
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

English at Work

4: The spring clean



NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

LANGUAGE FOCUS: How to tell people it's the end of the working day / session / task...

Narrator

Hello, it's time again for English at Work. Things are a bit busy at Tip Top Trading – the leading manufacturer of plastic imitation fruit. Mr Socrates – the big boss from America – has announced he's flying over to London for a 'spot check' on how the team's doing. So Anna is getting everyone to do a bit of **spring cleaning** to make the office look clean and tidy – although it's not spring and so far, nobody has done any cleaning.

Denise

Well there's nothing in my contract about cleaning... I only do sales – oh and a bit of **admin**...

Tom

More admin than sales actually Denise. But I don't see why we need to tidy up for Mr S – I mean, it's a working office – it's not like our house Anna, that's a real dump!

Anna

Hmm it is Tom – we need to talk about that – but anyway, I want Brad... I mean Mr Socrates to see we mean business – we have a clean, organised working environment – it shows we're serious about work...

Tom

Well not that serious...

Anna

Tom! No, I want us all to spend today tidying up, throwing away paperwork we don't need, washing up dirty coffee cups – that sort of thing. Come on everyone – let's do it!

[everyone moans and groans]

Narrator

Well done Anna – you're **taking the lead** – showing them who's in charge – but how about offering them an **incentive** for doing a good job?

Anna

An incentive?

Narrator

Yes – a reward that makes people want to work harder because they know they'll get something for doing it.

Anna

Ah I see – OK I'll give it a try.

[to team] Oh I forgot to say, if we do a good job there'll be a reward for your hard work

[to herself] although I'm not sure what it will be yet.

Denise

Oh well, why didn't you say – I'll get on with filing these invoices shall I?

Tom

[suddenly keen] No, no it's OK Denise – leave those to me – you can rearrange the staplers if you like...

Denise

I'm quite capable of doing it thank you Tom – and then Anna shall I polish your desk?

Narrator

The team has really risen to the challenge – especially now there's an incentive.

But what's going to happen at the end of the day when everyone usually goes home?

Anna

OK everyone – thank you for your hard work – but it's five o'clock now.

Tom

Oh good - is it time to knock off now?

Anna

Knock off?

Tom

Yeah, time to finish for the day – go home – I'll get my coat shall I?

Anna

Well, yes it is time to... 'knock off', so...

Denise

[interrupting/sounding keen] It's OK Anna, there's still a bit more spring cleaning to do – I know my contract says I work from 9 to 5 but... I'll ignore that just for today.

Tom

[interrupting] Of course, I don't need to go home yet, I could do some more tidying if you like – don't want to miss out on the 'incentive' do I Anna?

[Tom and Denise argue as they continue to tidy up]

Anna

Look both of you, just stop! Stop! Could you... err... hmmm...

Narrator

Oh Anna – are you **lost for words**?

Anna

If you mean, am I looking for the right thing to say, then yes – I think they've done enough work and should go home – even Tom.

Narrator

Well say that – or something like...

'I think that's enough for now.'... or

'Let's leave it there'...

Anna

Leave it where?

Narrator

There! – stop doing the task you were working on – it can always be finished later.

And you could say... 'let's call it a day' – meaning let's end what we have been doing today.

Anna

OK, very useful. I'll give those phrases a go.

[To team but gently] It's now ten past five and I really think you've done enough for now – let's leave it there.

[They continue to tidy up]

Narrator

Try a bit louder – oh and try saying 'let's wrap it up there' – that means bring the task to a close.

Anna

Right. Denise, Tom let's wrap it up there – you've done really well but I think you should go home – especially you Tom – you're cooking dinner tonight.

Tom

[surprised] Oh right.

Anna

So let's leave it there – the office is looking much better and...

[Door opens]

All

Huh! Mr Socrates!

Narrator

Oh no, he's arrived early. Luckily the office looks tidy. The team has worked hard but Anna's been a great manager and told them it's the end of the working day and to stop working by using these phrases...

It's time to knock off
You've done enough.
I think that's enough for now.
Let's leave it there.
Let's call it a day.
Let's wrap it up there.

The team has done plenty of spring cleaning – but will Mr Socrates notice?

Tom

Oh hello Mr Socrates – what do you think of our... tidy office?

Mr Socrates

Impressive – I can see Anna has everything in order – including you!

Tom

[nervously] Ha ha! So Anna... what about that... incentive?

Anna

[Realises she's forgotten] Oh, the incentive! Hmm... [Tries to think of one] I know! Tom's cooking dinner tonight so Mr Socrates, Denise – would you like to come for dinner?

Tom

Wwwhat!

Vocabulary

spring cleaning

thoroughly cleaning a place (traditionally done at end of winter)

admin

(shortened form of administration)

tasks needed to be carried out to manage the day to day running of a business

taking the lead

accepting the responsibility for dealing with a situation

incentive

a reward that makes people want to do something or work harder because they know they'll get something for doing it

lost for words

looking for the right thing to say