

## The benefits of a sabbatical

**Level:** Intermediate (B1–B2)

**Time:** 60–90 minutes

**Business topics:** work/life balance, taking time off work, employer/employee relationship

**Business language focus:** language associated with the benefits of taking time off work

**Activities:** In this lesson, students will:

- read a business article and look at the language necessary to understand and talk about it;
- learn or revise some business collocations;
- discuss aspects of the article in greater depth;
- research sabbatical activities and their benefits and report back to the class.

**Materials:** One copy of the worksheet per student, possible internet access for Exercise 6

**Group size:** All of the tasks can be completed in pairs or groups, so that as much communication as possible takes place in the class. However, this lesson plan can also be used in a one-to-one teaching situation.

This lesson is based on an authentic article, republished here with its full, original text.

The article discusses the pros and cons of taking a sabbatical.

### 1. Warmer

Students decide which of the benefits are the most important and which are the least important by ranking them from one to six. They should be prepared to give reasons for their choice. They can also be asked to think of further benefits that would be attractive to prospective employees.

### 2. Key words and expressions

Students search for words and expressions in the text and write them next to the definitions while noticing how the words are used in context.

**Key:**

1. *work/life balance*
2. *sabbatical*
3. *recharge batteries*
4. *seek out*
5. *misconception*
6. *initiative*
7. *stress-test*
8. *raring to go*
9. *downside*
10. *frugally*
11. *impetus*
12. *take someone up on something*

### 3. Understanding the article

Students work in pairs and decide if the statements are true or false. They correct the false statements.

**Key:**

1. *True.*
2. *False. She left a job she hated.*
3. *True.*
4. *False. Employees at Deloitte can take breaks of up to two years after working at the company for three years or more.*
5. *True.*
6. *True.*
7. *False. The downside for employees is loss of income. The downside for employers is the loss of an employee for a time.*
8. *False. Organisations and employees both benefit from sabbaticals.*

## 4. Business language – Two-word phrases

Students match the words in the left-hand column with those in the right-hand column to make expressions from the text. They then check their answers by looking in the text and seeing the phrases in context.

**Key:**

- |      |      |
|------|------|
| 1. e | 5. a |
| 2. d | 6. g |
| 3. h | 7. b |
| 4. f | 8. c |

## 5. Discussion

In small groups, students discuss the questions which pick up on and expand on topics and quotes from the article. Hold a short whole-group feedback session and compare and contrast each group's answers and input.

## 6. Wider business theme – Taking unpaid leave

Ask students to open a search on their computer or on their smartphone. Ask them to search for 'things to do on a sabbatical' (or similar) and make a list of the suggestions they find. Then ask them to search for 'the benefits of taking a sabbatical' and find out the ways in which taking a break from their job can help employees.

They then compare their findings with the rest of the class. Ask students to decide which suggestion for a sabbatical activity is the best.



### One-to-one teaching

This task can be adapted so that the student does the above as homework and then reports back (to you) in the next lesson.