NEWS LESSON

# Leaving Work on Time Is Not Quitting



## BEFORE YOU READ

### 1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What does doing a job well look like when you leave on time?
2. Would you answer a routine work message on a day off?
3. When does helping out become an expectation?

### 2 Key words

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

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **engaged** | ☐ | A | extra hours of work after your normal day |
| 2 | **overtime** | ☐ | B | a period of time when you work, for example at night |
| 3 | **salaries** | ☐ | C | money people get every month for their job |
| 4 | **colleagues** | ☐ | D | people you work with |
| 5 | **shift** | ☐ | E | wanting to do something well |
| 6 | **reasonable** | ☐ | F | interested in your work and ready to try hard |
| 7 | **motivated** | ☐ | G | fair and sensible |
| 8 | **unpaid** | ☐ | H | with no money given for it |

## 3 Read

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

**A Gallup report found only 20% of employees worldwide felt engaged at work in 2025. That does not mean everyone else has given up.**

1 A worker arrives on time, finishes their tasks and goes home when the working day ends. They do not answer emails on Sunday or take on extra projects without pay. Are they a bad employee?

2 Some people call this behaviour quiet quitting. The name is confusing because these people have not actually left their jobs. They are choosing to do what their contract requires, without making work the centre of their lives. For some, this is a way to protect their free time. For others, it may show they have lost interest in their work.

3 A 2026 Gallup report found that only 20% of employees around the world were engaged at work in 2025. Gallup uses engagement to measure how connected workers feel to their jobs and workplaces. This number does not mean that the other 80% were all quiet quitting.

4 Managers sometimes worry that employees who refuse extra tasks are not committed. They may believe a good worker should help out colleagues and show initiative. However, workers may feel that doing unpaid overtime every week is unfair, especially when salaries are not increasing.

5 There are important differences between setting limits and doing a job badly. Someone can work hard during paid hours and still keep their evenings free. At the same time, refusing to cooperate with colleagues can create problems for everyone.

6 The debate also depends on the kind of job someone has. An office worker may choose not to open work emails at night. A nurse, firefighter or restaurant worker may have different responsibilities when something unexpected happens during a shift. Even so, managers should not assume that every emergency can be solved by asking staff to work for free.

7 Clear rules help both sides understand what is expected. Some teams discuss busy periods in advance and give workers time off after extra hours. Others pay overtime. When people feel treated fairly, they may be happier to help. When rules constantly change, even motivated workers can end up feeling angry. Quiet quitting may sometimes be a sign that trust between employees and employers has already been damaged.

8 Perhaps the real question is what a reasonable working relationship looks like. Employers need reliable people, and workers need time to live. If both sides agree on clear expectations, leaving the office on time should not have to be treated as a problem.

Sources: Gallup. Picture: AI illustration.

## 4 True, false or not given

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

1. Quiet quitting means an employee has left the job. T F NG
2. Gallup found 20% of employees worldwide were engaged in 2025. T F NG
3. Most teams pay workers for overtime. T F NG
4. Gallup's number does not mean that all the other workers were quiet quitting. T F NG
5. A nurse and an office worker have exactly the same responsibilities. T F NG

## 5 Vocabulary

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

**contract** **damaged** **emergency** **limits** **reliable** **unexpected** **unfair**

1. Employers need _____ people, because they must know the work will be done.
2. A nurse may need to deal with an _____ during a shift.
3. Many workers read their _____ carefully to see how many hours they must work.
4. Setting _____ means deciding how much of your free time work can take.
5. After a bad argument, trust between a manager and a worker can be _____ .

## 6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. They are _____ to do what their contract requires. (CHOOSE)
2. A 2026 Gallup report _____ that only 20% of employees were engaged. (FIND)
3. Gallup _____ engagement to measure how connected workers feel to their jobs. (USE)
4. Managers should not assume that every emergency can _____ by free work. (SOLVE)
5. When people feel _____ fairly, they may be happier to help. (TREAT)

## 7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Ask yourself: does the word show a contrast, a reason or a result? Then read the whole sentence again.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| although | because | despite | especially | however | instead | so |

1. Many workers feel tired. _____ , they still finish all their tasks.
2. She does not answer emails at night _____ she needs time to rest.
3. The team had a very busy week, _____ the manager gave them Friday off.
4. _____ she likes her job, she never works at weekends.
5. Help is welcome, _____ when a colleague is ill.

SPEAK

## 8 Talk about it

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

1. Where would you draw the line between being reliable and always being available?
2. Should doing exactly the agreed job ever count as doing too little?
3. What could make people want to contribute more without feeling pressured?

## 9 Role-play: leaving on time

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

**Student A · the manager**

Your employee leaves at five every day and never answers messages in the evening. A big project starts next week. Ask why, and say what you need from the team. You can ask for a small change, or accept the way they work.

**Student B · the employee**

You finish your tasks and leave on time. Your manager wants to talk. Explain why your evenings matter to you. Say what you can offer instead, and what you cannot do.

**Useful phrases**

I always finish my tasks before I leave.
I'm afraid I'm not available in the evenings.
Can you tell me what you're expecting?
I'd be happy to stay late once a month if it's paid.
That's fair, but we've got a busy week coming.
Could we agree some clear rules?

**Afterwards, tell the class what you agreed. Was it a fair deal for both sides?**

ANSWER KEY

**2 Key words**

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

**4 True, false or not given**

1 F · 2 T · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

**5 Vocabulary**

1 reliable · 2 emergency · 3 contract · 4 limits · 5 damaged

**6 Verb forms**

1 choosing · 2 found · 3 uses · 4 be solved · 5 treated

**7 Language focus**

1 However · 2 because · 3 so · 4 Although · 5 especially

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