

Jobs and Employment

A job is a regular activity performed in exchange for payment. A person usually begins a job by becoming an employee, volunteering, or starting a business. The duration of a job may range from an hour to a lifetime. If a person is trained for a certain type of job, they may have a profession.

The series of jobs people hold in their life is their career. People may have a chosen occupation for which they have received a degree. Most people spend most of their time doing a regular occupation except when they are students, disabled, or retired.

There are many kinds of jobs: In a full-time job a person works more hours per week as required by his/her employer. Full-time jobs are often considered careers. A part-time job is a form of employment with fewer than 30 or 35 hours per week. Temporary work refers to a situation where the employee is expected to leave the employer within a certain period of time. Temporary workers may work full-time or part-time.

Temporary employees are also used in seasonal work, e.g. during the harvest in summer. Self-employment is working for oneself. Self-employed people work for themselves instead of an employer, drawing income from a trade or business that they operate. Those who do not hold down a steady job may do odd jobs or be unemployed. Odd jobs include a wide range of repairs, trade skills, maintenance work, both interior and exterior, light plumbing jobs or light electric jobs. They are sometimes described as “*handyman work*” or “*fix-up tasks*.” The practice of holding another job, often at night, in addition to one’s main job, which is usually done to earn extra income, is called moonlighting. A day job is a full-time job people hold solely to pay living expenses while they are trying to prepare for their preferred vocation. The day job would be abandoned if the real vocation paid a living cost.

The socioeconomic relationship between a worker and an employer is called wage labour. The workers sell their labour under a formal or informal employment contract. They can work an indeterminate time and get a wage or salary in return. They are called “employees” and they perform specific duties which are packaged into a job. The relationship between an employer

and an employee is affected by interests, control and motivation. The employers should manage and balance these three factors and enable a harmonious and productive working relationship.

Usually, either an employee or employer may end the relationship at any time.

Getting a first job is an important part of our lives. You may start with household duties, odd jobs, working for a family business or getting summer jobs during the summer holidays. Later you can find employers via job listings in newspapers, professional recruitment consultants or online (job boards).

Unfortunately, we should be aware of job scams which offer attractive employment opportunities and require the job seeker to pay them money in advance (to provide work visas, travel costs, and out-of-pocket expenses). The scams typically involve lucrative offers of employment in Europe, the Middle East, West Africa, or South Africa. These companies often present themselves with official-looking websites and documentation. Once the victim has paid the fees for employment in advance, the company declines employment as soon as the transfer is finalized. Remember, most reputable companies and/or agencies will absorb these costs themselves if they are the ones seeking the employee.

Employees can organize themselves into trade unions, which represent the work force to collectively bargain with the management of organisations about working and contractual conditions. The trade union is an organization of workers who have banded together to achieve common goals (e.g., to protect the integrity of its trade, achieve higher pay, increase the number of employees an employer hires, or better working conditions). The leaders of the trade union bargain with the employer on behalf of the union members and negotiate labour contracts with employers. This may include the negotiation of wages, work rules, complaint procedures, rules governing hiring, firing and promotion of workers, benefits, workplace safety and policies. Trade unions have become popular in many countries and may include individual workers, professionals, former workers, students, apprentices and/or the unemployed.

Answer the questions:

1. Try to explain the slogan “Money for jobs, not bombs“.
2. What kinds of jobs interest you the most and the least?
3. Do you think companies should offer employees lifetime employment?
4. What help should the government give those looking for a job?
5. What’s the best way to pass job interviews?
6. Are there any jobs you would refuse to do? Explain.
7. What would life be like without the need for work and money?