



Video 5 – Real Vocabulary: can you *grow* a company?

Hi there!

Here's a question for you:

You can *grow* crops and flowers but can you *grow* a company?

Let's take a closer look.

"We're working hard to grow the company."

When we're talking about plants, *grow* can be used transitively - that is, with an object - or intransitively - without an object: you can *grow crops*, or *crops grow*. When it's a question of businesses, or economies, or markets or things like that, *grow* has traditionally been used only as an intransitive verb: *our profits grew*, *the business is growing*, and so on. This transitive use of *grow* is a fairly recent development, and it is frowned on by many prescriptivists. But corpus data shows that this is a very common usage in contexts where business and economics are being discussed.

There are two responses to this criticism. Firstly, variations like this – where an intransitive verb is used transitively (or vice versa) – are a normal way in which English verbs can extend their uses. And secondly, it's fine to *dislike* a particular usage – but that doesn't mean it's wrong. The sentence here is acceptable.

In my next video I will talk about how we use the verb *comprise*.

Thanks for watching!