11 Job Satisfaction

In this unit you will...
• meet words and expressions about experiences at work
• read an article about job satisfaction
• find out more about ‘words that go together.’

A Do you enjoy your job? What gives you satisfaction at work? What is boring or irritating?

B Thinking about job satisfaction, what is good and bad about these jobs?
• a teacher
• a factory worker
• a call-centre operator
• a painter
• a management consultant

C Which of the words below are connected to work? Which can be used to describe a person?
the service sector, an assembly line, the common good, deprivation, to invest, to manipulate, consciousness, narcissistic, isolated, hostile, a letter of resignation, discrimination, an appraisal, job enrichment, the dole

D Put an appropriate word or phrase from the vocabulary box into each gap. You may need to adapt the word.

Danny Noble was looking for _1_, so he moved from a job in _2_ (He did photocopying in an office), to work nights on an _3_. ‘We can’t talk for eight hours because of the noise, so I feel _4_. Management has a very negative and _5_ attitude towards us. I went to a job _6_ meeting last week, but no promotion for me. I feel that I’m a victim of _7_, so I decided to send them _8_. I’m back on _9_ again.

E Look quickly at the article on the next page. In what kind of magazine would you find this article? Who would read it?

F Look at the article again quickly. What is the main point made in (i) the first three paragraphs, and (ii) the last four paragraphs?

G Form two groups. Group A should list the problems identified in the first three paragraphs and suggest solutions. Group B should list the problems identified in last four paragraphs and suggest solutions.

H Half the members of each group should swap groups. Discuss the problems and solutions with the members of your new group.

Job satisfaction – real-life phrases
I’ve got a dead end job. (a job with no prospects)
It’s a drag. (slang – very boring)
She got a 9-to-5 job. (regular office work)
‘I hate my job!’

Levels of job satisfaction are falling, particularly among women, says Sara Liebermann

As more workers enter the service sector, increasing numbers are complaining about jobs that provide them with little satisfaction. I don’t want to romanticise work on assembly lines, but people had a sense that they were creating products that served some higher purpose other than making money. They thought they were serving ‘the common good’. Most working people have a deep desire to serve some higher purpose or goal other than their own financial needs, and the deprivation of this vital need is an important source of their stress.

These days more and more people spend their working days trying to get others to want their products or services, which means investing a great deal of effort in manipulating and controlling the consciousness of others. Sometimes we are selling a product for others to make a profit with, but at other times we are selling ourselves, particularly if we work in the professions.

We need others to see us as desirable ‘products’, so that they will buy us, our services, our product, our way of doing things. We go to seminars to become the right person to sell. This creates self-centred human beings who know how to treat others as objects, but rarely as subjects. People tend to feel lonely and isolated, surrounded by a hostile world. They find it increasingly difficult to trust others. They hate being part of that kind of a world, yet to be realistic they feel they must be part of it, and that there is little they can do to change it, so they had better protect themselves as best they can.

Women suffer particularly, and have a higher turnover in employment than men. The reason is not because they are less committed workers, a new study finds. It's because they're given far less meaningful work than men.

A lack of overall job satisfaction, particularly the chance to do meaningful work and the opportunity for promotion, compels more women than men to hand in a letter of resignation. In a survey of 595 male and female workers in the civil service and higher education, researchers measured the workers’ intentions to leave and then examined thirteen possible motives for resignation. Among them were job security, wages, working conditions, benefits and paid holiday.

Women were approximately twice as likely as men to admit that they would ‘definitely’ or ‘probably’ leave their employment within two years. Only 12.2% of the men indicated an intention to quit, while 22.2% of the women said they were ready to resign. Female workers were far less content than their male counterparts with their chances for advancement and the meaningfulness of their everyday duties. In addition, the researchers found that the longer women had worked at their jobs, the more they wanted to leave; for them this was an ‘alarming’ finding, which contradicted previous studies.

Studies suggest that discrimination, high expectations, underlying performance problems, or differential treatment in the appraisal process may account for women's dissatisfaction with advancement opportunities. All this means that companies that want to have a solid core of workers at the end of the decade may want to consider starting programmes in career development and job enrichment, for their female workers in particular.
Exam Skills

A Celeste Stein is an interior designer. Give her short text a title.

‘I simply love my job. To be honest, it’s my hobby as well. Most of the day I’m thinking or writing about how to design the insides of people’s houses or offices. What I think I like most is the challenge of every room being different. Just think about it for a moment: every room has a different shape, a different height and a different purpose, because no two people have the same needs. Never forget that we live most of our lives in rooms, so when I design a room I’m doing something really important.’

B Look again at the text above and find the correct option for the gap in Celeste’s sentence below.

‘In the evenings I’m often tired, but I can look back on a day full of _1_.

A. boredom  B. variety  C. predictability  D. stress

N.B. Without reading the text we could probably discount the negative options ‘A’ and ‘D’ because she says ‘I’m often tired (a negative feature), but…’ (we expect a positive feature). Determining between options ‘B’ and ‘C’, however, can only be done by understanding the overall meaning of the text.

Exam tip: before you start looking at the gaps and options, read the text for gist.

C Collocation is about words that can and can’t go together, e.g. Let’s begin/start the lesson but only Let’s start the car. Read what Celeste says below and choose an option. The correct option forms a partnership with of living to produce a collocation.

Celeste says, ‘Although money is not the main thing in my life, my fees give a high _1_ of living’.  
A. level  B. degree  C. standard  D. measure

D Phrasal verbs consist of a verb and one or two adverbial particles. The adverbial particle often changes the meaning of the verb; e.g. with the verb to break. I broke the vase (non-phrasal) and War broke out. (phrasal). Read what Celeste says below and choose an option. The correct option completes a phrasal verb.

Celeste says, ‘Every day I wake up really excited and I _1_ forward to the day ahead.’
A. view  B. see  C. glance  D. look

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Look at the passage below. Which is the correct alternative? In each case decide whether the correct answer involves meaning in context, collocation and/or phrasal verbs.

‘Being an interior designer involves/avoids keeping in contact with a large/big number of people. There are of course the furniture makers, from whom each item is individually/collectively ordered according to my design specifications. The curtains are all tailor/individual made, and the type and colour of the fabric involves several types of experts. Carpet specialists and manufacturers are also involved/ignored. Lighting also makes/constitutes up an important/irrelevant element/part of room design; there is the design of the fittings themselves as well as the technical questions/issues of organising the wiring and the switches. People often don’t realise/take in the complexities of designing and putting/making together even one room, but all these specialists have to communicate/get on well together.’

Look at the four options for the word that is gapped in Celeste’s sentence below. Find the correct answer and then state why the distractors are incorrect, and how the distractor was intending to distract you.

‘Once I’ve designed a room I can’t _1_ up with clients changing their minds.’

A. put  B. take  C. tolerate  D. stand

Exam tip: Don’t just choose what you think is the correct answer, but work out why the distractors are wrong.

Work out the part of speech for the gap in Celeste’s sentence below, and then fill it in.

_1_ by the door of the room, Celeste surveys the beauty she has created.

Exam tip: Before looking at the options, try to work out the part of speech for the gap and what the word might be. If your guess is indeed among the options, it is probably correct.
Exam Practice: Caught in a dead-end Job

A What does the title of the newspaper article mean?
B Read the text quickly and find out what John Pizzy and Hector Jenner enjoy in their jobs.
C Do the task. Give reasons for why the distractors are wrong.

Job satisfaction: the modern oxymoron

What makes people happy at work? It’s very difficult to find an answer that fits to everybody. Saul Denman called in at a couple of workplaces in Grenberg to investigate. John Pizzy has been packing ice cream into boxes for twenty-three years now. Is there any job satisfaction in his work? ‘Well, there’s satisfaction being at work when all the lads are together. We often tell jokes all day, and that really keeps us going. Sometimes I am ordered on taping up the boxes and that makes a bit of a change. If the assembly process breaks down for a few hours, that can give us a laugh.’ And what is unsatisfying about the job? ‘Well, what do you think? Wasting eight hours a day in this place doing the same thing, year in and year out.’

I then went to ask Hector Jenner, a successful management consultant. He was ready with his answers. ‘Work satisfaction for me is pretty simple. Work becomes satisfying when it results in financial gain. For me, work is never a(n) end in itself. It’s always about money.’ Is there such a thing as job dissatisfaction in his lexicon? ‘Yes, when a muddle or inefficiency leads to financial loss. I call that a tragedy.’

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<th>C. joins</th>
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<td>B. discover</td>
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<td>C. workplace</td>
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Unit 11: Job Satisfaction

(p. 1) C

Connected to work: the service sector, an assembly line, the common
good, to invest, a letter of resignation, discrimination, an appraisal, job
enrichment, the dole

Connected to a person: deprivation, to manipulate, consciousness,
narcissistic, isolated, hostile, discrimination,

(p. 1) D

1. job enrichment, 2. the service sector, 3. an assembly line, 4. isolated, 5.
hostile, 6. appraisal, 7. discrimination, 8. letter of resignation, 9. the dole.

(p. 1) E

a general or women’s magazine

(p. 1) F

1. In the service sector today many people feel that they are doing useless and
stressful jobs. 2. Women feel under more stress than men, and many want to
leave their jobs.

(p. 3) A

Why Celeste likes her job

(p. 3) B

The answer is B.

(p. 3) C

The answer is C.

(p. 3) D

The answer is D.

(p. 3) E

involves (avoids makes no sense in context), large (big does not collocate with number
of), individually (collectively makes no sense in context), tailor (individual does not
collocate with made), involved (ignored makes no sense in context), makes (makes up
is a phrasal verb), important part (collocates with makes up a(n)), technical issues
(collocates better) putting together (is a phrasal verb and makes sense in context), get
on (a phrasal verb).

(p. 4) F

The correct answer is A.

DISTRACTORS: B take up with s.b is a phrasal verb, but it means to form a relationship with,
and is therefore inappropriate here. C The verb tolerate cannot be followed with the particle up. D The verbal phrase to stand up with
s.b is possible, but has no idiomatic meaning and is meaningless in the context.

(p. 4) G

It is a participle, probably a present particle, e.g. Standing, Sitting; Seated (third
form).

(p. 4) A

An oxymoron is the putting together of two words that contradict each other,
e.g. a square circle. The title of the article suggest at satisfaction and
employment cannot go together.

(p. 4) B


(p. 4) C