



WORKING UNPAID HOURS



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:
19M9-T6XD-AIG7



1

Warm up

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. How many hours are you supposed to work each week? How many hours do you actually work?
2. If you work more hours, do you get paid more? Why/why not?
3. How many hours per week do most people in your company work each week? Why?

2

Focus on vocabulary

Underline the correct choices in the definitions.

1. down payment (n): an amount of money which is given as a **significant** / first / last part of a larger payment
2. fintech (n): computer software which provides services to the **fishing** / technology / banking industry
3. slack off (phr. v): do a task with **less** / more / the same energy and enthusiasm
4. strike a balance between A and B (idiom): find a way of treating two opposing things **differently** / equally / uniquely
5. parameter (n): a rule or object which **limits** / opposes / aids the way something can be done
6. clean-living (adj.): living in a manner which **encourages** / welcomes / avoids unhealthy food, alcohol and lack of exercise
7. presenteeism (n): the practice of spending a large amount of time at work in order to **show that you're** / look as though you're / understand the value of working hard
8. belt-tightening (n): adjustments in the way things are done in order to spend **more** / the same / less money
9. arduous (adj.): **rarely** / continuously / occasionally working hard over a period of time



Part B: Now complete the following sentences with the correct vocabulary from Part A. You may have to change the form of the words.

1. I enjoy being a freelancer because I can decide on the _____ of my day rather than having to organize myself around going to an office.
2. There's going to have to be some _____ now we're having a child, but it will be completely worth it.
3. For my 18th birthday, my parents made a _____ on my first car, but I was responsible for the monthly repayments.
4. She was always really brilliant with computers at university and I hear she works in the _____ industry now.
5. I used to be almost 300 pounds and struggle with alcohol, but I've adopted a _____ attitude to life and I feel much better for it.
6. There was a real culture of _____, but I didn't care. I just left at 5 pm and went home.
7. It's been a really _____ year to be honest and I think I'm suffering from burnout.
8. We're almost there, this is no time for _____
9. I find _____ my professional and private life difficult. I don't have much time for relationships.

Now in pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. Have you ever had to make a down payment? What was it for?
2. What times during the day are you most likely to slack off? Why?
3. Do you know anyone who works in fintech? Is the idea of working in fintech appealing to you? Why/why not?

3

Listening for gist



Listen to the three people talking about overtime. Underline the words which reflect their attitude.

- Speaker 1 **resents/accepts/enjoys/ isn't bothered by** working overtime.
- Speaker 2 **resents/accepts/enjoys/ isn't bothered by** working overtime.
- Speaker 3 **resents/accepts/enjoys/ isn't bothered by** working overtime.





4 Listening comprehension

Complete the table by ticking the correct box.

Who...	Speaker 1	Speaker 2	Speaker 3
A. sometimes has a problem with their diet?			
B. lives with a parent?			
C. feels as though they have missed out on things in life?			
D. has made a significant amount of money?			
E. is a landlord?			
F. frequently works at weekends?			
G. gets into trouble at work sometimes?			
H. is happy to be in their particular industry?			

5 Scanning for specific information

Scan the article about the culture of overwork on page four and write down the meaning of the following numbers.

- a. 7.6 _____
- b. 10 _____
- c. 9.2 _____
- d. 75 _____
- e. 35 _____
- f. 95 _____
- g. 32 _____



The culture of overwork

All nighter...

1. 'I don't really know how I got through it,' says Todd (not his real name as he still does not want to be identified). Talking about his time as a junior investment bank analyst he says, 'I'd easily work 100 hours per week, sometimes more. I'd usually be operating on around three- or four-hour's sleep per night, and that's if I went to sleep at all. Pulling an all-nighter was just what you had to do to keep up and I'd probably do that at least once a week. It was just a part of the culture.' Todd's case is not unique. Long, unpaid hours are common, not just in highly paid work like investment banking and the legal profession, but across all industries. 'I do regret that my youth was lost to a blur of work and stress,' says Todd. Now in his thirties, Todd still works long hours, but prioritizes taking the weekend off completely as he has a young family.
2. Before the pandemic, five million British workers worked an average of 7.6 hours extra per week, adding up to over \$42 billion in unpaid work. Since Covid-19 irrevocably altered our working lives, research shows that across the world, 10% of people say they now work an additional 20 hours per week for free with a global average of 9.2 hours a week. A recent survey in the UK found that 50% of employers knew their staff were working unpaid overtime. Part of this is down to people working from home which has increased the working day by an additional two hours, with many replacing the daily commute with work. But remote working has also removed the line between home and work making it easier for employees to toil for longer hours.
3. It's a trend that isn't to be taken lightly. According to the World Health Organization, 745,000 people around the world died in 2016 as a result of health issues caused by overwork. The areas most affected were in the populations of the Western Pacific region and South East Asia, with around 75% of deaths being amongst men who are middle-aged or older. The WHO's research concluded that a work week in excess of 55 hours leads to a 17% increased possibility of heart disease and the chances of having a stroke goes up by 35%. The problems stem from two areas: an increase in stress and the higher likelihood of overworked employees eating poorly, exercising infrequently, and using alcohol and tobacco.
4. There are some signs of pushback against the culture of overwork though. Last year, a group of young employees of Goldman Sachs, the investment bank, issued a warning that they would have to leave unless their work week was capped at 80 hours. They reported punishing 95-hour weeks had resulted in serious deterioration of their physical and mental health. Elsewhere, countries such as Ireland, Spain and Iceland have had successful experiments with a four-day work week which were shown to actually boost productivity while improving employees' sense of well-being. Recently, the state of California also started looking into legislation for employees in companies of over 500 employees to shorten their work week to 32 hours a week, with anyone working more than that being eligible for pay at time-and-a half. Whether these signs of change will impact the global culture of overwork remains to be seen though. The issue is that most of the jobs affected are task-based and so measuring them by time is impractical. There's also the factor that pushing back against peer pressure or the endemic expectations of management when your job is at stake is very difficult for the majority of people. We all want to please and say yes. So real change in the way we overwork may be some time in coming.

Sources: BBC, workplaceinsight.net



6 Reading comprehension

Read the article on page four and decide if the following statements are True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG). Give reasoning to your choices.

1. Todd didn't used to get enough sleep when he worked in finance.

2. Todd wishes he hadn't spent so much time working when he was younger.

3. The pandemic has reduced the problem of people working unpaid hours.

4. There were a greater number of deaths from overwork in South East Asia than the Western Pacific region.

5. Workers doing extra unpaid hours are more likely to have a poor diet.

6. New employees would rather take a pay cut and work fewer hours.

7. Research shows that working four days a week results in less getting done.

8. The author of the article believes that it may be a while until there is a significant transformation in attitudes towards working long hours.

7 Scanning for vocabulary

Quickly read the article on page four and find vocabulary which has the same meaning as the following.

- a. _____ work instead of going to sleep (idiom, para. 1)
- b. _____ to make something the most important thing (v, para. 1)
- c. _____ work very hard (v, para. 2)
- d. _____ the act of going against something (n, para. 4)
- e. _____ stop something at a particular point or level (v, para. 4)
- f. _____ tiring and difficult (adj., para. 4)
- g. _____ a situation where something wears away or gets weaker (n, para. 4)
- h. _____ a part of something that is difficult to change or remove (adj., para. 4)



8 Talking point

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

Student A

1. Is unpaid work a problem in your country?
In which type of jobs is it most likely?
2. What advice would you give to someone who felt that they were working a lot of unpaid hours and were not happy about it?

Student B

1. Do you believe unpaid work is a problem for you personally? Why/why not?
2. How much responsibility does a company have to reduce the number of unpaid hours that its employees work? What do you think they can do about it?

9 Extended activity/Homework

Read the following email extract from your friend.



...I find myself going into the office for around 6 am just so I can finish the tasks I need to do before everyone comes in around 9 am and the meetings begin.

We spend around 4 – 5 hours a day in meetings and it makes it very hard to finish the work I have to do. I also end up staying late quite often, although I really try not to as I like to spend time with the kids then.

But I'd say I end up working roughly every other weekend just to keep up. I like the company I work for and my colleagues, but I'm exhausted, and I don't know what to do about it. Most other people seem to be working the same hours that I do...

Write a reply to your friend and give them advice on what to do about the situation.

You should:

- write at least 150 words
- check your grammar, spelling and punctuation