

## There's probably an app for that – new solutions for old problems

### 1 Warmer

- Brainstorm all the ways you could safely and humanely transport a pet dog across a country or continent.
- Scan the article to find out how the author transported her dog across the USA.

### 2 Key words

- Write the words from the box next to the definitions below. Check your understanding of how the words are used by using the same word to complete the example sentence immediately after each definition. Then read the complete article to see how each of the key words is used in context.

brokerage    compensated    dilemma    dubious    ferry    gig  
innovative    relish    side hustle    striking    traits    wiping out

- a situation in which you have to make a difficult decision \_\_\_\_\_  
*I'm in a bit of a \_\_\_\_\_ over whether to tell everyone at work about my diagnosis. What do you think I should do?*
- to enjoy the thought of something that you are going to do \_\_\_\_\_  
*I don't \_\_\_\_\_ the idea of having to renegotiate my salary.*
- carry people or goods between two or more places \_\_\_\_\_  
*Firemen and villagers formed a human chain to \_\_\_\_\_ furniture and other valuables to safety.*
- not sure about the truth or quality of something or whether you should do something \_\_\_\_\_  
*At first, we were \_\_\_\_\_ about accepting the offer, but it turned out to be a good decision.*
- the activities of organizing business deals for other people \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hundreds of investors sued \_\_\_\_\_ houses and traders for not warning clients about the danger to their investment.*

6. a second job you can do while continuing to do your main job \_\_\_\_\_

*If you're looking to score up to \$1000 a month, you might want to try out some of these \_\_\_\_\_ ideas.*

7. ensuring that something is no longer in existence \_\_\_\_\_

*The new police chief announced that he was committed to \_\_\_\_\_ knife crime in the city.*

8. a piece of work that you do for money, especially if you are self-employed

\_\_\_\_\_ *Jonathan decided to take on the gardening \_\_\_\_\_ that would at least bring in a bit of money to keep him going until his redundancy payment arrived.*

9. attracting your interest or attention because of some unusual feature \_\_\_\_\_

*It was a \_\_\_\_\_ example of how misleading statistics can really be.*

10. being given money for work you have done \_\_\_\_\_

*The company finally \_\_\_\_\_ him for the extra hours he had worked during the merger*

11. new, original, inventing, or using new ideas, methods, equipment, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

*Its \_\_\_\_\_ and discreet design is what makes it popular with younger consumers.*

12. qualities or characteristics \_\_\_\_\_

*Applicants are asked to list experience, relevant qualifications, character \_\_\_\_\_, or other details that show that they are able to perform the job.*

## What delivering a dog to Denver tells us about work

FOR SOME, THE PANDEMIC TURNED A SIDE HUSTLE INTO A NEW WAY OF LIFE

GILLIAN TETT

- 1 Last month I confronted a doggy dilemma. My daughters and I unexpectedly had to fly to Denver for a long period, leaving our beloved golden retriever behind in New York.
- 2 We were desperate to have Charlie with us. Pets, after all, are a comfort at times of stress and this was unfortunately one of those times. But I did not relish returning to New York to make the 26-hour drive to ferry her to Denver and there were no sensible flying options.
- 3 “Get someone else to drive her. There’s got to be an app for that,” a friend suggested. I was dubious: sure, I use apps to book taxis, dinner and flights, but it had never occurred to me I could ferry a dog at short notice, like a pizza.
- 4 But I duly tapped it into my phone, discovered a site called CitizenShipper and three days — and \$825 — later, Charlie arrived in Denver in the car of a dog-loving millennial couple. My daughters were so overjoyed that I swallowed the steep cost (and additional \$159 brokerage fee).
- 5 The dog-movers were delighted too. They cheerfully explained that they had started performing this service as an occasional side hustle, but demand had soared so dramatically during the pandemic that dog ferrying was now their main source of income.
- 6 “We love it,” said Robert, the driver, explaining that his wife had given birth six months ago and they had discovered that ferrying dogs around was a way for them both to spend quality time with their new offspring, while also getting paid.
- 7 It is a trivial tale. But it underscores a key theme of our age: digitisation and the pandemic are turning many of us into the cyber equivalent of hunter-gatherers, scavenging for income and services in novel ways.
- 8 Think about it. In recent years, there has been a flurry of debate about how digitisation is wiping out jobs. No wonder: a widely cited 2013 Oxford Martin School study suggested that as many as half of existing roles could be automated over the next couple of decades.
- 9 That sounds scary. But what is often ignored is that digitisation is creating jobs too. The speed and scale is tough to measure: while the jobs being eliminated tend to be attached to institutions (and thus easy to count), the jobs being created are often “gig” posts, or those linked to non-traditional, short-term and contract work.
- 10 But the data that are available are striking. A Survey of Household Economics and Decision-making carried out by the Federal Reserve found that, in 2020-21, 27 per cent of adults earned some money from gigs and 8 per cent were regular gig workers, spending 20 or more hours on gigs.
- 11 Most of these workers are young, relatively poor and non-white. A survey issued by Pew Research Center last month, for example, found that, while 30 per cent of those under 30 have done gig work, in older age groups it was half this number. And while 30 per cent of Hispanics have done gig work, far fewer white Americans have. Most significantly, just a tenth of wealthy Americans are gig workers, compared with a quarter of those who are poorer.
- 12 The focus of such work fluctuates, as demand for services shifts: during the pandemic a quarter of all gig workers saw income soar, while another quarter saw it decline. But nobody expects such gig work to disappear soon; on the contrary, the pandemic has almost certainly left it more deep rooted.
- 13 Is this a good thing? Leftwing economists might howl “no”, given that gig work is not just insecure and lacking in benefits, but often less well compensated than traditional forms of employment.

Continued on next page

- 14 Many free-market economists, however, might argue that gig work's lack of fixed structure is precisely what makes it so vibrant and innovative, and thus able to adapt to changing patterns of demand. Some gig workers would also say they like the freedom it can bring, if they are fairly compensated and treated by the tech platforms (which is a big "if").
- 15 As the moral debate around gig work continues, it is interesting to consider our concept of work. In the 20th century, it was widely assumed that a job was separate from one's home and social life; temporal and spatial boundaries existed between work and everything else.
- 16 However, as the evolutionary anthropologist Joseph Henrich has observed, many traits that westerners consider normal are actually abnormal by the wider standards of history: hunter-gatherers, peasant farmers and almost anyone else outside the modern western world have had fluid boundaries between work and family. To them it is the idea of "nine-to-five" that seems weird.
- 17 What the 21st-century gig economy is doing is essentially tossing people back to the future. For someone like Robert, with a dog and a baby in the car, the boundaries between home and work, or family and colleagues, have become fluid. The rise of working from home during the pandemic has blurred them further, even for people doing more traditional forms of work. This might sound terrifying. But for some people — and their dogs — it has been liberating too.

FT

Gillian Tett January 05 2022

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## 3 Understanding the article

a. Answer the questions with as much detailed information from the article as possible.

1. What type of pet did Gillian Tett need to transport and from where to where?
2. Why didn't she take it with them herself?
3. What transport service did she arrange for her pet? How did she find out about it? How soon was she reunited with her pet? What did it cost?
4. What do you know about the couple who provide the service and why they do it?
5. What are *gig* posts?
6. How is a typical gig worker described?
7. What are the work-related challenges associated with gig work?
8. What do gig workers describe as being the positive aspects of doing non-traditional gig work?

## 4 Business language

a. Find two and three-word expressions and phrases in the article that match the meanings below. The section numbers are given to help you.

1. without being given much warning before something happens (3 words, section 3)  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. accept the price of something even though you think it is expensive (3 words, section 4)  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. quoted by many people in many places (2 words, section 8)  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. used for emphasizing that something is true, even though it is the opposite of something that has been said (3 words, section 12) \_\_\_\_\_
5. a way to describe a feeling, belief, or idea that is now fixed and will be difficult to change (2 words, section 12) \_\_\_\_\_
6. believed by many people to be true even though there is no proof (2 words, section 15)  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. related to time and distance (3 words, section 15) \_\_\_\_\_
8. movable and changing divisions between two things (2 words, section 16)  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Now choose some of the expressions that are going to be useful for you and write two sentences for each.

## 5 Discussion questions

a. Discuss these questions.

- Have you ever had to transport a living animal from one place to another, e.g., when moving house, travelling, or taking it to the vet? How did you accomplish it? What difficulties did you encounter and how did you overcome them?
- What was the last awkward, difficult, and/or fragile thing you had to transport? Talk about how you transported it, from where to where it had to go, and in what condition it arrived.
- What tricky or annoying tasks do you wish someone would create an app for?

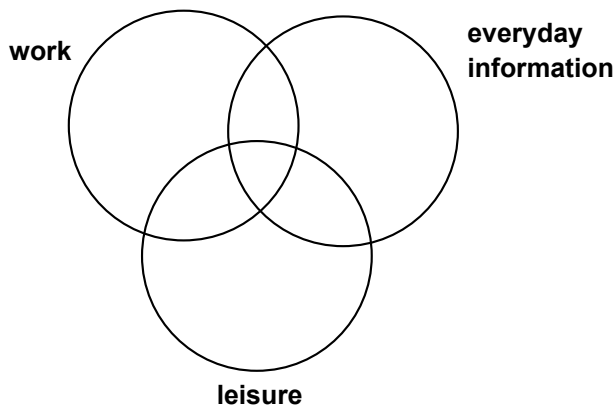
## 6 Wider business theme – Venn diagrams / graphs

- a. Find three words in paragraph 12 that can be used when describing trends in graphs.

\_\_\_\_\_

- b. What apps do you have on your phone? Write them into the Venn diagram to show how and when you use them.

Apps on my phone:



- c. Chose one of the apps and draw a graph to show how and when you use it.

Explain the app to a partner. Talk about:

- when you downloaded it
- what it can do
- whether you had to pay for it and/or additional purchases
- how useful it is

Make sure you refer to both your venn diagram and your graph.