

NEWS LESSON

Time or Money at Work?

BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What is the most important thing about a good job for you?
2. How do you get to work or school, and how long does it take?
3. Would you rather work from home or have a shorter working day?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**survey**	☐	A	the jobs a person does during their working life
2	**career**	☐	B	making you feel worried and tired
3	**payslip**	☐	C	a set of questions asked to many people to learn what they think
4	**challenge**	☐	D	the strength to do things without feeling tired
5	**stressful**	☐	E	something difficult that you must try to deal with
6	**hobbies**	☐	F	a paper that shows how much money you earned
7	**energy**	☐	G	in a way that is equal and right for everyone
8	**fairly**	☐	H	things you enjoy doing in your free time

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

A new survey says work-life balance is now the top reason people think about leaving a job, ahead of pay.

1 Imagine two job offers. One pays more, but you must stay in the office until six every evening. The other pays a little less, but you can choose when to start and finish. Which would you take? Many people still need the highest salary they can get. However, a new international survey suggests that time and freedom are becoming just as important when people think about changing jobs.

2 The employment company Adecco asked 40,500 workers in 36 countries about their working lives. Its report came out on 19 November 2026. For the first time in the seven years of this research, work-life balance was the main reason people said they might leave a job, ahead of pay. The results do not mean that money has stopped mattering. They show that workers are thinking more carefully about what a job takes away from their personal lives.

3 There are several reasons for this change. Some people travel a long way to work and spend hours on crowded trains. If they can work from home sometimes, or change their hours, they can fit work around their lives more easily. Flexible hours can also leave time for hobbies.

4 Employers see the problem differently. A restaurant cannot let every employee work from home, and a hospital needs staff at certain times. Even in offices, teams sometimes need to be together to solve problems. Managers may worry that too much freedom will make planning difficult. The challenge is to work out which jobs can offer flexibility and how to treat everyone fairly when some roles cannot.

5 There is also an important question about money. Someone with a comfortable salary may be happy to give up extra pay for more free time. Someone struggling to pay rent may have no choice. For that person, a higher salary could make life less stressful. It is easy to talk about balance, but not everyone has the same choices. A good job may look different depending on your situation.

6 The survey is a reminder that success at work is not only about climbing the career ladder. People also want enough energy to enjoy the rest of their day. Perhaps the best job is not the one with the biggest number on the payslip, but the one that lets you live well outside work. If you were offered more money or more time, which would make the biggest difference to you?

Sources: The Guardian, Flexibility more important to jobseekers than pay, global survey finds; The Adecco Group, The Adecco Group global study: AI delivers more value when people are involved in work redesign. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The survey asked workers in 36 countries. T F NG
2. The results mean that money has stopped mattering to workers. T F NG
3. Most workers in the survey want to work from home every day. T F NG
4. Adecco's research has been done for more than five years. T F NG
5. Work-life balance has been the main reason for leaving a job every year of the research. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

borrow	crowded	international	invite	reminder	solve	worry

1. The company asked workers in 36 countries, so it was an _____ survey.
2. The metro was so _____ at eight o'clock that nobody could find a seat.
3. Managers may _____ that too much freedom will make planning difficult.
4. The photo on my desk is a _____ of my holiday in Italy.
5. A good team can _____ a difficult problem together.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Adecco _____ 40,500 workers about their working lives. (ASK)
2. The report _____ out on 19 November 2026. (COME)
3. Last year, my sister _____ her job because the journey took too long. (LEAVE)
4. If I _____ more free time, I would learn the guitar. (HAVE)
5. People also want enough energy _____ the rest of their day. (ENJOY)

7 Language focus: collocations

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Some verbs and adjectives go together naturally. Think about which word you usually hear before or after the other.

climb	comfortable	hold	keep	make	pay	take

1. She wants to _____ the career ladder at a big bank.
2. Someone struggling to _____ rent may have no choice.
3. It is easy to _____ a mistake when you are tired after a long day.
4. Someone with a _____ salary may be happy to give up extra pay.
5. Parents need to _____ care of their children after school, so fixed hours are hard.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Would you take less money to get more free time? Why?
2. Which jobs, like a hospital or a restaurant, cannot offer flexible hours?
3. What would you do with one extra free hour every day?

9 Role-play: a better deal at work

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the manager

Your employee wants to change their working hours. The shop is busy in the evenings and you need enough staff. Ask at least two questions before you decide. You can say yes, no, or yes with a condition.

Student B · the employee

You would like to start earlier and finish earlier so you can be home for your family. You could accept a little less pay. Explain why this matters to you and how the work will still get done.

Useful phrases

I'd like to talk about my working hours.

I'd be happy to earn a bit less if I could finish earlier.

It'd make a big difference to my family.

How would the team cover the busy evenings?

I'm afraid we can't change everyone's hours.

Could we try it for a month and see how it goes?

Afterwards, tell the class: did you agree a deal, and was it fair for the rest of the team?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 C · 2 A · 3 F · 4 E · 5 B · 6 H · 7 D · 8 G

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 international · 2 crowded · 3 worry · 4 reminder · 5 solve

6 Verb forms

1 asked · 2 came · 3 left · 4 had · 5 to enjoy

7 Language focus

1 climb · 2 pay · 3 make · 4 comfortable · 5 take

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