

Happiness is a snip away

Topic: Jobs

Aims:

- To provide practice of the vocabulary of jobs and of reading and speaking skills
- To introduce the topic of jobs with discussion and a dictation
- To identify and exchange information
- To allow learners to give their own opinions about what makes a good/bad job

Level: Pre-intermediate and above

Procedure

Introduction

- Introduce the lesson by asking the learners to discuss the following questions in pairs. Get feedback open class by asking for interesting answers.

Do you have a job? What is it? Tell your partner about it. If you don't have a job, what job would you like to have?

Vocabulary and discussion

- Some of the target language is introduced in the following dictation exercise.

Tip: Traditional dictation has gone out of fashion in ELT but it has some useful functions in a class – here it encourages the learners to think and talk more about the target language, and forces them to make guesses about spelling. It also focuses learners on the task very quickly.

- Read the learners the following list of 15 jobs:

Teacher
Waitress
Doctor
Hairdresser
Marketing manager
Chemical engineer
Managing Director
Policeman/woman
Nurse
Ambulance Driver
Soldier
Bee-keeper
Chef
Property investor

Farmer

- Now give them an opportunity to check and compare answers together. One way to now check the spelling is right – which is important – is to ask learners to write their answers on the board. If this delays your class, you can dictate the words directly to learners who stand at the board.
- Open class ask learners what they think are the best and the worst jobs from the list.
- Now ask learners in groups to sort the jobs out into categories – 3 or 4 – in any way they like. Give an example by showing them a possible grouping, e.g. doctor, nurse, ambulance driver. Explain they need to justify their choices but accept all logical answers.

Tip: Grouping exercises generate a great deal of discussion about meaning and connections between words. They also encourage learners to be creative in the connections they make.

- When learners finish, put them into different groups and ask them to explain their choices to others.

Before you read

- Ask learners to read the introduction (**Worksheet A**) to the article and ask them in groups to guess the missing words. Tell them these are connected to one of the jobs in the list they have been discussing. Point out that a) is a job and b) the people who do that job. Discuss possible answers open class.

Worksheet A

The text below is the beginning of an article about one of the jobs in your list. Which one do you think it is? Complete the gaps with the name of the job or with the name of the person who does it.

Do you want a job that brings you happiness? If so you might want to consider a) _____ as a career. A new league table has said that b) _____ are the happiest workers in the UK.

Reading

- Divide the class in half. Hand out to one half of the class **Text A** and **Text B** to the other half. Ask them to look at the article introduction to see if their ideas in **Worksheet A** (above) were right. **(Answers: a) hairdressing and b) hairdressers.**

Text A**Happy hairdressers...**

Do you want a job that brings you happiness? If so you might want to consider hairdressing as a career. A new league table has said that hairdressers are the happiest workers in the UK.

So what is it about being a hairdresser that makes you happy? Jonathan Pickup who works at the Slice Salon in Newcastle and has been a hairdresser for 21 years says 'It's quite a young environment – it's quite trendy. You mix with quite a lot of young people. You get to my age and it is quite nice to be around people who are eager in their job'.

Michael Osbaldeston from examination body City & Guilds who conducted the survey said there were lots of reasons why happiness and hairdressing should go hand in hand. 'It is the relationship they have with their client which makes the job what it is... They are appreciated. They make people feel good and look good.'

Text B**Happy hairdressers...**

Do you want a job that brings you happiness? If so you might want to consider hairdressing as a career. A new league table has said that hairdressers are the happiest workers in the UK...

...But before you get out your curling tongs and enrol on the nearest hairdressing course, see what other hairdressers have to say! Here are some of the comments posted on the BBC website following this story.

'I am a former hairdresser ... and gave up 8 years ago to do a degree. I am now working at a university and have regular hours, no back problems, Saturdays to do what I want with and no late nights. There is nothing I miss about hairdressing...'

Jill Handley from Norwich

'I did summer work [at a hairdressers] as a teenager and hated every minute of it. There was no way in the world I would want to be a stylist and now very content working in IT.'

- Tell learners that the two texts give reasons why hairdressers are happy and unhappy in their work. Ask learners to identify what the reasons are and note them on **Worksheet B**. As they only have part of the text ask them to predict what the other answers will be.

Worksheet B

If you have text A, find the reasons why hairdressers are happy. Write them below:

A _____
B _____
C _____

If you have text B, find the reasons why hairdressers are unhappy. Write them below:

A _____
B _____
C _____
D _____

Answers:

Text A:

A __young environment/around young people

B __relationship with the client

C __hairdressers are appreciated for making people look and feel good

Text B:

A __irregular hours

B __back problems

C __have to work on Saturdays

D __late nights

Speaking

- Ask learners to form pairs with people from the other half of the class, then share their answers. Ask them to see if the answers they predicted were right.

More useful vocabulary

- Now ask learners to match other jobs (**Worksheet C**) with things they are associated with. Note some of the jobs may be unfamiliar, e.g. social worker and estate agent, depending on your own culture. Be ready to explain further.
- Check answers open class. **Answers: 1 – 10, 2 – 9, 3 – 6, 4 – 15, 5 – 16, 7 – 12, 8 – 11, 13 – 14.**

Worksheet C

Below are some more jobs the article talks about. First, can you match them with things they work with?

1. Clergy
2. Engines
3. Chefs
4. Houses
5. Beauticians
6. Food
7. Plumbers
8. Family problems
9. Mechanics
10. The bible
11. Social workers
12. Bathrooms
13. Architects
14. New buildings
15. Estate agents
16. Make-up

Reading again

- Learners now read the conclusion to the article (**Worksheet D**) and complete the gaps with jobs from the previous exercise. This should generate more discussion about for example why people hate certain jobs.

Answers: Happy jobs a)-e) (in any order) clergy, chefs, beauticians, plumbers and mechanics,
Unhappy jobs f)-h) social workers, architects and estate agents.

Worksheet D

Here is the conclusion to the article. Can you complete it with jobs from the list? One group is jobs people were happy in, the other jobs people hated.

Some happy alternatives

So maybe there are a few downsides to being a hairdresser, even if the job does make some happy – long hours and a lot of standing may not make everyone happy. If hairdressing isn't your thing then you'll be glad to hear that the same survey found that, as well as hairdressers,

a) _____, b) _____, c) _____, d) _____ and
e) _____ were also happy jobs to have.

However, to save yourself from unhappiness in your job avoid being
f) _____, g) _____ and h) _____! Maybe it's about being able to do something practical or creative that makes you happy?

What do you think?

- This is a discussion activity for learners, starting with thoughts about the previous exercise and expanding out into broader areas.

Tip: Students in a mixed nationality class might find the opportunity to compare ideas about good and bad jobs interesting – ideas are very different in different cultures!

- Hand out **Worksheet E**. Give learners time to discuss then feedback open group to finish the class.

Worksheet E

Discuss these questions in groups:

- Look at your answers to 9 again. Why do you think people liked some jobs and hated others?
- What are the top 5 and bottom 5 jobs in your country? Talk with your partners, then explain to the class.
- What are the most important things about a job? Is it money? People? The hours you work?
- What for you is the perfect job?

Follow up activities

Possible follow-up work to this lesson could include:

- Learners choose a job and research it, then present it to the class
- Learners conduct a survey of jobs and what people think of them, then write a report like that of the article describing their findings
- A personal writing task on 'My dream job'
- Learners create their own job quiz, for example a matching activity like ex. 8, and test other learners.