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Describing Jobs

Objective:

After completing this lesson you will be able to :

- identify what roles different jobs and careers have and what is required to perform those jobs and careers.
- give a brief description of jobs
- ask about person's jobs

A large computer company can employ hundreds of staff, all with a specific responsibility, function, and purpose. Each employee has a specific role to play in meeting the needs of the guests or clients. The specific functions of particular employees are usually described under job descriptions or duties. Although the role of most computer company staff may be obvious, there may be times when a guest or client may ask about an employees job or his duties. Certainly these kinds of questions may be asked on job interviews. Here are the dialogues describing jobs in Information and Communication Technology (ICT)..

Dialogue 1



Client : What do you do?

Staff : I'm a computer software engineer for a computer company.

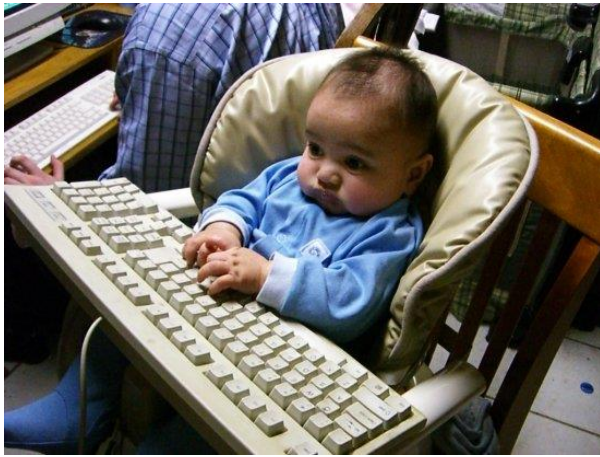
Client : What exactly does a computer software engineer do?

Staff : Well, we analyze user needs to formulate software specifications, and then design, develop, test and evaluate programs to meet these requirements. We try to ensure that every thing runs smoothly and efficiently during testing and evaluating programs and solve problems that may come up.

Client : That sounds interesting.

Staff : It has its moments.

Dialogue 2



Client : What's your job?

Staff : I'm a programmer.

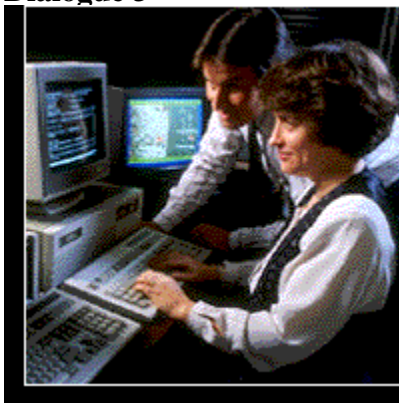
Client : Are you a senior programmer?

Staff : Well, I'm the head of IT department.

Client : Sounds sweet. Where do you work?

Staff : At Intelligent Software .

Dialogue 3



Client : What do you do for a living?

Staff : I'm employed at a leading financial magazine as a graphic designer.

Client : So you design graphic and page layout that magazine.

Staff : Yes that.

Client : Just out of curiosity- where did you work before you applied in this company?

Staff : I was a graphic designer for PromoPrint, a company specializing in publishing catalogues and promotional material, and have used Adobe InDesign and other DTP software.

Language Expressions

There are a couple of standard expressions that can be used when asking about a person's occupation. Look at the example below :

What do you do?

What's your job?

What's your occupation?

What do you do for a living?

What type of work do you do?

Where do you work?

I'm a salesman. (job-general)

I'm in sales. (general)

I'm in the computer business. (industry)

I'm a programmer at Digitum-UK. (specific)

I'm a consultant for IBM.

What company do you work for?

I work for eJupiter.co.uk. (company name)

I work at eJupiter.co.uk. (general)

I'm with eJupiter.co.uk. (industry)

What do you do there?

What do you do at eJupiter.co.uk?

I'm a software engineer. (job title)

I work in the sales department. (place in company)

I'm in customer service. (general area)

I work as a webmaster.

I design and develop IT devices. (specific job)

I use page layout software to prepare electronic files for publication.

Once a person knows what your job title is, they may want to know a little bit about your specific job duties.

Sometimes it is hard to tell exactly what a person does just from the job title. Look at the expressions below that can be used to inquire about job duties.

What are your job duties?

What exactly do you do in your job?

What does your job entail?

what does your job involve?

Here are the responses to answer if someone asks about job duties.

a) to talk about main responsibilities

I'm in charge of (= responsible for) designing and maintaining websites

I have to deal with any complaints from the clients

I run the small computer company in my hometown.

I'm responsible for managing websites.

b) to talk about daily duties/routines

I have to go to/ attend a lot of meetings.

I see/ meet/ visit clients

I design programs in C for use in large retail chains.

I make sure the web server runs properly, monitor the traffic through the site, and design and update the web pages.

Language work: the simple present tense

The simple present tense is used to discuss customs and habitual actions (activities), things which are general true (general truth) and factual statements, permanent situations, the frequency of events, and to ask for and give instructions or to discuss a series of actions.

To have	Short form	Other Verbs (to work)
I have	I've	I work
he has	he's	He works

she has	she's	She works
it has	it's	It works
you have	you've	you work
we have	we've	we work
they have	they've	they work

Statements +	Statements -	Questions	Short answer +	Short answer -
I work.	I don't work.	Do I work?	Yes, I do.	No, I don't.
He works.	He doesn't work.	Does he work?	Yes, he does.	No, he doesn't.
She works.	She doesn't work.	Does she work?	Yes, she does.	No, she doesn't.
It works.	It doesn't work.	Does it work?	Yes, it does.	No, it doesn't.
You work.	You don't work.	Do you work?	Yes you do.	No, you don't.
We work.	We don't work.	Do we work?	Yes we do.	No, we don't.
They work.	They don't work.	Do they work?	Yes they do.	No, they don't.

Customs and habitual actions (activities)

- ❑ *you design and create either a graphic or 3D animations for software programs, games, movies, web pages, etc.*

Things which are general true (general truth) and factual statements

- ❑ *metals expand when heated.*
- ❑ *The coffee bean grows well in warm, damp climates.*

Regular or permanent situations

When something happens regularly or is a permanent situation we usually use the simple present tense. When using the simple present the verb (with the exception of the [auxiliary verbs](#)) remains in the dictionary form (verb + s with he/she/it).

3D Animation / Graphic design



Description: A position where you design and create either a graphic or 3D animations for software programs, games, movies, web pages, etc. Position may also require that you work on existing graphics, animations, movies, etc. done by other people.

Requirements: An individual applying for this job would need to be talented in design and creating visuals, for most people this is not something that you could train for. In addition to being talented in design and art you must have a good understanding of the software programs being used to create the visual designs or 3D animations.

Recommendations: If you wish to get into graphic design / arts, learn major graphics programs such as Adobe Photoshop. In addition to this program, there are numerous other programs used to create your own pictures or edit photos.

Difficulty: (MEDIUM - HIGH) Many of the programs used to create a graphic, edit a photo, or create a 3D render are complex programs and often require a lot of learning and experience; and in some cases, training or schooling.

Customer service

Description: Helping customers with general questions relating to the company, ordering, status on orders, account information or status, etc.

Requirements: Good communication skills and a general understanding of the company and its products.

Recommendations: Great starting position for anyone who is looking to get their foot in the door at the company and/or who are not yet that familiar with computers.

Difficulty: (LOW) customer service will require that the employee be familiar with computers and be able to navigate through the companies system. However, will seldom require the employee to be skilled with computer.

Data Entry

Description: A job that commonly requires the employee to take information from a hard copy or other source and enter it into an electronic format. Position may also be taking electronic data and entering it into a database for easy sorting and locating.

Requirements: Generally requires someone capable of typing 40-50 or more WPM, familiarity with computer, and usually requires familiarity with a word processors.

Recommendations: Practice your typing and take typing tests to determine your overall speed.

Difficulty: (LOW) Most data entry jobs are beginner level jobs and don't require much or any prior experience or formal education.

Database

Description: A job that requires creating, testing, and/or maintaining one or more database.

Requirements: Commonly requires that the user is familiar with and/or has an extensive knowledge with the database at the place of employment. For example: Access, FoxPro, MySQL, SQL, Sybase, etc.

Recommendations: Become familiar with the database being used at the business. If the job is for developing or continuing the development of a database, you will need to have a great understanding of the database as well as how to program it. Often this knowledge requires past experience or formal education.

Difficulty: (MEDIUM - HIGH) Developing or maintaining a database can be a difficult and sometimes very complex job. As mentioned above you will need to have past experience or formal education with maintaining or developing a database before most companies will even consider you.

Engineer

Description: An engineer is someone who is at the top of their class and almost always someone who has or is working on a college degree or several certifications. Although used broadly in this document, the type of engineer is usually specified in the job requirement. For example, a software development engineer may be a highly skilled computer programmer.

Requirements: The requirements for this type of job change depending on the type of engineer you plan on being. However, as mentioned above, any engineer job will require an extensive understanding of the job. Usually, this understanding is obtained from a school, certifications, training, and/or years of past experience.

Recommendations: Get training and/or education in the subject of interest from a school or other location. Learn as much about the subject as possible from books, the Internet, and other sources. Often before you can qualify for many engineer positions you will need past experience; therefore, it's a good idea to get an entry-level job in the same field. For example, if you want to be an engineer in software development, get a job in programming and/or create your own software programs. If you want to become a network engineer, get a job that requires you to setup, maintain, or otherwise work with networks and setup your own home network.

Difficulty: (HIGH) This is a job / position that requires a lot of work to obtain and is not likely something you will be able to get as your first job.

Hardware

Description: A position as a hardware designer, circuit design, embedded systems, firmware, etc. is a job that requires you to design and create a complete hardware package or portions of a hardware device.

Requirements: Jobs that design and/or create hardware devices often require that the person has a good understanding of electronics, circuits, firmware, and/or design. For this type of position the person will often need to have several years of prior experience and/or a degree in the field.

Recommendations: If you're interested in this type of field we suggest you get a degree in the field.

Difficulty: (HIGH) Hardware design is a difficult position to learn and understand unless you get training or a degree.

Networking

Description: Computer networking jobs involve designing, setting up, and/or maintaining a network.

Requirements: Although most users today have their own home networks, setting up, troubleshooting, and maintaining a corporate network can be a much more complicated task. Often, networking jobs also require a good understanding of how a network works, and in some cases how all the underlying protocols and structure of how networks work.

Recommendations: There are numerous types of network and network related certifications available today, such as the CCNA, MCSE, etc. Often depending on the level of certification and the job you're applying for, the certifications will be more than enough to qualify you for most network jobs. Some of the higher networking positions, especially in the development of network hardware or programming side, may also require past experience in networking and/or a degree.

Difficulty: (MEDIUM - HIGH) Depending upon the job specifications and the complexity of the network usually determines the difficulty of this job.

Programmer / Software developer

Description: A job that requires the development and/or continued development and maintenance of a software program.

Requirements: A basic to extensive understanding of a programming language. Because most job positions will require a person to develop sections of a program or the whole program, they often require several years of past experience and/or a degree before even considering you.

Recommendations: Learn one or more programming languages. Depending on what type of programs or scripts you wish to create may change the type of language you wish to learn. If you need experience, creating your own software programs is a great way to learn a language and demonstrate your abilities at a job interview.

Difficulty: (HIGH) Learning a programming language can be as difficult as learning a second language and takes a lot of experience and practice to become a skilled programmer.

Quality Assurance (QA) / System analyst / Tester

Description: This job requires that the employee test out all features of a product for any problems or usability issues.

Requirements: Requires that the person have a good understanding of computer software, hardware, and the product being tested.

Recommendations: Become familiar with computers, software, hardware, and/or the products the company makes.

Difficulty: (LOW - MEDIUM) Depending on what is being tested and how much needs to be tested usually determines the difficulty of this job. However, for users familiar with the product or similar products, you should not have much difficulty locating and reporting issues.

Sales

Description: Selling a product or service to another person or company.

Requirements: Good communication skills and a general understanding of computers and/or the product that is being sold.

Recommendations: If you're selling computers, computer hardware, or computer software, become familiar with all aspects of the product.

Difficulty: (LOW) Sales for computer software, hardware, electronics, or related products is a good first job and can be a good way to learn more about computers.

Technical Support (Technician / Help Desk)

Description: Helping an end-user or company employee with their computers, software program, and/or hardware device. A technical support position is a great first step for people interested in working in the computer industry.

Requirements: A basic understanding of computers, computer's software, and/or hardware.

Recommendations: Become as familiar as possible with computers, computer software, and/or computer hardware, depending on what you will be supporting. Almost all technical support centers that help end-users with their computers, computer software, or computer hardware products have training that all employees go through before you actually start work but will still often require that the user be familiar with computers.

Help desks for corporations do not usually have any type of training; these positions require that the person being hired already have a very good understanding of computers and troubleshooting computer problems.

Difficulty: (LOW - MEDIUM) The difficulty of this job is really depending on the type of training you get. However, someone who is familiar with computers or works with computers often will generally have an easy time with these positions after a few days working at them.

Technical Writing

Description: This position often involves creating or editing technical papers or manuals.

Requirements: This position often requires that the individual has a basic understanding about the subject being written about and have good writing skills.

Recommendations: Many of these positions will require that the person have a degree and will often test a user before hiring them. In addition to having good writing skills, you should also be familiar with a major word processor.

Difficulty: (LOW - MEDIUM) For someone who has good writing skills and familiarity with the subject, this job can be an easy job.

Security expert

Description: Test and find vulnerabilities in a system, hardware device, or software program.

Requirements: This position is for someone who has a strong familiarity with how software, hardware, and/or networks work and how to exploit them. Often, you will need to have a good understanding of how the overall system works as well as good programming skills.

Recommendations: Keep up-to-date with all security news, advisories, and other related news. The majority of security vulnerabilities are through software, and in order to understand these vulnerabilities or find new security vulnerabilities, you'll need to understand how to program and have a good understand of how software works and interacts with computers.

Difficulty: (MEDIUM - HIGH) The difficulty of this job really depends on what you're testing or trying to find any vulnerabilities in.

WebMaster / Web Designer

Description: A job where a person creates, maintains, or completely designs a web page.

Requirements: For basic web designing positions you should have a good understanding of HTML, the Internet, and web servers. More advanced positions where you will be working with more advanced web pages and not just static web pages may also require that you be familiar with such things as CGI, CSS, Flash, FTP, Linux, Perl, PHP, RSS, SSI, Unix, and/or XHTML.

In addition to having a good understanding of the technologies and code used to create a web page, you're also often required to know the software programs they are created in.

Recommendations: One of the best learning experiences for people who are interested in this type of job is to create your own web page. Keeping in mind that simply designing and posting a web page using Microsoft FrontPage without understanding HTML or the code of how it works may not be sufficient enough for most jobs.

Difficulty: (MEDIUM - HIGH) The complexity of this job is really dependent on how difficult of a project you're working on, simply creating and posting a simple web site with no interaction is not that hard. However, creating an interactive site with forms, databases, and overall more interaction with the user and the server can increase the difficulty of the job significantly.