

# Talking about Work

*Once upon a time, everybody had work. Today, lots of people are "out of work"; but what is "work"? And what do young people in Britain think about it? Freeway magazine asked some British teenagers for their views.*

## Teens talk about work...

**COLIN:** Well I hate work! And if I could sit back and not **do a stroke** for the rest of my life, I'd be **delighted!**

**SOPHIE:** Me too!

**NAOMI:** You wouldn't! You'd be bored to tears! Imagine having nothing to do all day! It'd be like being permanently **on the dole!**

**SOPHIE:** Oh no! You don't think we're serious, do you Naomi?

**COLIN:** I am! .... I'm quite serious! I'd love to not have to work! A life of luxury! Great! Fantastic!

**NAOMI:** See, he is!

**SOPHIE:** Well I'm not! There's nothing wrong with working!

**JAMIE:** No, everyone's got to work, but I don't think it should be the only thing in life. I **reckon** there's too much pressure on people to work these days.

**SOPHIE:** Oh **that's rubbish!** I wouldn't say I've got too much work to do, at least not normally. There are some days I reckon I'm overworked, like when we've got a history essay to do, or exams to **swot** for; but normally I don't do too much. And generally speaking, people are working shorter hours these days than ever before, aren't they?.

**NAOMI:** I think it's normal to work hard, though I know I don't always! But if you want to get anywhere in life, you've got to make an effort! You won't get a good job unless you work well, and I don't think you **deserve** to either!

**JAMIE:** No. But I still don't want to spend all my life working. I'd like to have time to enjoy myself too.

**MARK:** But why can't you enjoy yourself and work at the same time?

**COLIN:** 'Cos work's basically something different from enjoying yourself!

**MARK:** Not necessarily.

**JAMIE:** I think it depends on the sort of work you do, doesn't it? I mean it can't be much fun sitting in a factory doing the same old boring job, day in, day out, like some people do; but other jobs can be quite exciting. Like being a pilot or something like that.

**MARK:** Yeah, **up to a point**, but not always. I mean, my Dad's been working in the same office since before I was born, and he's really at home there. He does the same thing all the time, but he's quite happy with it.

**SOPHIE:** O.K, why not? I think you can **enjoy** anything, if you **set your mind to it!**

**MARK:** Yeah, I think it's largely down to attitude. **As long as** you go round thinking 'this is a real pain' just 'cos it happens to be work, you'll never get anywhere!

**NAOMI:** Of course! And as far as I'm concerned, I'm quite willing to work hard, if it means earning more, or getting a better job. After all, people who work hard should get more money and better jobs, shouldn't they?

**COLIN:** Maybe, but often they don't, do they?

**NAOMI:** Often they do though!

**COLIN:** But look at the people in badly-paid jobs: they have to work overtime often, just to **make ends meet**. Sometimes they don't even get that. I mean, take my brother for instance, he worked all through the summer hols last year selling balloons in the High street. He put in absolutely hours, but he only made about £200 a week in the end.

**NAOMI:** That sounds like exploitation to me!

**JAMIE:** Yeah!

**SOPHIE:** O.K., some people are exploited, yeah, and that shouldn't be allowed... but **let's face it**, generally speaking the harder you work, the better **rewards** you get...

**COLIN:** Not selling balloons, or waitressing.

**SOPHIE:** Well in most jobs, anyway!

**COLIN:** Only up to a point! Look, if you're a **labourer**, you'll never get as much as a doctor, will you? However hard you work!

**SOPHIE:** I don't know. Look at the **blokes** building sky-scrapers. They earn tons, don't they!

**COLIN:** Well why shouldn't they?

**SOPHIE:** I didn't say they shouldn't, did I? They work really hard for it. And it's dangerous. I reckon they deserve it!

**COLIN:** But what about shop assistants and people like that? They often work hard too, don't they?

**NAOMI:** Yes, but maybe if they'd worked harder at school, they wouldn't be shop assistants now!

**COLIN:** But someone's got to be shop assistants, haven't they? After all, look at it! Even if everyone **slaved their guts out** at school, and we all went to university, we'd still need shop assistants and **dustmen** and people like that.

**NAOMI:** Yes, but...

**COLIN:** But what?



#### WORD GUIDE

**delighted:** very happy - **reckon:** think - **swot:** work hard, revise -

**deserve:** merit - **enjoy:** find pleasure in - **reward:** recompense -

**labourer:** manual worker - **bloke:** man (slang) - **dustman:** man who empties rubbish bins.

More resources on [Linguapress.com](http://Linguapress.com)

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**Worksheet:**

# Talking about work

## [Linguapress.com](http://Linguapress.com) intermediate English

*Pick out the different "tags" used by the speakers (example You don't, do you?), then add the appropriate tags to these sentences or questions:*

He doesn't work very fast, .....

You can't get a good job if you haven't got qualifications, .....

You like reading books .....

We've got to finish it, .....

He didn't tell them they should, .....

We'll never finish it by this evening, .....

You've done everything you had to, .....

Naomi lives in London, .....

*Select the correct alternative that best matches the following expressions used in the dialogue: try to be logical*

**do a stroke:** be ill, be comfortable, work hard.

**on the dole:** without work, sitting down, on the road.

**that's rubbish:** that's true, that's not true, that's exciting.

**up to a point:** that's best, possibly, not at all.

**to set your mind to it:** to stop thinking about it, to not be interested in it, to make a determined effort.

**to make ends meet:** to finish the job, to earn enough for their needs, to succeed.

**let's face it :** on the contrary, let's talk, in reality

**as long as:** if, until, because

**blokes:** machines, people, firms

**slaved their guts out:** did nothing, worked very hard, walked out of.