

A large orange graphic element on the left side of the cover, consisting of a diagonal line from the top left to the middle, and a horizontal bar extending to the right from that point.

The logo for Power Basics, featuring a square icon with a grid pattern to the left of the text "POWER BASICS" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a registered trademark symbol (®) to the right.

# School-to-Career

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*To the Student* ..... v

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# UNIT 3

Doing Your Best Work



# LESSON 10: Starting a New Job

**GOAL:** To know how to start a new job right

## WORDS TO KNOW

advancement

coworkers

entry-level job

appropriate

employee handbook

unwritten rules

cooperate

## Starting Off Right

The first day on a new job is always a challenge. It won't take long before you feel comfortable, but it is important to start off right. Knowing what to do can help you get along better with your boss and your **coworkers** (the people you work with).

A good way to start off right is to get to work on time. Of course, that's important every day, but on the first day it's doubly important.

Before your first day on the job, see how long it will take you to get to work. If you will be driving to work, take a test drive at the same time of day as you will report for work. If you will take the bus or subway, take a ride to your new workplace to see how long it takes.

### IN REAL LIFE



Kim's career goal was to become a paralegal. Part of her career plan was to get a part-time job working in a law firm. She found a job as an office assistant in a law firm near her home. The pay was good for an **entry-level job** (a beginning job). When she finished her community college program, there was a chance for **advancement**, or promotion, to a full-time paralegal position. Kim was thrilled when she found out she'd been hired. She decided to start off right and work hard at her new job so she would meet her career goals.

Allow yourself plenty of time to get ready the morning of your first day. Plan to arrive at your job about five to ten minutes before you are expected.

You will have a lot of new people to meet on your first day. One of the most important of these people is your new boss. Smile and shake hands when you are introduced. It is a good idea to ask your boss what he or she would like to be called. You can say, “Should I call you Mrs. Barnes?” It is not a good idea to call your boss by his or her first name unless you have been told to do so.

You may have to introduce yourself to your new coworkers. When you do this, be pleasant and smile. Try hard to learn their names as soon as you can. Be friendly to all your coworkers. But don’t try to be “best friends” too fast. It’s better to get to know everyone a little better before you make friends. (We will talk about this more in Lesson 20.)

Your coworkers will probably offer to show you the ropes. Be sure to take advantage of this. **Cooperate**—work as part of the team. Ask questions about things you don’t understand, and listen carefully to what you are told. You may want to take notes. No one expects you to know what to do the first day. But employers do expect you to show a desire to learn.

No matter what jobs you are given, do your best. Show that you want to do the job right. Since you are new, you are likely to be given some simple tasks at first. Don’t complain. Do these jobs to the best of your ability. If you do well, you’ll be given other things to do later on.

**TIP**



It is hard work starting a new job. Be sure to take care of yourself so you’ll feel your best. Get plenty of rest and eat good meals. Things are sure to go better if you do.

You will probably be given an **employee handbook** on your first day of work. This is a set of written rules for what is expected of all employees. (We’ll talk about this more in Lesson 12.)

There are also **unwritten rules** in your workplace. These are the rules that “everybody knows,” but that no one has thought about writing in the

handbook. You will learn these rules by watching your coworkers and paying attention to what is going on around you. You will soon learn what type of clothing is **appropriate**, or suitable, by observing what the other workers are wearing. The men may be wearing suits and ties or just khaki pants and polo shirts. The women may be wearing nice dresses or just a blouse and pants. Maybe most of them are wearing uniforms.

You can also learn a lot about the tone of the workplace by observation. It may be very quiet, very noisy, or somewhere in between. Whatever the tone is, you will need to fit in.

By looking around you, you can see if all the workstations are perfectly orderly or if a few piles of paper on the desk are all right. You may even see that most of the desks are pretty messy.

Another thing you can pick up by observation is the general atmosphere of the workplace. In the lunchroom or break room the workers may keep to themselves. It may be very quiet and serious. There may be a friendly chatter or there may be a lot of joking around.

You may not find written rules about these things. But if you are observant your first days on the job, you will see how best to fit in with the other workers.

**TIP**



Give your new job (and yourself) a fair chance. Don't take the easy way out and quit if the going gets rough. There is always an adjustment period in any new job.

## **PRACTICE 17: Starting Out Right**

Answer the following on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Why do you think you should not call your boss by his or her first name unless you are told to do so?
2. Why do you think it's a good idea to learn your coworkers' names as quickly as possible?
3. Why is it so important to be on time the first day?

4. Circle the letter of each statement that is an example of how you should act on your first day of work:
- a. If coworkers offer to show you how to do a task, tell them “no!” After all, you don’t want to look dumb.
  - b. If you aren’t sure if you can leave on your lunch hour, leave by the back door. Maybe no one will notice.
  - c. Call your boss and coworkers by their first names.
  - d. Don’t worry about learning anyone’s name. It’s not important.
  - e. Ask questions about any instructions that are not clear to you.
  - f. If you don’t understand how to do something, don’t worry about it. Just go ahead and do what you want.
  - g. Eat snacks and soft drinks at your desk if you feel like it; that is your right.
  - h. Invite your boss and coworkers to your place after work to celebrate your first day on the job.
  - i. Take a break whenever you get tired. There is no limit on rest breaks.
  - j. If your boss has a messy desk, don’t worry about picking up after yourself or keeping your things neat.
  - k. Don’t complain about the jobs you are given even if some of them seem boring.
  - l. Show that you are willing to learn how to do new things.

# LESSON 11: Looking Right for the Job

GOAL: To know how to look right for a job

## WORDS TO KNOW

clothing fads	employees	uniform
deodorant	employers	well-groomed
dress code	scent	

### Dressing for a Job

Being **well-groomed** (neat and clean) and dressing appropriately for the job are two easy but important ways to keep your job. Many **employers** (bosses) feel that the appearance of their **employees** (workers) is a reflection on the company. Workers who are neat and attractive make the company look good. Workers who are sloppy give the impression that they will do sloppy work as well.

### Looking and Smelling Clean

The most important part of good grooming is being clean. There is no substitute for that daily bath or shower followed by clean underwear and socks. Keep your hair washed and trimmed neatly. Your hands should be clean, and your nails trimmed to a reasonable length. Brushing your teeth regularly will give you clean teeth and fresh breath.

Smelling good is important. Using a deodorant after your shower will control body odor. A **deodorant** is a product that is used to eliminate odors. If you have a special **scent** (a perfume or an aftershave lotion) you like to wear, use only a little or none to avoid bothering your coworkers.

### Dressing for the Job

It is important to most employers that their employees dress right for work. Dressing right for work shows that you think your job is important.

## IN REAL LIFE



Juan and Joel were enrolled in business courses in a community college. Their career goal was to become department managers in a large building supply store in town. As part of their career plans, the two got part-time jobs as clerks at the building supply store. The store manager gave each boy two T-shirts with a store logo on the front. The boys were instructed to wear the shirts every day to work with clean jeans.

Juan washed his shirts after he had worn them to work once. He discovered that they didn't need ironing if he shook them out and hung them up after drying them.

Joel tossed his shirts on the floor after wearing them. He didn't worry about washing them. He didn't think the customers would notice if they were a bit dirty. He always wore plenty of body spray to cover up any unpleasant scent.

The building supply store let Joel go after a few customers complained. Joel couldn't believe his appearance had really cost him his job. Now he would have to rethink his career plan as well.

Some workers are asked to wear uniforms to work. A **uniform** is a special kind of clothing that identifies workers as part of a group. If you wear a uniform, you don't have to choose what to wear every morning, but you do need to keep your uniforms clean and pressed.

Most people don't wear uniforms to work. They have to choose what to wear to work every day. Different types of clothing are right for different jobs. Your company may have a dress code. A dress code is a list of written rules that state what clothing is to be worn for work.

If your company does not have a **dress code**, it is up to you to find out what is appropriate. Dress as your coworkers do, neither more casually nor

more dressy. Avoid wearing **clothing fads** to work. A fad is trendy clothing that will be in style only a short time. Avoid clothing with symbols or sayings on it. Instead, buy classic clothing of good fabric that will wash well and last a long time.

Choose clothing that fits well and is neither too tight nor too loose. Your clothing should be comfortable for you to work in.

Some clothing requires ironing before it can be worn to work. However, many items of clothing are wash and wear. Clothes that are made with a polyester and cotton blend often do not need ironing if you remove them promptly from the dryer. If left in the dryer, the clothes will be wrinkled. Ask a clerk in the clothing store to help you choose items that will be easy to wash and need no ironing.

Wear shoes that are comfortable all day long. If your job keeps you on your feet all day, make sure your shoes will feel good all day, too. Keep your shoes clean and polished.

If you wear jewelry, make sure it is simple. Don't wear a lot of chains, earrings, or bracelets.

#### TIP



Look at yourself in the mirror before you leave for work to make sure you look right for your job. Then answer the following questions about your appearance:

- Is your hair neat and trimmed? Is your body clean? Is your face shaved or facial hair trimmed? Is your makeup applied in good taste?
- Is your clothing appropriate? Is it clean, unwrinkled, and appealing?
- Are your shoes clean and polished? Are they comfortable to wear all day?
- Is your jewelry simple and not overdone?
- Overall, are you well-groomed?

## ■ PRACTICE 18: Grooming and Dressing for Success

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Why do you think a drugstore would lose customers if its pharmacy technicians were poorly groomed?
2. Why do you think a clothing salesperson will make fewer sales if he or she is poorly groomed?
3. Why do you think a receptionist who dresses in clothes that do not fit well or are wrinkled does not make the company look good?
4. Why do you think wearing strong perfume or aftershave is not a good idea at work?
5. Why do you think it would matter to a boss whether his or her employees are neat and clean?
6. How do you think having neat and clean workers could affect the overall sales of a company?
7. How do you react if a grocery store cashier who is helping you has dirty hands or clothing?
8. How do you think you can be sure to wear the right clothes to work?
9. Why do you think it is important to dress correctly for work?
10. Why do you think it might be a good idea to lay out your clothing for work the night before?
11. Why do you think your boss has the right to tell you what you can or cannot wear?
12. How could you know if an item of clothing you are thinking about buying for work would be easy to wash and need no ironing?