NEWS LESSON

When a Hobby Starts to Feel Like Work



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Would you keep a hobby if you never improved at it?
2. What do you enjoy doing without showing anyone the result?
3. Does sharing a hobby online make it more fun or more work?

2 Key words

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

1	**measures**	☐	A	making you feel calm and happy
2	**compare**	☐	B	very, very good
3	**competition**	☐	C	a game or event where people try to win
4	**pressure**	☐	D	good chances to do something
5	**deadlines**	☐	E	a feeling that you must do something
6	**opportunities**	☐	F	the last days or times you can finish something
7	**excellent**	☐	G	look at two things to see how they are the same or different
8	**relaxing**	☐	H	finds out the size or amount of something

3 Read

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

You start running for the fresh air. A few weeks later you have a watch, training tips and a race to enter.

1 You start running because you want some fresh air. After a few weeks, you buy a watch that measures your speed. Soon, you are looking up training tips and entering races. What happened to the simple pleasure of going for a run?

2 Many hobbies now come with goals. Readers count how many books they finish. People share photographs of perfect cakes or compare their results at the gym. Social media can make an ordinary activity feel like a competition, even when nobody asked us to compete.

3 There is also pressure to turn interests into businesses. Someone who makes candles may be told to set up an online shop. A good cook may be encouraged to start selling food. In a 2026 Forbes article, a writer explored both the opportunities and the difficulties of making money from a hobby.

4 There can be real benefits. Setting goals helps some people improve, and selling something you have made can be exciting. A hobby might even become a career. But taking orders, dealing with customers and meeting deadlines can turn a relaxing activity into another job.

5 Not everybody wants to be excellent at everything. You can paint badly, play tennis slowly or read only when you feel like it. An activity can matter simply because it makes an ordinary day more enjoyable.

6 Imagine two friends who enjoy playing guitar. One practises for concerts and wants to improve every week. The other knows only a few songs and plays them in the living room after work. Both can enjoy the same hobby in very different ways. Problems begin when one person feels they must follow somebody else's idea of success. It is easy to compare yourself with talented people online and forget why you took it up in the first place.

7 Sometimes learning a new skill is fun because progress is clear. Sometimes repeating something familiar is relaxing because there is nothing to prove. Hobbies can also change over time. What begins as a serious challenge may later become a quiet pleasure, or the other way around. We can decide what we want from them rather than letting an app or audience decide for us.

8 Perhaps the most useful question is not 'How can I get better at this?' or 'Could this make money?' It is 'Am I still enjoying myself?' A hobby does not need a medal, an audience or a business plan to be worth doing.

Sources: Forbes. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

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

1. Taking orders and meeting deadlines can make a hobby feel like a job. T F NG
2. Most people who sell their crafts give up within a year. T F NG
3. Setting goals never helps anybody to improve. T F NG
4. A 2026 Forbes article looked at making money from a hobby. T F NG
5. The text says the two friends who play guitar enjoy the hobby in the same way. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

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

audience	benefits	career	customers	progress	races	tips

1. Regular exercise has many health _____ , such as a stronger heart and better sleep.
2. She loved painting so much that it later became her full-time _____ .
3. After three months of lessons, Tom can play faster, and he is happy with his _____ .
4. The singer smiled at the large _____ and thanked everyone for coming.
5. The baker greets all her _____ by name.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. What _____ to the simple pleasure of going for a run? (HAPPEN)
2. People share photographs of cakes they have _____ . (MAKE)
3. In a 2026 Forbes article, a writer _____ the difficulties of selling a hobby. (EXPLORE)
4. A good cook may be _____ to start selling food. (ENCOURAGE)
5. What begins as a challenge may later _____ a quiet pleasure. (BECOME)

7 Language focus: phrasal verbs

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. A phrasal verb is a verb plus a small word, like set up. The small word changes the meaning, so learn the two words together.

into	off	on	out	over	up	with

1. Hobby kits often come _____ everything you need to start.
2. A hobby can turn _____ a job if you are not careful.
3. My cousin wants to set _____ a small baking business.
4. Even when it rained, the runners carried _____ until they reached the end.
5. We tried several recipes and worked _____ which one tastes best.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

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

1. When does a hobby start feeling like another job?
2. Would you rather be average at something you loved or excellent at something you disliked?
3. What could help someone try a hobby without feeling judged?

9 Role-play: should you sell your cakes?

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

Student A · the friend

You love your friend's cakes and think they should open an online shop. Give at least two reasons. Listen to their worries and answer them.

Student B · the baker

You bake for fun and your friend says you should sell your cakes. You are not sure. Explain what you enjoy now and what worries you.

Useful phrases

You should really sell these!

I'd love to, but I'm worried it'd feel like work.

What's stopping you?

I bake because it's relaxing, not because I want money.

We could start small and see how it goes.

That's a fair point, I hadn't thought of that.

Afterwards, tell the class: did the baker decide to sell, and what made the difference?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

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

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 NG · 3 F · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 benefits · 2 career · 3 progress · 4 audience · 5 customers

6 Verb forms

1 happened · 2 made · 3 explored · 4 encouraged · 5 become

7 Language focus

1 with · 2 into · 3 up · 4 on · 5 out

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