

1.1

The gig economy

VOCABULARY

Describing working life

1 What does this quotation mean to you?

'Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans.'
John Lennon, English singer & songwriter (1940-1980)

2 Discuss these questions.

- 1 How many jobs do you expect to have in your life? 1-3 4-7 8 or more
- 2 Would you prefer to be self-employed or an employee? Why?
- 3 In fifteen years' time, do you expect to be working more or less than now?
- 4 At what age do you expect to stop working? 55 65 75



3 Underline the best word to complete each sentence.

- 1 At the moment, people generally *retire* / *resign* at 65.
- 2 I *joined* / *applied* for the company when I was 25 and have worked there ever since.
- 3 What's the best way to *pay* / *reward* our employees for good performance?
- 4 About 700 staff were *laid off* / *dismissed* when the company lost the contract to supply Toyota.
- 5 We have *educated* / *trained* our staff in the use of laser equipment.
- 6 I'm going to *leave* / *change* the company at the end of the year.
- 7 E and G Consultants *recruits* / *employs* from the top business schools.
- 8 Companies need to offer parents of young children more *flexible* / *overtime* hours.
- 9 They used only to offer permanent posts, but now most new contracts are *temporary* / *part-time* ones.
- 10 I have one *day off* / *holiday* a week to attend a course at college.

4 Make sentences with the words you *didn't* use in Exercise 3.

5 Make nouns from the following verbs.

Verb	Noun	Verb	Noun
1 employ	<i>employment</i>	6 recruit	
2 apply		7 compete	
3 retire		8 choose	
4 resign		9 pay	
5 train		10 reward	

Working for yourself

- 6** What do you think are the advantages of being self-employed? What are the disadvantages? Make a list. Then read the text and compare your ideas.
- 7** Look at the text and find the answers to these questions.
- 1 What are the advantages for companies of using self-employed people?
 - 2 How has the digital age changed the world of work, according to the article?
 - 3 Why do some young people feel they have to do freelancing work?

The Gig Economy

Whatever you call it – the Gig Economy, the Freedom Economy or the Freelance Economy – the trend for people to be self-employed, rather than salaried employees, is a growing global phenomenon. In Europe, independent workers are the fastest growing sector of the workforce; in India, freelance workers now stand at around 15 million people; while in China, an increasing number of workers are choosing freelance work over permanent posts because of the flexibility it offers them. This flexibility is also very attractive to employers who can bring in skilled talent as and when they need them, rather than recruiting or training their own employees which can be both costly and time-consuming.



At the heart of this trend is the digital revolution which has not only created new jobs in programming, web design and online marketplaces, but has also allowed workers to choose where, when and how they work. There are rewards for those who opt for this path. A UK study found that self-employed people typically earn double the amount of their salaried counterparts. But the most obvious incentive is the independence freelancing brings. So it is not surprising that it appeals particularly to the younger generation, many of whom have no particular desire to manage other people or to be managed by them. In some cases, they feel they have no choice, either because there are not enough suitable permanent jobs to apply for or because the competition for those jobs is too fierce.

But freedom comes at a cost. Job insecurity – not knowing where your next ‘gig’ or dollar for that matter, is going to come from – can cause stress and anxiety. Freelance work is not for everyone. If you are more of a risk-taker by disposition, self-employment can be an exciting proposition. But if you are someone who worries about job security, finding more permanent and stable employment may be the better option.

- 8** Do you think that this trend towards self-employment is a positive one? Give reasons to support your answer.

- 9** What do the following phrases from the text mean?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 global phenomenon | 4 the competition is too fierce |
| 2 costly and time-consuming | 5 your next gig |
| 3 counterparts | 6 by disposition |

GRAMMAR

Grammar Tip
 We say:
 I am *good at*
 making *decisions*
 but
 He *intends to* run
 for President.

Gerunds and infinitives

1 Which of the verbs or phrases in the box take the gerund (-ing) and which ones take *to* + infinitive (*to do*)?

~~be good at~~ ~~plan / intend / aim~~ be worth fail be reluctant
 have trouble / difficulty hope / expect manage succeed in
 decide think about / consider enjoy avoid involve have
 be used to / accustomed to be willing / prepared

+ gerund (-ing)	+ to + infinitive (to do)
be good at	plan / intend / aim
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2 Which of the following pairs of phrases is the odd one out grammatically? Why?

- 1 be good at - be bad at
- 2 be willing - be reluctant
- 3 succeed in - fail
- 4 enjoy - dislike

3 Complete these sentences.

- 0 When I retire, I plan to do some voluntary work for a charity.
- 1 When I retire, I plan ...
- 2 I think I'm quite good at ...
- 3 Before attending a job interview, it's worth ...
- 4 My job involves ...
- 5 When speaking English, I often have difficulty ...
- 6 At work I feel satisfied if I manage ...
- 7 For my summer holiday this year, I am considering ...
- 8 If I was offered more money, I would be willing ...
- 9 The hardest thing about starting a new job is getting used to ...
- 10 I get annoyed with colleagues if they fail ...



4 Choose five of the phrases in exercise 1 and make sentences about your own working life.

LISTENING

Exam Success

Study the options carefully before listening. When listening, be aware that each correct answer on the page will paraphrase what you hear, ie have the same meaning, but use different words.

The future of human resources

5  1.1 You will hear five human resources (HR) managers talking about the key issues in human resources facing companies today.

- The first time you listen, indicate which employee group in the workforce they are talking about.
- The second time you listen indicate what actions they propose to take to deal with each issue.

TASK ONE - EMPLOYEE GROUP

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____

- A older employees (50-60)
- B new recruits
- C trainees
- D senior management
- E young highly qualified employees
- F women
- G retired employees
- H disabled workers

TASK TWO - PROPOSED ACTION

6 _____
7 _____
8 _____
9 _____
10 _____

- A efforts to retain good employees
- B the introduction of more flexible working arrangements
- C linking salaries more closely to results
- D more focus on job training for employees
- E encouraging people back from retirement
- F more support for working parents
- G developing a more positive attitude towards older workers
- H reducing staff costs

6 You've heard the priorities of HR managers. What are your priorities for your working life? Consider the following:

- flexible hours
- working environment
- pay
- training
- career prospects
- retirement

CVs and personal summaries

1 What do you call someone who ...?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 0 employs people | an employer |
| 1 is employed by a firm | _____ |
| 2 applies for a job | _____ |
| 3 is interviewed for a job | _____ |
| 4 is seeking (looking for) a job | _____ |
| 5 participates in something | _____ |
| 6 has left university with a degree | _____ |

2 Do this exercise from an online guide for employers.

Guide for employers

CVs and covering letters are essential tools in the search for the right candidate for the job and you should use them as a snapshot of a potential candidate. Being able to read between the lines will help you in your task of putting the right person in the right job. Look at these three examples of *personal summaries* from first-time job applicants received by a leading consultancy firm. Which applicant would you employ and why?

1 A dynamic and knowledgeable IT graduate who can bring success to your business, I have excellent interpersonal skills and considerable experience of designing software solutions. Whether working as part of a team or independently, I have the ability to come up with the goods.

2 I am a successful business entrepreneur seeking to return to a large organisation after years of running my own company. I have experience of all aspects of business and would welcome the chance to share this expertise with clients of a forward-looking consultancy firm.

3 A self-motivated graduate with a masters in economics, I have pre-course experience in the Economic Studies department of a subsidiary of Exxon Mobil, where I enjoyed six months working with the back office team. Adaptable, efficient and keen to learn.

Mistakes to avoid

3 Underline which elements should definitely be included in a CV (the others are 'optional extras').

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1 name | 11 goals and objectives |
| 2 address | 12 education - primary, secondary, higher education |
| 3 telephone number | 13 other skills or qualifications (membership of associations, driving licence, etc.) |
| 4 email address | 14 employment history - company, job title, responsibilities, results |
| 5 age / date of birth | 15 hobbies and interests |
| 6 sex | 16 languages |
| 7 marital status | 17 references |
| 8 nationality | 18 personal achievements |
| 9 personal summary | |
| 10 personal qualities | |

4 Read the first part of the text. Why do recruiters spend so little time on a first look at an individual CV?

Mistakes to avoid

Research shows that recruitment specialists typically spend less than 60 seconds looking at a CV before deciding whether to take a candidate's application further. Part of the reason is that owing to the ease of sending out a CV by email, employers these days receive hundreds of speculative applications a day, in many cases from people who have not even bothered to adapt their CV or covering letter to suit the company receiving it. But even if we discount these rather pointless applications, there are still many CVs that employers reject within the first few moments of looking at them because they fail basic tests.



Most of us know the classic mistakes: making your CV too long; making claims about your experience or achievements that are not backed up by facts; and leaving gaps in your career that make the reader wonder if you are trying to hide something. But there are other CV bad habits which may seem innocent, but are actually damaging your chances of getting to the next stage.

5 Now read the second part of the text and put one word in each space.

The first is a lack of key words. If the reader is only going to spend a matter (0) of seconds deciding whether to read on or not, you (1) _____ need to highlight key words directly relating to your suitability for this particular post. Some recruiters might be specifically looking for key words (2) _____ 'MBA' or 'accounting software'. The second is the use of templates, like those in Microsoft Word. Don't rely on (3) _____, because using a standard format on your CV will by definition not make it stand out from (4) _____ rest. The third common mistake is a failure to explain (5) _____ you are doing currently and how it relates to your career goals. One of the first things that employers need to know is what has brought the candidate to this point of applying (6) _____ their company. The last point is spelling and grammar. Good spelling and grammar won't win you any points, (7) _____ incorrect use of language or careless spelling will almost certainly mean your application will (8) _____ discarded. It shows a sloppiness and lack of attention to detail that most employers will find extremely off-putting.

6 Do you think avoiding these mistakes will be effective in making your CV more attractive to employers?