

## 7.2 Rules at work

GOALS ■ Use verbs and prepositions ■ Use past modals of deduction

### Vocabulary & Reading using verbs and prepositions



1 Work in small groups. Discuss the following questions.

- 1 Approximately how many times a day do you check your phone? What do you look at? Do you think people use their phones too much these days? Why/Why not?
- 2 Are you (or would you be) happy to deal with work emails outside work (e.g. before or after work or in the holidays)? Why/Why not?

2a Look at the headline of the news article. With your partner, make a list of reasons for and against this ban.

b Now read the article and compare it with your ideas.

3a Match verbs 1–6 to the prepositions in the box. There may be more than one possibility.

for to on against from

- |           |           |             |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| 1 protect | 3 protest | 5 insist    |
| 2 react   | 4 expose  | 6 criticize |

b Now find the verbs in exercise 3a in the news article and check your answers.

4 Choose the correct options to complete the sentences.

- 1 Employers have been accused *for / of* taking advantage *of / from* their employees.
- 2 Employers' expectations have been blamed *for / on* increasing working hours.
- 3 As a result, the government has prohibited employers *in / from* contacting workers outside office hours.
- 4 However, the new rules will not apply *on / to* all jobs.
- 5 Lawyers whose clients count *against / on* them at all times, will still be available out of hours.

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### Major European companies ban work emails outside working hours

Some of Germany's biggest companies have brought in rules to protect their workers from being disturbed by work email outside office hours. Firms such as the car manufacturers Volkswagen have reacted to growing levels of employee stress and burnout by installing software to prevent emails from reaching employees at home.

In France, workers have protested against the way that the use of electronic devices has been exposing workers to much longer (unpaid) hours than the official thirty-five-hour working week. In response, the government has recently introduced laws which insist on employers switching off email contact after 6 p.m.

But some employers and employees have criticized the new rules for not taking account of modern-day flexible working practices. Many parents, for example, prefer to leave work early to pick up their children and then check emails later in the evening. The fact that you can be contacted on email might actually mean that a lot of people are able to leave the office earlier than they would have done ten or fifteen years ago.

Margaret Smyth, Berlin



- 5 Look at the online article. Have you experienced anything similar at work or school? Discuss in pairs.

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### Does your boss have strange or unfair rules for the office?

A government minister has reportedly made a list of rules for her staff which have been leaked to the media. The guidelines are supposed to include a rule that staff stand up when she arrives, and that people do not use the corridor next to her office while she is eating, as the noise is distracting.

Have you ever had a boss who insisted on strange or unfair rules?

- 6 Now read some of the comments on the article. Could there have been any good reasons for these rules? Discuss your ideas with a partner.

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*I used to work somewhere where the company insisted on us parking our cars all facing the same way.*

*We were expected to eat lunch sitting at our desks.*

*We had to start work very early. There were always team meetings at 7.30 a.m.*

*We were forbidden to use cups without lids.*

- 7 7.2 ))) Listen to two people discussing the comments in exercise 6. Compare what they say with your ideas.

## Grammar past modals of deduction

- 8 Look at the extracts from the listening and, for each one, decide if the person ...
- is almost certain something happened or was true.
  - finds it hard to believe what happened.
  - is guessing about what happened.
- It must have been a way of making the car park look tidier or something!
  - It might have been a safety issue.
  - It could have been something like that.
  - They can't have stopped them having a lunch break.
  - They may have needed people to stay in order to answer the phones.
  - It might have been in a hot country.
  - Someone must have spilt a drink over a computer!

- 9 Now read the Grammar focus box and add examples from exercise 8 to each section.

### GRAMMAR FOCUS past modals of deduction

We can use **must/can't/might/could + have + past participle** to make deductions about a past event or situation.

- Use *must have + past participle* when you are almost certain something happened or was true.
  - \_\_\_, \_\_\_
- When you are almost certain something is not true, or did not happen (or you can't believe it happened), use *can't have + past participle*.
  - \_\_\_

Note that we do *not* usually use *mustn't have*.
- When you are guessing about what happened, or you think something possibly happened or was true, use *might/could/may have + past participle*.
  - \_\_\_, \_\_\_, \_\_\_, \_\_\_

→ Grammar Reference page 149

- 10 Rewrite sentences 1–7, replacing the underlined words with a phrase using a suitable past modal of deduction.

- It isn't possible that they worked such long hours.
- Perhaps they had a long lunch break.
- I'm sure they hated their jobs.
- I'm pretty certain he was fired.
- Maybe he resigned.
- Perhaps he was made redundant.
- They definitely weren't friends.

### PRONUNCIATION have in past modals

- 11a 7.3 ))) Compare your answers in exercise 10 with those in the listening. Notice the weak form of *have*.

- b 7.3 ))) Listen and repeat.

- 12a **TASK** Work with a partner. Look at the following extract from a newspaper story and make deductions about what happened.

*The manager insisted that we had to wear make-up if we wanted to keep our jobs.*

Think about the following questions: What was the job? Why did the manager insist on make-up? Did the employee complain?

- b Now turn to page 129 and read the newspaper story. Were your deductions correct?