

## Chance and opportunity

by Adrian Doff

**Level:** Intermediate and above

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Aim:** – To talk about opportunities that are available.  
– To talk about taking and missing opportunities.  
– To talk about scope for doing things.

**There are three ways of using this worksheet:**

- Give the worksheet to students to work through independently, and then in the next lesson go through the exercises and deal with any points that arise.
- Use the worksheet for an active classroom lesson. The notes below give ideas for doing this.
- Do not give the worksheet out in class but use it as the basis for your own lesson, getting ideas and phrases from the students and presenting language on the board (use the notes below to help you). Then give out the worksheet at the end, and ask students to do the exercises for homework.

### Warm-up

**Warm-up: Establishing the concept**

Tell the students: I went to a conference in Glasgow last week. Then write on the board:

*It was a good opportunity...*

Ask them to suggest possible ways the sentence might continue (e.g. ... to meet people; ... to practise my English; ... to hear about new developments in my field; ... to drink Scotch whisky). Use this to focus on the meaning of 'opportunity', and the structure 'a (good) opportunity to...'

**Larger classes:** Students could think of continuations in pairs; then get different ideas from the class.

Give out the worksheet.

### Worksheet

**Language focus**

1. Read through the example, and ask a few questions to check comprehension and focus on the key language (possible answers in brackets):

What is the advertisement for? (Jobs with a technology company in Scotland.)

Who is it for? (Graduates in engineering and design.)

What do you think happens at the seminar? (Presentations about the company, a film, drinks and food, information packs.)

2. **opportunity:** Read the examples, and show how the two structures are often alternatives, e.g.

*I had an opportunity to learn Chinese or It was an opportunity for me to learn Chinese.*

*Tesco had an opportunity to expand or It was an opportunity for Tesco to expand.*

Look at the tables, and check that students understand 'rare' (= uncommon) and 'unique' (= it's the only one, there's no other like it).

To practise, give a few simple situations and ask students to make sentences with *opportunity*, e.g.:

- you go to an office party
- you go on holiday to Paris
- it's a national holiday
- your boss is away for a week

Read through the expressions with *opportunity*. Ask students to tell you about a time when:

- they took an opportunity to do something
- they missed an opportunity to do something

If you like, you could ask them to write sentences, then read them out to the class.

3. **opportunities:** Read the examples, and point out that we can talk about opportunities in general, but not 'chances' or 'possibilities' (but see the Note on *possibilities* below). If you can, focus on equivalent expressions in

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students' own language, so they can compare them with English.

Read through the table, and ask students to explain them or give examples:

- *business opportunities* = opportunities to make new contacts, sell new products, expand into new markets
- *career opportunities* = opportunities to get a better job, be promoted, be given more responsibility
- *job / employment opportunities* = opportunities to find work, get a new job
- *investment opportunities* = opportunities to invest money, e.g. in houses, in a company, in diamonds, in antiques, in a developing economy

4. **scope:** Read the examples, and give a few others of your own. Point out that we say:

(There's) scope for + noun: scope for improvement

**or:** (There's) scope for + *-ing*: scope for improving your work

Ask students a few questions, using the word 'scope':

Do you think your job gives you plenty of scope for creativity, or not much?

What about your flat or house? Is there scope for improving it or changing it?

What about this town? Is there scope for improvement or change? In what way? What could people do?

**Note:** *Possibilities* is often used to mean 'possible courses of action'.

There are various possibilities. We could arrange a face-to-face meeting, we could set up a video conference, or we could just talk on the phone.

We often use *chances* in sentences like:

Her chances of getting into Oxford University are quite good. (= she has a good chance of getting in.)

### Practice

#### 1. Talk or write:

Students write sentences. Then ask them to read out what they have written.

**Alternative:** Give students a few moments to think about opportunities in their job, and possibly make a few notes. Then ask them in turn to tell you about them.

**Larger classes:** Do this as pairwork, then ask a few students what their partner told them.

#### 2. Exercise:

Do the exercises together round the class; or let students do it alone or in pairs, then go through it together.

**Answers:**

- They had a good opportunity to expand into the USA, but they missed it by being too cautious.
- If you're in Paris, you should take the opportunity to visit the Louvre.
- In advertising, there's plenty of scope for creativity.
- The conference was a good opportunity for me to get to know my colleagues in London.
- Unemployment in IT is low, so there aren't many employment opportunities (or job opportunities) at the moment.

**Other language areas you could explore:**

#### 1. other uses of the word 'chance' and related expressions

- *take a chance, take a lot of chances* (= risks)
- *by chance* (= by accident); *a chance meeting* (= accidental)

#### 2. uses of the word 'possibility'

- *There's a possibility that he's ill.* (= maybe is ill)
- *There are various possibilities.* (= things you might do, possible explanations)

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<p><b>A</b> Career <b>opportunities</b> in Scotland. <b>Opportunities for</b> engineering and design graduates <b>to</b> work in an exciting new technology company based in Aberdeen.</p>	<p><b>B</b> Come to our introductory seminar on 15 September. This is <b>a good opportunity to</b> meet people and hear about what we're doing.</p>	<p><b>C</b> Don't <b>miss</b> this <b>rare opportunity</b>. Register for the seminar now!</p>
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<b>an opportunity</b>	<b>to + verb</b> <b>for (someone) to + verb</b>	<p><i>I worked in Beijing for a year, so I had <b>an opportunity to</b> learn Chinese.</i></p> <p><i>The opening up of Eastern Europe provided <b>an opportunity for</b> supermarkets like Tesco <b>to</b> expand into new markets.</i></p>
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**Phrases with opportunity:**

a	good great perfect	opportunity
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a	rare unique	opportunity
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**opportunity**

Notice these expressions:

- take the opportunity (to) ⇨ While she was in London, she **took the opportunity to** meet some new clients.*
- give someone the opportunity (to) ⇨ The manager retired, which **gave him the opportunity to** take over the company.*
- provide an opportunity (to) ⇨ Conferences **provide a good opportunity to** make new business contacts.*
- miss an opportunity (to) ⇨ By acting too slowly, they **missed several opportunities to** get new customers.*

**Note:** We can say *chance* instead of *opportunity*, with the same meaning:

- I had **a chance to** learn Chinese.*
- It gave him **the chance to** take over the company.*
- We can't say *possibility* here: NOT ~~*I had a possibility to learn Chinese.*~~

**opportunities**

We can talk about *opportunities* in the plural:

business career job employment investment	<b>opportunities</b>	<b>to + verb</b> <b>for + noun</b>
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- We're looking for **opportunities to** develop new products.*
- There are plenty of **opportunities here for** young people.*
- In the winter, there are very few **opportunities for** casual work.*

We can't say *chances* or *possibilities* here:

- NOT ~~*We're looking for chances to develop new products.*~~
- NOT ~~*We're looking for possibilities to develop new products.*~~

**scope**

*scope (for)* = opportunities to do positive things, or 'space' to develop further

- There's plenty of **scope for** developing new technologies. (= there are still opportunities that haven't been taken yet)*
- The company is already so big that it has very little **scope for** expansion. (= it can't easily expand any more)*
- She's in the accounts department, which doesn't give her much **scope for** using English. (= doesn't give many opportunities)*

**Talk or write** 

What opportunities are there in your own job? Think about:

- promotion - learning new skills
- meeting people - travel
- making money

Write one or two sentences, using phrases from this Worksheet.

**Exercise**

Correct these sentences.

- a) They had a good possibility to expand into the USA, but they failed it by being too cautious.
- b) If you're in Paris, you should make the opportunity for visit the Louvre.
- c) In most secretarial jobs, there's plenty scope to creativity.
- d) The conference was a good opportunity to me for getting to know my colleagues in London.
- e) Unemployment in IT is low, so there aren't many good working chances at the moment.