, so Xavier had to leave. Also, it's my flat, and he was the one who suggested moving in. Luckily, we are good as **flatmates**, but I like to have different spaces for work, sleep and socialising. Xavier doesn't think like that. He can get up, start work **straight away** and then leave the house.
- 4 It took Xavier a while to organise 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, and he joined a co-working space right after that.
- 5 I like to talk about things that come up straight away, but Xavier will **avoid** things and hope they'll disappear. Luckily, there are no other issues between us. But I think it's important to have rules.
- 6 Xavier *can* work from home, 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

- 7 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.
- 8 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.
- 9 Claire starts at 1pm, so I 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, after about 10 days, she said it wasn't working, that she wanted me to work outside of the flat all the time.
- 10 Claire said she wanted her space in the mornings. She doesn't talk much, but I am a morning person. I didn't like having to find a co-working spot straight away. I needed to work out what I liked and what I wanted out of one. I tried one place, and it was too social, and it affected my productivity.
- 11 Claire is very good at communicating, and I'm glad she told me she wanted me out of the flat. And I have managed to find a better co-working space that is less **social**.
- 12 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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First published in *The Guardian*, 07/08/2025

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3 Comprehension check

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

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. I need quiet time in the mornings and don't want to communicate with anyone. | Claire / Xavier |
| 2. I work better when I can stay at home instead of going to an office. | Claire / Xavier |
| 3. When there's a problem, I like to discuss it immediately. | Claire / Xavier |
| 4. I prefer to start work early in the morning and finish by mid-afternoon. | Claire / Xavier |
| 5. It's important for couples to have separate spaces during work time. | Claire / Xavier |
| 6. Sometimes I feel unhappy that I can't work from home more often. | Claire / Xavier |

4 Key language

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

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. hanging around | a. visit a place quickly and briefly |
| 2. moved in | b. went to live in a place, often with other people |
| 3. pop into | c. understand; realise |
| 4. stuck to | d. staying in a place without any purpose |
| 5. work out | e. continued to follow a plan or decision |

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

- I _____ the supermarket on my way home from work to get some bread and milk.
- After university, my brother _____ with his girlfriend.
- It took me some time to _____ how to use the new washing machine properly.

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4. Ella looked at the dessert menu, but _____ her diet plan and ordered fruit salad.
5. Teenagers often _____ in shopping centres 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

- a. 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 solve the problem.
- b. Share your comments with your classmates. Decide whose advice you think is the most useful.