

## Good-bye burnout! How a sabbatical could help mitigate its effect.

**Level:** Advanced (C1–C2)

**Time:** Approximately 90 minutes (plus extra time for writing)

**Business topics:** employee burnout and wellness, sabbatical leave, career moves

**Business language:** useful business vocabulary, collocations

**Activities:** discussing sabbatical leave, key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, writing a memo about an organisation's sabbatical-leave policy

**Groups:** whole class, one-to-one, pair work or small groups

**Overview:** This article shares three cases of an investment banker turned CEO, a tech titan, and a bestselling novelist (formerly a financial analyst) who achieved greater success after going on sabbatical leave.

### 1. Warmer

- a. Ask students to read the definition of *sabbatical*. Check understanding by asking what the difference is between a holiday/leave and a sabbatical (an extended leave). Then put students into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions.

### 2. Key words

- a. Ask students to complete the task individually and then compare their answers in small groups before eliciting the answers from the whole class. You can also ask half the students to complete 1–7 and the other half to complete 8–14 and then work together to check and share their answers.

**Key:**

1. *peril, peril(s)*
2. *guise*
3. *titan, titans*
4. *remorseless*

5. *contender, contenders*
6. *mouth off, mouthing off*
7. *oblivion*
8. *headhunt, headhunted*
9. *phenomenon*
10. *malaise*
11. *rivalry*
12. *relentless*
13. *slack off*
14. *lure*

### 3. Understanding the article

- a. Ask students to scan the article for the information in each statement. Then they should compare the statement and the text and decide if the statement is true (each part matches the text), false (a part contradicts the text), or not given in the text (not specifically mentioned). Then ask students to compare their answers in small groups before eliciting answers from each group.

**Key:**

1. *False. They may have suffered from burnout but they're not described as disliking their jobs.*
2. *True*
3. *Not given. We only know that he learned Mandarin.*
4. *False. He started writing on his sabbatical.*
5. *True*
6. *True*
7. *Not given. We only know that he found guidance from a "hugging saint".*
8. *False. Sabbaticals do not automatically guarantee company loyalty.*
9. *True*

### 4. Business language

- a. Ask students to match the words to form collocations. If students need further support, they can refer back to the article. Note that the answers given below are collocations from the article. Other collocations are possible, like: brokerage division, corporate division, financial division / suicide / titan / powerhouse, software analyst / division / firm / titan, tech division / firm / powerhouse. Explore these other collocations for extra practice.

**Key:**

1. *brokerage firm*
2. *career suicide*
3. *company loyalty*
4. *corporate job / life*
5. *financial analyst*
6. *options division*
7. *software powerhouse*
8. *tech titan*

- b. Ask students to match the collocations from activity 4a to their meanings. Check understanding by asking students to provide examples of each. Remind students they can go back to the text to re-read the words in context.

**Key:**

- a. 2 (*career suicide*)
- b. 4 (*corporate job / life*)
- c. 6 (*options division*)
- d. 1 (*brokerage firm*)
- e. 8 (*tech titan*)
- f. 3 (*company loyalty*)
- g. 5 (*financial analyst*)
- h. 7 (*software powerhouse*)

## 5. Discussion questions

- a. Put the students in pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions. When students have covered all the questions, bring the whole class back together so that they can share their answers and any interesting information that arose from their discussions.

## 6. Wider business theme – HR: sabbatical leave policy and employee well-being

- a. Ask students to discuss task A first. Encourage them to share their own reflections on the information. Then have students work in pairs or small groups to discuss task B. Encourage them to come up with a relevant authentic situation, but if they are struggling, you can suggest that they come up with a policy for the *Financial Times*.

Then have students brainstorm their ideas for task C. in pairs or small groups before writing their memos individually. They can complete the writing for homework and peer-edit someone else's memo as a follow-up activity.