

Worksheet A

A. Pre-reading

Ask students to make their lists in pairs or small groups. Make a list of their suggestions on the board before they go on to read the text individually. Then review their answers again with the whole class.

B. Comprehension

Get students to check answers in pairs; then review with the whole class. During the whole-class checking stage, refer to the text and get them to identify which specific sentences helped them to decide on their answers.

Key:

1. T. *They argue that employee development 'should aim to build employee potential and the firm's agility over the long run'. [paragraph 3, lines 12-13]*

2. F. *The text does not say this.*

3. T. *They say it 'is wrong, however, to criticize' smaller firms, because the blame lies elsewhere. [paragraph 2, lines 8-9]*

4. T. *'The opportunity to use education and training more powerfully really arises where firms have invested more comprehensively in recruitment.' [paragraph 3, lines 1-3]*

5. F. *Although the text does argue that big companies are able to invest more in training than smaller ones and short-term training is the 'most common approach' among smaller firms, it doesn't say that all small companies do training badly (or worse than bigger companies).*

C. Vocabulary 1

This activity can be used to develop dictionary skills, as well as their existing knowledge of the vocabulary covered.

To do this, get students to work individually and then check each other's answers in pairs before reviewing with the whole class. Encourage them to use a learner's dictionary. Then, when doing the whole-class review, show them how a dictionary definition can help them identify the correct answers.

Key:

1. b; 2. b; 3. b; 4. a; 5. a; 6. b; 7. b

D. Vocabulary 2

Explain the importance of these linking expressions for written English and formal spoken presentations. If there is any confusion, get students to write sentences using all the expressions correctly in context. If you are working with a monolingual class whose language you speak, you could get them to explain the difference in their own language.

Key:

1. *Except for this*
2. *Although*
3. *In other cases*
4. *Too much*
5. *Moreover*
6. *Such firm (This expression is always incorrect; where such is followed by a countable noun, it is always plural).*

E. Discussion

Get learners to discuss these points in pairs or small groups; then review their conclusions with the whole class. Each of these topics would work as an essay topic, as well as a class discussion.

In each case, encourage learners to come up with specific examples.

F. Webquest

There are three phases to this activity: the initial discussion, the online research, and the whole-class review of research findings.

1. In the initial discussion, get them to list and discuss the potential advantages and disadvantages of face-to-face and online training. Key vocabulary for doing this: efficient, cost-effective, impersonal, pace.
2. For the second phase (individual internet research), if you are working with job-experienced learners, encourage them to find examples of training needed from their own particular field of work. If you are working with pre-experience learners, you might need to suggest the areas of training yourself.

For example, get them to Key 'IT training', 'time management training', or 'motivational training' into a

search engine and look at the websites of individual training organizations offering both face-to-face and online training. What claims are made for each kind of training? Do they seem realistic? How do costs compare?

3. In the final (presentation) phase, encourage students to give spoken presentations accompanied by relevant screen grabs, although written presentations are also useful.

Worksheet B

A. Pre-listening

Monitor students while they are discussing their ideas and review answers with the whole class.

B. Comprehension

This activity checks learners' ability to get a general sense of the topics discussed during the conversation and also tests their note-taking skills. Get learners to read the questions before they listen to the conversation and encourage them to take notes while they are listening.

Key:

- 1. under-utilized: people who are overqualified for the job they are doing;
matched: people whose qualifications and skills match the job they are doing;
under-qualified: people whose qualifications and skills are too low for the job they are doing.*
- a. The fact that under-utilized employees are dissatisfied at work.
b. The fact that under-qualified employees were the most satisfied with their jobs.*
- 3. Tom thinks the under-qualified employees are happy 'because their managers haven't found out yet how bad they are'. He is probably not being serious. Another possible explanation is that the under-qualified employees simply don't realize that they are under-qualified (although this is not directly mentioned in the conversation).*
- 4. The three life stages are:
under 30: people change jobs and employers more often;*

*30 to 50: people need job security because of financial commitments;
over 50: people want more job satisfaction again.*

5. People get 'restless'.

C. Vocabulary

This activity can be used to develop dictionary skills, as well as their existing knowledge of the vocabulary covered.

To do this, get students to work individually and then check each other's answers in pairs before reviewing with the whole class. At the initial checking stage in pairs, encourage them to use a learner's dictionary. Then, when doing the whole-class review, show them how a dictionary definition can help them identify the correct answers. Finally, listen again as a way of doing a final check.

Key:

- 1. feeling; 2. current; 3. realized; 4. stretching;*
- 5. broadly; 6. for; 7. labelled; 8. as; 9. restless;*
- 10. because of*

D. Discussion

Get learners to discuss these points in pairs or small groups; then review their conclusions with the whole class. Each of these topics would work as an essay topic, as well as a class discussion.

- For question 1: get them to explore all the different ways that people's age affects their attitude to work. Key: words might include *ambition, stamina, experience, maturity, work/life balance*.
- For question 2: elicit a range of suggestions. These might include: giving employees an improvement plan, transferring them to a less challenging job, or encouraging them to move on. Then get students to discuss their relative merits.
- For question 3: elicit a range of suggestions. These might include: interim training, temporary assignment to other departments and divisions, or giving them special projects to do. Then get students to discuss their relative merits.

Worksheet A: Level 2 (Upper Intermediate)

A Pre-reading

Make a list of all the different kinds of work-related training you can think of. Then divide them into different groups: formal and informal; short-term and long-term. Now read the text and compare your answers with the kinds of training mentioned in the text.

Training should be seen as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, careful recruitment. Having said this, all companies have a lot to gain from encouraging informal and incidental learning on the job. Besides encouraging individuals to try new things and thus learn by trial-and-error, it is typical to expose new workers to the skills of experienced performers. This approach is sometimes colloquially referred to as a 'buddy' or 'sit by Nellie' system (based on the expression: 'Sit by Nellie and do what she does'). Alternatively, the direct line manager may play the crucial role of job coach. This may be complemented by some formal on- and/or off-the-job training in technical skills where the expense can be justified by the fact that such skills are needed for acceptable job performance. Much training in the use of new computer software is of this nature.

Informal learning and short-term training are probably the most common approaches among small firms in English-speaking countries. The expense is kept down and the costs of losing good workers through 'poaching' – an ever present risk in tight labour markets – is minimized. The overall approach is often described as a 'deficit model' (simply based on bridging obvious performance gaps). It is wrong, however, to criticize small firms for this kind of pragmatic attitude to training investment. They are acting in an economically rational manner and the problem of under-investing in employee development lies in wider national and industry institutions over which they have no control.

The opportunity to use education and training more powerfully really arises where firms have invested more comprehensively in recruitment, and thus built a labour pool with greater long-term potential (and consequently greater aspirations). Such firms are well placed to consider more ambitious training strategies which involve moving beyond immediate demands in jobs to longer-term employee development. The key principle here is that, in the context of a superior investment in work and employment practices, employee development should not be restricted to a deficit model. Rather, it should aim to build employee potential and the firm's agility over the long run.

Unlike short-term training, long-term development plans involve a balanced mix of formal training and education (typically off-the-job) and informal coaching and team-building (typically on-the-job). Formal learning can be important to enhance the individual's grasp of relevant facts (the template through which they understand their experience) and their ability to tackle abstract problem solving. This kind of development becomes more powerful when individuals also, of subsequently, face a more challenging work environment in which their informal learning is extended. There are stages in careers when a mix of abstract, theory-based learning and more difficult assignments help to extend individual abilities and open up more satisfying work.

Adapted from *Strategy and Human Resource Management* by Peter Boxall and John Purcell, pp. 198-199 © Palgrave Macmillan, 2011

B Comprehension

Do these statements match the information in the text? Mark each statement true (T) or false (F).

The writers think that ...

1. Long-term training and development benefit both companies and employees.
2. A lot of the training that takes place in companies isn't sufficiently relevant to what individual employees actually need.
3. Smaller firms are not to blame if their training is limited in its scale and ambition.
4. Companies that invest more in getting the right people are more likely to have a better approach to training.
5. Big companies are always better at training their employees than smaller ones.

Worksheet A: Level 2 (Upper Intermediate)

C Vocabulary 1

Look at the extracts from the text and decide whether a or b is the best paraphrase.

1. *encouraging informal and incidental learning* [paragraph 1, line 4]
 - a. Learning that is not specifically related to a person's job.
 - b. Learning that takes place through experiencing unplanned events at work.

2. *This may be complemented by some formal ... training* [paragraph 1, lines 12-14]
 - a. replaced by
 - b. positively supported by

3. *the expense can be justified by the fact that the skills are needed.* [paragraph 1, lines 14-15]
 - a. The expense can be accounted for.
 - b. The expense can be shown to be worthwhile.

4. *losing good workers through 'poaching'* [paragraph 2, line 5]
 - a. When a company 'steals' an employee from one of its rivals.
 - b. When employees decide to get a better job elsewhere.

5. *this kind of pragmatic attitude* [paragraph 2, lines 9-10]
 - a. practical and sensible
 - b. negative and sceptical

6. *where firms have invested more comprehensively in recruitment* [paragraph 3, lines 2-3]
 - a. more intelligently
 - b. more thoroughly

7. *the firm's agility over the long run* [paragraph 3, line 13]
 - a. ability to survive for a long time
 - b. ability to react quickly and flexibly to events in the long term

D Vocabulary 2

Here are some linking expressions from the text, with three possible alternatives. Two of the alternatives have a similar meaning but one doesn't. Circle the incorrect option.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <i>Having said this</i> [paragraph 1, lines 2-3] | Despite this / Except for this / Nevertheless |
| 2. <i>Besides encouraging</i> [paragraph 1, line 5] | Although / As well as / Apart from |
| 3. <i>Alternatively</i> [paragraph 1, line 11] | Another possibility is / In other cases / Otherwise |
| 4. <i>Much training</i> [paragraph 1, line 16] | A lot of / A great deal of / Too much |
| 5. <i>Rather</i> [paragraph 3, line 12] | Instead / Instead of this / Moreover |
| 6. <i>Such firms</i> [paragraph 3, line 5] | Some firms / This kind of firm / This sort of firm |

Worksheet A: Level 2 (Upper Intermediate)

E Discussion

Do you think it's possible to learn how to do a job simply by observing somebody else doing it and copying them? Why / Why not?

Do you agree that it is 'rational' for smaller firms not to invest in ambitious training programmes because it's too expensive and it would lead to rival companies 'stealing' the employees they had trained? Why / Why not?

F Webquest

Consider the question 'What kinds of training can be done online and what kinds do you think are best done face-to-face?'

1. First, discuss this in groups.
2. Search the Internet for examples of some of the kinds of training (both face-to-face and online) that you discussed. What claims are made for each kind of training? Do they seem realistic? How do costs compare? Do they confirm or contradict your opinions about what it is and isn't possible to do online?
3. Finally, present your findings to the class.

Worksheet B: Level 2 (Upper Intermediate)

A Pre-listening

Look at the following excerpt from the listening.

From an employee's point of view, the most important thing a job can give you is money and security.

Do you think this statement is always true, sometimes true, or not at all true? Note down your conclusions. Now listen and compare your ideas with those expressed by the two speakers.

B Comprehension 1

Listen to the conversation and answer the questions.

1. In the research Laura describes three categories of employee are defined. Name each of the three categories and explain what each one means.
2. Which part of the research findings does Tom find:
 - a. unsurprising?
 - b. surprising?
3. How does Tom explain the part of the findings which he finds surprising? (Do you think he is being serious? What is another possible explanation?)
4. Laura describes three life stages. What are they? How do they affect people's attitudes to their jobs?
5. Apart from life stages and the need for financial security, Laura and Tom mention another reason for people wanting change in their jobs. What is it?

C Vocabulary

Look at these extracts from the conversation and choose the correct expression. (Don't listen or look at the transcript while you are doing this.) When you have finished, listen again and check your answers.

And now I'm **coming** / **feeling** / **getting** [1] more and more aware that my **actual** / **current** / **real** [2] job isn't using all the skills I have.

... even when I started doing this job, I soon **considered** / **estimated** / **realized** [3] it was too easy for me: it wasn't really **pulling** / **reaching** / **stretching** [4] me.

Then there are people whose personal skills **broadly** / **widely** / **highly** [5] match the skills needed **for** / **by** / **from** [6] the job they are doing.

The survey **announced** / **labelled** / **revealed** [7] these people **as** / **be** / **like** [8] 'under-qualified'.

Anyway, maybe you're feeling **restless** / **sleepless** / **unrested** [9] **because of** / **by** / **through** [10] your age.

D Discussion

To what extent do you think that people's attitudes to work are determined by how old they are? How should companies deal with 'under-qualified' employees?

At the end, Tom asks Laura how companies can keep 'under-utilized' employees motivated when they aren't in a position to give them an immediate promotion. What suggestions would you make?

Listening transcript: Level 2 (Upper Intermediate)

Laura, a new employee of a company, is talking to Tom, who has been working at the same company for a long time. They are talking about how job satisfaction can change at different times in life.

Laura: What's the matter, Tom? You look unhappy.

Tom: You know, I've been doing the same job for four years now and I'm getting really bored. To be honest, even when I started doing this job, I soon realized it was too easy for me: it wasn't really stretching me. And now I'm feeling more and more aware that my current job isn't using all the skills I have.

Laura: It's interesting you say that. I read an article last week which mentioned some research into the relationship between job skills and job satisfaction.

Tom: What did it say?

Laura: Well, the research was based on the idea of three different categories of employees. First, there are people like you who have more talent and ability than their current job requires. The survey calls people in this category 'under-utilized'.

Tom: Yes, that's me!

Laura: Then there are people whose personal skills broadly match the skills needed for the job they are doing. The survey calls these people 'matched'. Anyway the research shows that the matched employees felt generally happy with their job, whereas the under-utilized employees were generally dissatisfied.

Tom: Well, that isn't a big surprise, is it?

Laura: No you're right, but wait. The survey identified a third group. That group consisted of people whose skills were low – so low that their skills didn't match the requirements of their job. The survey labelled these people as 'under-qualified'. And guess what?

Tom: What?

Laura: It was this last group, the under-qualified, who had the highest levels of job satisfaction of all the three categories.

Tom: That's really funny. The people who are least able to do their job are actually the happiest employees. I suppose it isn't surprising. Perhaps the under-qualified employees are just happy because their managers haven't found out yet how bad they are!

Laura: Maybe you're right. It's funny, but it's a bit scary, too. Anyway, maybe you're feeling restless because of your age.

Tom: Thanks very much!

Laura: No, I'm not saying you're old. It's just that people often change their attitude to work depending on how old they are, or perhaps according to what stage of life they're at. I mean, until you're about 30, you're still really finding out about your preferences at work: the kind of things you like doing and don't like doing, what you're good at and bad at, and so on. So you tend to change jobs and employers more than you do later in life.

Tom: OK, so are you saying that after 30, you stop being ambitious?

Listening transcript: Level 2 (Upper Intermediate)

- Laura:** No, not at all. But it is true that, for a lot of people over 30, stability becomes more important. And so a lot of people focus on the need for work to provide them with a regular income, and less on finding something that really motivates them. And that's especially true if you have children or financial commitments.
- Tom:** Yes, I can see that.
- Laura:** And the opposite is also true. People who don't have those financial commitments often have a different attitude. And often people actually have fewer commitments when they get older, say at around 50. For example, your children have finished university now, haven't they?
- Tom:** Yes, they have.
- Laura:** And you've paid off your mortgage, haven't you?
- Tom:** Well, yes I have.
- Laura:** So while I'm sure you still want to earn a good income, money isn't the be all and end all for you. You want to feel fulfilled as well, and that's starting to feel more important for you. Am I right?
- Tom:** Yes, I agree with all that. But I'm not sure it depends entirely on how old you are or on your financial commitments.
- Laura:** What do you mean?
- Tom:** Well, if I look back at my career, I can see a sort of pattern. Every three or four years, I start to feel restless – in need of a change. Even if the job is going quite well, I just get bored. Do you know what I mean?
- Laura:** Yes, I do. And that feeling is very common – it happens to me, too. But I suppose it isn't always easy for companies to deal with this. I mean, everybody's life cycles and attitudes are different. And it isn't always possible for employers to give somebody a new job as soon as they feel they are ready for one.
- Tom:** So what's the answer, then? How can a company keep an employee motivated when it can't offer them a promotion or a new job straight away?
- Laura:** Hmm. That isn't easy to answer. I think that ... [fade]