

'No two days are the same and you can make a real difference': four social workers reflect on their careers

Level 3: Advanced

Article summary: This article outlines the career paths of four people and the different ways they became social workers.

Time: 60 minutes

Language focus: Reported speech

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

14. *academia*
15. *postgraduate*
16. *young offenders*
17. *opens the door to*
18. *consistency*

- b. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences using words or phrases from the previous activity in the correct form. Encourage students to read complete sentences to you when they give answers, so you can check their pronunciation of the key words. To extend the activity, check that students understand the differences between an *undergraduate* and a *postgraduate* and between a *degree* and a *diploma*.

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to get students thinking about the skills and abilities that people need in order to become social workers. Ask students to work in pairs to discuss the questions. Get feedback from one or two pairs on what they discussed.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to match the words in bold in the article with the definitions. Allow a few minutes for students to check answers in pairs or groups before checking answers with the whole class.

Key:

1. *to stem the tide of*
2. *paid apprenticeships*
3. *voluntary sectors*
4. *family support worker*
5. *exemplary*
6. *adolescent*
7. *fast track*
8. *simultaneously*
9. *agency social workers*
10. *undergraduate*
11. *selling point*
12. *in partnership*
13. *funded by*

Key:

1. *academia*
2. *adolescent*
3. *Agency social workers*
4. *consistency*
5. *exemplary*
6. *family support worker*
7. *fast track*
8. *funded by*
9. *in partnership*
10. *Paid apprenticeships*
11. *postgraduate*
12. *selling point*
13. *simultaneously*
14. *open the door to*
15. *to stem the tide of*
16. *undergraduate*
17. *voluntary sectors*
18. *young offenders*

3. Comprehension check

- a. Students can work individually or in pairs to do this activity. Encourage students to write complete sentences when they answer the questions and to use their own words where possible rather than simply copying information from the article.

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Key:

1. *Because she helped an old woman move into a flat and live more independently, which made the woman very happy.*
2. *She says it's not about 'fixing' things for families but working in partnership with them to create sustainable changes.*
3. *It was funded by the council and allowed her to work and train at the same time.*
4. *Because it allowed her to earn while learning, making a career change possible without leaving employment or going to university full-time.*
5. *Options include: undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, degree-level apprenticeships, fast-track postgraduate programmes.*
6. *He says there are many more career paths now than when he qualified, including work in policy, the voluntary sector and academia.*

4. Key language

- a. Students work individually to rewrite the direct quotes using indirect speech plus the reporting verbs from the box. You may want to do a quick revision of the ways different tenses change from direct to indirect speech, e.g. *present simple* → *past simple*.

Key (Suggested answers):

1. *She explained (that) everybody had thought it wasn't a good idea but she had helped her move into a flat where she had carers on site, and that she was now so happy.*
2. *She observed (that) a lot of people who went into social work would describe themselves as 'fixers', which had definitely been the case for her.*
3. *She emphasised (that) she had been able to do what she wanted to do without coming out of employment or spending time at university.*

4. *He argued (that) they should treat families with the respect they deserved and give them a consistent workforce.*
5. *He admitted (that) he wouldn't hesitate for a second to make the same career choice today. He described it as the best job in the world, where no two days were the same and you could make a real difference.*

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the questions in pairs or groups. Ask them to justify their opinions, referring to their own experiences whenever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. The aim of this task is to get students to elaborate on their opinions about becoming a social worker that they discussed in the first activity. Remind them to support their opinion with reasons and examples where necessary.
- b. Students can share their personal statements with the class. When they have done this, ask students to identify whether becoming a social worker is a popular career choice for people their age and why or why not.