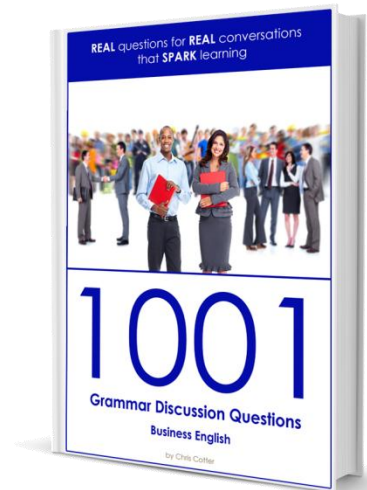
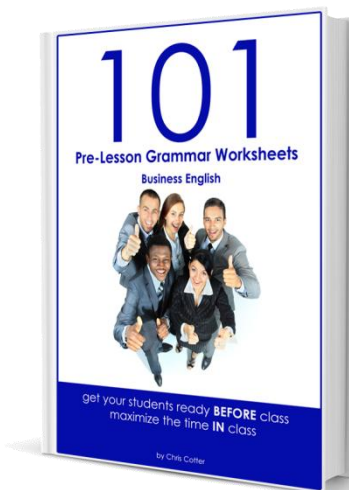


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the ARTICLE (for teachers)

Messiness More Efficient

Every office has at least one slob -- the employee whose desk looks like a tornado has struck. Papers are stacked precariously. Post It Notes from months and months ago are still tacked to the cubicle wall. The garbage overflows with takeout coffee cups and empty bags. But a business book suggests that neat people are actually less efficient and less creative, or at least so says the book's author, David Freedman.

A mess, it turns out, works surprisingly well for the person who made it, he explains. It becomes a filing system of sorts. Take Karen Jackson, who readily admits that her desk looks like a disaster area. Yet it's an organized mess, she says, because she knows where everything is. Clean it up, or otherwise disturb the mess, and the method behind the madness goes out the window.

What may come as the biggest shock, though, is how a messy workspace can serve as a natural reminder system. Old papers and notes stacked with more recent information will get picked through. As a result, connections between the old and the new become possible, which translates into increased creativity and opportunity. Filed away papers, on the other hand, usually end up forgotten, and anything thrown away is lost forever. As for efficiency, tidy employees usually spend from one to four hours per day keeping their desk clean, time more productively spent attending to the tasks at hand.

But Barry Izsak, who heads the National Association of Professional Organizers, disputes the author's claims. Izsak explains that the average person, because of the mess, will often feel increased stress. There will be accompanying feelings of missed deadlines and lost opportunities. And according to another study, that inability to quickly retrieve information can cost companies money -- \$50 per week for each employee. At large organizations, that can quickly run into millions of dollars.

Teacher's Notes:

* Underlined words in **red typeface** are the recommended vocabulary for this lesson.

WARM-UPS

Select one or all of the following warm-up activities.

- 1. Define:** What does "efficient" mean? Can you use it in a sentence? Can you give examples?
- 2. Brainstorm:** Brainstorm with a partner(s) words and ideas associated with "efficient" for 2 minutes. Spend another 5 minutes or less discussing the words and ideas together.
- 3. Title:** Speculate and/or discuss the contents of today's article from its title: "Messiness More Efficient."
- 4. Speculate:** Write in the missing words for today's article title: "Messiness ()
()." Why did you choose these words for the blanks?
- 5. Do you agree or disagree? Why?**

a.	I wish I were a neater person.
b.	I wish I were a more efficient person.
c.	I wish I were a more creative person.
d.	Messy people at the office are usually less productive than neat people.
e.	Messy people at the office are usually more creative than neat people.

VOCABULARY

Select one of the following vocabulary acquisition activities.

1. Vocabulary match: Individually or in pairs/groups, match the words in column A (from the article) with the best choice in column B.

a. slob	q. dangerous
b. precarious	r. type
c. tack	s. quickly
d. overflow	t. take back
e. readily	u. post
f. disturb	v. take care of
g. sort	w. bother
h. attend	x. associate
i. accompany	y. pig
j. retrieve	z. spill

2. Fill in the Blanks: Fill in the blank with the correct word.

	sorts	retrieve	precariously	disturb	readily
	slob	overflows	accompanying	tacked	attending
a.	Every office has at least one ().				
b.	Papers are stacked ().				
c.	Post It Notes from months and months ago are still () to the cubicle wall.				
d.	The garbage () with takeout coffee cups and empty bags.				
e.	A mess, it turns out, becomes a filing system of ().				
f.	Karen Jackson () admits that her desk looks like a disaster area.				
g.	Clean it up or () the mess, and the method behind the madness goes out the window.				
h.	Tidy employees waste time, time more productively spent () to the tasks at hand.				
i.	There will be () feelings of missed deadlines and lost opportunities.				
j.	According to a recent study, that inability to quickly () information can cost companies money.				

3. Define: Define each word, correctly pronounce it, explain the meaning and/or usage, and offer an example sentence to the class.

a.	slob	c.	tack	e.	readily	g.	sort	i.	accompany
b.	precarious	d.	overflow	f.	disturb	h.	attend	j.	retrieve

WORD RECOGNITION

1. Word Search: Find the target words (in bold). Time yourself, and see how many words you can find in three minutes. In five minutes. In ten minutes.

sorts	retrieve	precariously	disturb	readily
slob	overflows	accompanying	tacked	attending
Y O A H B Y V D G D O B W J A R L F T Z R E O I F M R U M S T E S X T K U S R S W E Y E L Z G R U C E U T U O W T L V O I N R A O R N L S O W R I E B Y I T E B I Y D L I Q I D N Y V Y M E A N R F I Q D E A A K K N D I I D R A P N X V E T L I A O M L E Y E C Y G E R W Z M P H D D K B V I E R T E R O P M K N D K I P M Q R Z X B V W O U F O G E Q I A U P O U K U C G P N X Q P I M H N I S T D C K U V E Y R Z S O R T S I S A O V E R F L O W S S U I U				

2. Target Word Pool: Find the target words (in bold) with their exact match. Time yourself, and see how many words you can find in three minutes. In five minutes. In ten minutes.

sorts	retrieve	precariously	disturb	readily
slob	overflows	accompanying	tacked	attending
really accompaniment readily precancerous slab slobs overflowing sort attendance disturbed tacking retrieved attendance irretrievable precarious tacked sloppy accompanying overflows stacked sorts flow over attending sorted precalculus accomplishing retrieve disturbing overflow readying assort distrust attend disturb overflow slob tactful reading retrievable slop sorting accompanied precariously precious companion retrieving tacky ready disperse attention				

pre- or post-COMPREHENSION

1. Word Association: Brainstorm words associated with today's topic for two minutes. Present to the class.

2. Brainstorm Questions: Brainstorm questions that you would like to ask about today's topic. Answer the questions without looking at the article.

3. True or False?: Guess (before the article) or answer (after the article) whether the sentence is true or false. If false, correct the sentence.

a.	A recent book suggests that neat people are more creative and more efficient.	T / F
b.	A mess acts as a filing system.	T / F
c.	A mess acts as a natural reminder system.	T / F
d.	According to Freedman, tidy employees waste time cleaning their desks.	T / F
e.	The average person will feel stress from a messy workspace.	T / F

4. Questions: Answer the questions to check comprehension.

a.	How does the article describe the office slob?
b.	Why does Freedman consider a mess as a sort of filing system?
c.	Why does a mess increase creativity?
d.	How many hours does the average employee spend tidying his/her desk?
e.	Why would the average employee feel stress from a messy workspace?

5. Vocabulary: In pairs/groups, remember how the words were used in today's article.

a.	slob	c.	tacked	e.	readily	g.	sorts	i.	accompanying
b.	precariously	d.	overflows	f.	disturb	h.	attending	j.	retrieve

6. Fragments: Remember how the fragments were used, and complete the sentence from today's article.

a.	Post It Notes from...
b.	A mess, it turns out, works...
c.	What may come as the biggest shock, though, is how a messy workspace...
d.	As a result, connections between the old and the new become possible, which...
e.	Izsak explains that the average person...

post-COMPREHENSION

1. Vocabulary: Circle any additional unknown words/phrases in the article. In pairs/groups, use your dictionaries to understand the meanings. Present to the class.

2. Class Questions: Read through the article once more, and write down any questions that you would like to discuss in pairs/groups or as a class. Discuss.

3. Summarize: Work with a partner to summarize the article in your own words.

4. Discuss (part I): Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

a.	Did you like this article?
b.	What was your general impression after reading this article?
c.	Would you consider yourself a neat person or a messy person? Why?
d.	Do you think that messy people are more or less efficient than neat people? Why?
e.	Do you think that messy people are more or less creative than neat people? Why?
f.	How much time do you spend a day or week cleaning your workspace? Is this too much or too little?
g.	Are there any very messy people in your office? If yes, does their messiness bother you? Why/not?
h.	Are there any very neat people in your office? If yes, does their neatness bother you? Why/not?
i.	Are there any negative connotations to being messy? If yes, what?
j.	Are there any negative connotations to being neat? If yes, what?

5. Discuss (part II): 1) Brainstorm in groups/pairs problems that harm efficiency at an office. 2) Think of solutions for each of these problems. 3) Make a list of pros and cons for each solution. 4) Debate each solution in pairs, with partner A the boss and partner B the employee. Record your answers/responses to present to the class.

	Problem	Solution	pros & cons
a.			
b.			
c.			
d.			

6. Google Search: Type "efficient" into Google news and read additional articles on this topic. Discuss or write an essay about your findings.

STUDENT HANDOUT (the article)

Messiness More Efficient

Every office has at least one slob -- the employee whose desk looks like a tornado has struck. Papers are stacked precariously. Post It Notes from months and months ago are still tacked to the cubicle wall. The garbage overflows with takeout coffee cups and empty bags. But a business book suggests that neat people are actually less efficient and less creative, or at least so says the book's author, David Freedman.

A mess, it turns out, works surprisingly well for the person who made it, he explains. It becomes a filing system of sorts. Take Karen Jackson, who readily admits that her desk looks like a disaster area. Yet it's an organized mess, she says, because she knows where everything is. Clean it up, or otherwise disturb the mess, and the method behind the madness goes out the window.

What may come as the biggest shock, though, is how a messy workspace can serve as a natural reminder system. Old papers and notes stacked with more recent information will get picked through. As a result, connections between the old and the new become possible, which translates into increased creativity and opportunity. Filed away papers, on the other hand, usually end up forgotten, and anything thrown away is lost forever. As for efficiency, tidy employees usually spend from one to four hours per day keeping their desk clean, time more productively spent attending to the tasks at hand.

But Barry Izsak, who heads the National Association of Professional Organizers, disputes the author's claims. Izsak explains that the average person, because of the mess, will often feel increased stress. There will be accompanying feelings of missed deadlines and lost opportunities. And according to another study, that inability to quickly retrieve information can cost companies money -- \$50 per week for each employee. At large organizations, that can quickly run into millions of dollars.

Notes:

STUDENT HANDOUT (fill in the blank)

Fill in the blank with the correct word.

tacked	accompanying	readily	surprisingly	precariously
translates	reminder	overflows	disturb	efficient
sorts	slob	attending	efficiency	retrieve

Messiness More Efficient

Every office has at least one (a. _____) -- the employee whose desk looks like a tornado has struck. Papers are stacked (b. _____). Post It Notes from months and months ago are still (c. _____) to the cubicle wall. The garbage (d. _____) with takeout coffee cups and empty bags. But a business book suggests that neat people are actually less (e. _____) and less creative, or at least so says the book's author, David Freedman.

A mess, it turns out, works (f. _____) well for the person who made it, he explains. It becomes a filing system of (g. _____). Take Karen Jackson, who (h. _____) admits that her desk looks like a disaster area. Yet it's an organized mess, she says, because she knows where everything is. Clean it up, or otherwise (i. _____) the mess, and the method behind the madness goes out the window.

What may come as the biggest shock, though, is how a messy workspace can serve as a natural (j. _____) system. Old papers and notes stacked with more recent information will get picked through. As a result, connections between the old and the new become possible, which (k. _____) into increased creativity and opportunity. Filed away papers, on the other hand, usually end up forgotten, and anything thrown away is lost forever. As for (l. _____), tidy employees usually spend from one to four hours per day keeping their desk clean, time more productively spent (m. _____) to the tasks at hand.

But Barry Izsak, who heads the National Association of Professional Organizers, disputes the author's claims. Izsak explains that the average person, because of the mess, will often feel increased stress. There will be (n. _____) feelings of missed deadlines and lost opportunities. And according to another study, that inability to quickly (o. _____) information can cost companies money -- \$50 per week for each employee. At large organizations, that can quickly run into millions of dollars.

STUDENT HANDOUT (extended listening)

Listen and fill in the missing sentences. Compare your answers with a partner, and then listen once more.

Messiness More Efficient

Every office has at least one slob -- a) _____.

Papers are stacked precariously. Post It Notes from months and months ago are still tacked to the cubicle wall.

The garbage overflows with takeout coffee cups and empty bags. But a business book suggests that

b) _____, or at least so says the book's author, David Freedman.

A mess, it turns out, works surprisingly well for the person who made it, he explains. It becomes a filing system of sorts. Take Karen Jackson, who readily admits that her desk looks like a disaster area. Yet it's an organized mess, she says, because she knows where everything is. Clean it up, or otherwise disturb the mess,

c) _____.

What may come as the biggest shock, though, is how a messy workspace can serve as a natural reminder system. Old papers and notes stacked with more recent information will get picked through. As a result, connections between the old and the new become possible, which translates into increased creativity and opportunity. Filed away papers, on the other hand, usually end up forgotten, and anything thrown away is lost forever. As for efficiency, d) _____, time more productively spent attending to the tasks at hand.

But Barry Izsak, who heads the National Association of Professional Organizers, disputes the author's claims. Izsak explains that the average person, because of the mess, will often feel increased stress. There will be accompanying feelings of missed deadlines and lost opportunities. And according to another study, that

e) _____ -- \$50 per week for each employee. At large organizations, that can quickly run into millions of dollars.

STUDENT HANDOUT (notes)

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary

1. Vocabulary Match:

a.	y	f.	w
b.	q	g.	r
c.	u	h.	v
d.	z	i.	x
e.	s	j.	t

2. Fill in the Blanks:

a.	slob	f.	disturb
b.	precariously	g.	sorts
c.	tacked	h.	attending
d.	overflows	i.	accompanying
e.	readily	j.	retrieve

pre- or post-Comprehension

1. True or False:

a.	F
b.	T
c.	T
d.	T
e.	T

2. Fragments:

a.	months and months ago are still tacked to the cubicle wall.
b.	surprisingly well for the person who made it, he explains.
c.	can serve as a natural reminder system.
d.	translates into increased creativity and opportunity.
e.	because of the mess, will often feel increased stress.

Student Handout

1. Fill in the Blanks

a.	slob	i.	disturb
b.	precariously	j.	reminder
c.	tacked	k.	translates
d.	overflows	l.	efficiency
e.	efficient	m.	attending
f.	surprisingly	n.	accompanying
g.	sorts	o.	retrieve
h.	readily		

2. Extended Listening

a.	the employee whose desk looks like a tornado has struck
b.	neat people are actually less efficient and less creative
c.	and the method behind the madness goes out the window
d.	tidy employees usually spend from one to four hours per day keeping their desk clean
e.	inability to quickly retrieve information can cost companies money