

The Worst Job in The World

A Talking Points lesson for
English reading & speaking



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Introduction

What is your dream job?

What kind of job would be a total nightmare? Why?

Reading

Many people complain about their jobs. It is only natural to think your job is the most difficult and that other people's jobs are easier and more interesting.

But before you complain about your job next time, look at these three jobs and consider.

First, let's look at the job of sewer swimmer. This job is exactly as it sounds — it requires someone to swim in the sewer. The city is so crowded and therefore, has so much waste, that the sewer system can't deal with it. So, occasionally there are blockages that can only be cleared by human hand.

It takes a bold worker to swim down the sewer and find the offending blocked channel and then clear it. But that is what several workers do in this city every week to earn money.

Then there is pet food taster.

Ever wondered who tests the food you give to your pet dog or cat? Well, there's a job for that.

There are people employed whose job it is to taste-test the food we give to our dogs and cats.

They have to make sure it has just the right taste to please our pets. You have to really love animals to do this kind of work.

Finally, there is the job of gravedigger. This is the person who digs the graves where people are buried. Sound like fun? The worst thing is that the work has to be carried out late in the evening to avoid upsetting anyone that might see the gravedigger at work.

Imagine that. Not only are you digging a grave for someone who recently died, but you are doing it in the pitch black with no other people around.

So, next time you think you have too much to do, sat at your desk with a big pile of reports to do. Consider the poor sewer swimmer. Or the pet food taster. Or the gravedigger.

If you fancy a career change, you only need to ask.

Essential Vocabulary

only natural	consider	sewer
waste	can't deal with it	occasionally
blockages	bold	offending
taster	wondered	employed
gravedigger	digs	carried out
upsetting	imagine that	pitch black
big pile	poor	fancy

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

"I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class."

Questions

1. Would you like to try any of the jobs in the reading? Why/why not?
2. Think about the following other jobs:

slaughterhouse worker	odour tester
traffic warden	feet fixer
telemarketer	portaloo cleaner

What do you think these jobs are? Would you like to try any of these jobs? Why/why not?

3. All the jobs above are either highly unusual or at least a little different — what kind of normal, everyday jobs do you think would be difficult or hard to do? Think of jobs like police officer, dentist, teacher or truck driver. What is difficult about these jobs do you think?
4. What jobs would you not like to do regarding the following:

dangerous	unhygienic	isolated
high off the ground	repetitive	noisy

Why would you not like to do these kinds of jobs?

5. Can you think of any jobs to fit in the above categories? Would you like to do this job? Why/why not?

Group Work

In small groups, choose one of the worst jobs above. Now think of ways to advertise this job to make it sound attractive. You need to find someone to do this job, so you have to make it sound good.

Present your ideas as a team in front of the class.

Teacher's Notes

Students often have lessons on jobs. Usually all they talk about are the different kinds of jobs and what they involve.

This lesson is somewhat different – and possibly more entertaining – in that you are talking about really undesirable jobs.

I have found this to be good fun with younger students. But for adult students it can give them the opportunity to talk about the things they dislike about their own jobs.

The questions in this lesson are more about different kinds of jobs and why they may be dangerous, unhygienic or repetitive and so on.

Credits

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