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#### A question from **Giuliana in Italy**:

What is the difference between *work* and *job*? They both have the same meaning in Italian but I'd like to know better how to use them.

#### **Gareth Rees answers:**

Hello Giuliana.

Thank you for your question about the difference between *work* and *job*. Although this topic isn't necessarily most people's favourite subject, the difference between the two words is important.

Firstly, on a grammatical level, *work* is both a verb and a noun, whereas *job* is only a noun. Let's look at their meanings now.

*Work* is an activity in which you use effort or energy, normally to achieve a particular aim or task, rather than for fun or enjoyment. It is essentially the opposite of play, and *to work* means to do such an activity. Generally, we work in order to earn money, and this is often how we use the verb; to describe what we do to earn money. For example:

*I work for the BBC.*

*David works in a café.*

In these examples, we do not know exactly what the person's duties or responsibilities are. David works in a café, but we do not know if he cleans the tables or cooks the food.

So, in this sense, *work* has a very general meaning, whereas *job* is much more specific, and its most common meaning is the name for the work that you do to earn money. For example,

*David has now got a new job. He is a cook in a small restaurant.*

In this example, we now know exactly what David does because we know what his job is. To summarise, we can say that the word *job* refers to a particular employment role or position, such as cook, teacher or banker, whereas *work* refers in a more general way to activities that you do.

Interestingly, all jobs involve work but doing work isn't always part of a job. For example, *someone can spend the weekend working in their garden, perhaps cutting the grass or planting new flowers*. However, this is a free time activity, and so it is not his or her job.

As a verb, *work* does have other meanings, such as, if you describe how a machine *works*, you explain how it functions, or operates. For example,

*Can someone show me how the photocopier works? I don't know how to use it.*

Similarly, you can use it to say if the machine is functioning correctly. For example,

*Don't try to use that computer. It doesn't work. We are waiting for the engineer to fix it.*

Finally, although your job is the name for what you do to earn money, it can also refer to a specific task that you have to do; a task that requires work and a task that you can specifically identify. For example,

*I have a few jobs to do at home this weekend. I need to paint my bedroom, fix a broken door and cut the grass.*

Right, well, I've been working hard for the last few hours, so I think it's time for me to take a break. Fortunately, the work that I do in my job is very interesting, so even though it is hard work, I don't think I will look for another job! What about you, Giuliana? Are you a student or do you have a job? Whatever you do, is it hard work?

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