

Worksheet A

A. Pre-reading

1. Get students to list their suggestions in pairs or small groups.
2. Then review suggestions with the whole class and note them on the board.
3. When students have read the text, get them to compare their ideas with those in the text.

B. Comprehension

Get students to work individually, then review their answers with the whole class. As part of the review, ask them to identify which parts of the text they used to decide on their answers.

Key:

1. T. 'First, **it is safe to assume that**, during the recruitment process, potential applicants will be more attracted to an organization that has a reputation for offering a healthy and safe work environment for employees.' [paragraph 1, lines 8-11]
2. F. The writers are recommending that companies carry out personality tests to check whether potential employees are likely to behave safely in the future. They do not mention checking on their past record. ('Second, by choosing applicants with personality traits that make accidents less likely, companies can help to keep the workplace healthy and safe.') [paragraph 1, lines 12-14]
3. F. The writers do not say that the managers should be directly responsible for recording accidents. Instead, they argue that the number of accidents that take place in the departments they manage should be taken into account when appraising them and assessing their performance. They don't say who should do the checking. ('Research suggests that safety management programmes are more effective when the assessment of managers' performance includes a check on the number of accidents in the departments or teams that they are responsible for.' [paragraph 1, lines 17-22])
4. F. They say that training during the early months of a job is 'particularly beneficial', but this doesn't imply that training at other stages of a job isn't essential in some cases. [paragraph 2, line 13]

5. T. 'Reliable estimates of the total cost of occupational ill-health and accidents are incomplete: **this perhaps shows the low priority given to this area of work.**' [paragraph 3, lines 8-11]

6. T. 'In Canada, compensation for victims of workplace accidents exceeds US\$3 billion; this figure excludes the cost to the public health care system resulting from long-term work-related illnesses.' [paragraph 3, lines 19-23]

C. Vocabulary

Do as much as possible to elicit answers from students before you let them refer back to the text. For example:

- Give them the final letter of the missing word as well as the initial one (e.g. d__y).
- Give them the total number of letters in the missing word (e.g. d__ _ y).
- Encourage them to use a learner's dictionary.

However, with weaker students, you could move straight on to the second stage, where they have to find the corresponding expressions in the text without trying to elicit them first.

Key:

1. duty; 2. reputation; 3. traits; 4. account; 5. bonus; 6. essential; 7. beneficial; 8. borne (past participle of the irregular verb 'to bear'); 9. reliable; 10. priority; 11. occupational

D. Discussion

If you have time, get students to discuss this in small groups initially, then review conclusions with the whole class.

This question would work as a topic for written essays, as well as for discussions.

The question could lead into a number of interesting areas for discussion about personal, corporate and governmental responsibility. Encourage students to give specific examples to support their opinions.

Elicit or teach expressions connected with the concept of responsibility, e.g.:
responsibility / irresponsibility
have / take / assume / accept / deny responsibility for ...
be responsible for ...
total / overall / partial / limited responsibility
blame someone for ...
a legal / moral responsibility for ... etc.

Worksheet B

A. Pre-listening

1. Get students to list their suggestions in pairs or small groups.
2. Then review suggestions with the whole class and note them on the board. List suggestions as they are made, then reorganize them into two lists: Work-related factors and Personal factors. A final list might look like this:

Work-related factors

Too much work
Time pressure
Problems with managers
Problems / conflict with colleagues
Communication problems
Change of jobs
Unclear work role
Lack of promotion
Violence
Harassment / bullying

Personal factors

Family problems (partner, children, dependent parents)
Pregnancy
Death of partner or relative
Financial problems

3. Then play the conversation. When students have listened to the conversation, get them to compare their ideas with those in the conversation.

B. Comprehension

1. Get students to listen to the complete conversation and note down their answers.
2. Then tell them to compare their answers with a partner. Ask them to listen again and answer any questions they weren't able to answer the first time round, or that they disagreed about.
3. Then review answers with the whole class. When reviewing answers, if there is any disagreement or confusion, get students to refer to the transcript and identify which specific parts of the text enabled them to answer each question.

Key:

1. F. He has "been given a month's leave", but has not been told that he will have to leave the company. [paragraph 3, line 1]
2. T. "Another reason I was surprised to hear about George is that I didn't think his job was particularly difficult or high-pressure" [paragraph 7, lines 1-2]
3. T. "There have been some studies in the US that show that the most stressful jobs are manual work and lower-level office jobs." [paragraph 8, lines 2-3]
4. T. "... the chances of suffering a first heart attack are 2.5 times higher among manual and clerical workers than they are among executives and senior managers." [paragraph 8, lines 4-5]
5. F. Laura mentions the lack of personal contact with people making claims as a possible cause of George's stress, but not the number / volume of claims he has to deal with. [paragraph 12, lines 1-2]
6. T. "That's what causes **me** stress! And I'm sure I'm not the only person to hate constant interruptions." [paragraph 13, lines 4-5]
7. F. Laura's stress was caused by the way her job was designed and by not knowing what she was supposed to be doing or how well she was doing. She does not mention lack of support from her managers as a problem. "I didn't have a job description straight away, and I was working for two different managers. I wasn't really sure what I was expected to do, or whether I was succeeding or failing." [paragraph 14, lines 1-3]
8. F. Laura doesn't say that she asked for her colleague to be transferred. Her use of the passive ("the problem was solved for me", "she was transferred") implies that somebody else took the decision without her direct involvement. [paragraphs 18, 20, lines 1, 1]
9. T. He uses the expressions "Yes, that's true" and "Fair enough" to signal his agreement. [paragraphs 25, 27, lines 1, 1]

C. Vocabulary

This activity recycles some of the vocabulary that students will have needed to know in order to complete the comprehension section above.

Do as much as possible to elicit answers from students before you let them listen to the conversation again. For example:

Teacher's notes: Level 1 (Intermediate)

- Give them the final letter of the missing word as well as the initial one (e.g. l__e).
- Give them the total number of letters in the missing word (e.g. l___e).
- Encourage them to use a learner's dictionary.

However, with weaker students, you could move straight on to the second stage, where they have to find the corresponding expressions in the text without trying to elicit them first. Or you could even let them find the words in the transcript.

Key:

2. *anxious*; 3. *obvious*; 4. *pressure*; 5. *studies*;
6. *manual*; 7. *clerical*; 8. *routine*; 9. *following*;
10. *expected*; 11. *solve*; 12. *transferred*; 13. *combine*

D. Discussion

1. With the whole class, elicit suggestions and write them on the board. Then add suggestions of your own. The list might end up looking like this:

Symptoms of workplace stress

anxiety / tension
finding it hard to relax
sleep problems
digestive problems
absenteeism
forgetfulness
worrying / panicking
boredom
irritability
lack of cooperation
more accidents

(Allow students to express these ideas in other ways, but correct any mistakes. A number of the suggestions in the list above involve nouns derived from adjectives, e.g. 'absenteeism', 'forgetfulness', 'boredom', 'irritability'. Try to elicit these.)

2. Get students to suggest which of the symptoms are most serious / are in most need of urgent attention. You could even get them to rank them in order of seriousness.
3. Next, ask students to make lists of specific suggestions and review them with the whole class. Or you can elicit and write down suggestions from the whole class from the outset.

List suggestions as they are made, then reorganize them into two lists: Individual remedies and Company remedies. With weaker students, you may need to add extra suggestions of your own. A final list might look like this:

Individual remedies

Taking exercise / doing sport
Doing meditation
Taking up hobbies
Participating in group discussions
Doing an assertiveness training course

Company remedies

Holding meetings with employees
Carrying out workplace surveys
Improving job descriptions and departmental organization
Improving communication
Training managers to identify causes and symptoms of stress

This question would work as a topic for written essays, as well as for discussions.

E. Webquest

This is a deliberately general task. You can get students to refine their search by looking for items relating to their own country or to their own field of work.

Get students to present their findings in written form or in presentations to the whole class.

The items that students find should help to recycle and extend the vocabulary presented in these lessons.

You could also get them to focus on specific websites, e.g. the UK Health and Safety Executive www.hse.gov.uk, the UK Trade Union Council www.tuc.org.uk and publications for HR professionals, e.g. Canadian HR Reporter www.hrreporter.com. In each case, they would need to do a site-specific search.

A Pre-reading

In what ways can a company's HR department help promote health and safety within the company? Discuss, then compare your ideas with those in the reading text.

Health and wellness and human resource management

The employer has a legal duty to maintain a healthy and safe workplace. Health and safety responsibilities are directly related to key Human Resources Management activities such as selection, appraisal, rewards and learning, and development. Health and safety considerations and policy can affect the process of selecting new employees in two ways. First, it is safe to assume that, during the recruitment process, potential applicants will be more attracted to an organization that has a reputation for offering a healthy and safe work environment for employees. Second, by choosing applicants with personality traits that make accidents less likely, companies can help to keep the workplace healthy and safe. When a manager's performance appraisal takes account of the safety record of his or her department or team, this can also improve health and safety. Research suggests that safety management programmes are more effective when the assessment of managers' performance includes a check on the number of accidents in the departments or teams that they are responsible for.

Safe work behaviour can be encouraged by a reward system that ties bonus payments to the safety record of a work group or team. Some organizations also give prizes to their employees for safe work behaviour, a good safety record or for suggestions for improving health and safety. Training and human resources (HR) development play an essential role in promoting health and safety awareness among employees, and indeed the Health and Safety at Work Act (HASAWA) 1974 requires employers to provide

instruction and training to ensure the health and safety of their employees. Studies indicate that safety training for new employees is particularly beneficial, because accidents are highest during the early months of a new job.

On the question of the importance of occupational health and safety, the costs of ill-health and work-related accidents are not only borne by the victims, their families and their employers. In fact, the costs of occupational ill-health and accidents are also clearly borne by the taxpayer and public sector services. The health care sector, for example, bears the costs of workplace ill-health and accidents. Reliable estimates of the total cost of occupational ill-health and accidents are incomplete: this perhaps shows the low priority given to this area of work. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has admitted that, although occupational diseases kill more people in the UK each year than industrial accidents, there is only limited information on the former. An official survey in 1993 estimated the cost to society for deaths and accidents (excluding occupational disease) in British workplaces at £10-15 billion, or 1.75-2.75 per cent of the gross domestic product. In Canada, compensation for victims of workplace accidents exceeds US\$3 billion; this figure excludes the cost to the public health care system resulting from long-term work-related illnesses.

Adapted from *Human Resources Management*, Bratton & Gold, ©John Bratton and Jeff Gold, 1994-2007, pp. 481-2.

Worksheet A: Level 1 (Intermediate)

B Comprehension

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

1. Having a good health and safety record can definitely help companies attract candidates.
2. Employers can keep a workplace healthy and safe by choosing employees who have a proven record of preventing and avoiding accidents.
3. All managers should be responsible for recording the number of accidents that take place in the departments or teams that they manage.
4. Safety training is only essential during the early months of a new job, because that is when most accidents tend to happen.
5. Estimates of the total cost of work-related ill-health and accidents are incomplete, probably because the authorities do not see them as being sufficiently important.
6. The figure of US\$3 billion for compensation of accident victims in Canada does not represent the true cost for the Canadian government.

C Vocabulary

Without looking back at the text, fill in the missing words (the first one is done for you).

1. a responsibility imposed by the law: a legal duty _____
2. when an organization is well known for something, it has a r_____ for something
3. particular qualities or types of someone's personality: personality t_____
4. to consider specific facts when deciding about something: to take a _____ of
5. payments that are in addition to somebody's normal salary: b_____ payments
6. to play a vital part in something: to play an e_____ role
7. especially valuable and useful: particularly b_____
8. costs are met by (the taxpayer): costs are b_____ by
9. when you are sure that estimates are correct, they are r_____ estimates
10. to treat something as unimportant: to give something a low p_____
11. diseases that you can get from the workplace: o_____ diseases

D Discussion

How should the responsibility for maintaining health and safety in the workplace be divided between individuals, companies and the government?

Worksheet B: Level 1 (Intermediate)

A Pre-listening

What do you think are the main causes of workplace stress? Discuss this question and make notes.

You are going to hear a conversation between Laura, a new employee, and Tom, who has been working at the same company for a long time. Listen and compare your ideas with the ones mentioned in the conversation.

B Comprehension

Listen to the conversation and decide whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. Because he is suffering from stress-related illness, George will have to leave the company in a month's time.
2. Tom was surprised that George is suffering from stress, because he thought that George's job didn't involve a lot of responsibility or pressure.
3. Laura describes research showing that lower-level jobs tend to be more stressful than higher-level ones.
4. The research Laura mentions suggests that manual workers are two and a half times more likely to have a first heart attack than senior managers.
5. Laura thinks that George might be stressed because of the number of expense claims he has to deal with.
6. Tom feels stressed because he is constantly being interrupted at work.
7. Laura got stressed when she was promoted because she didn't get any support from her two managers.
8. Laura asked for the colleague she had been arguing with to be transferred to another department.
9. Tom accepts Laura's arguments that stress can be caused by personal factors such as financial or family problems.

C Vocabulary

Listen to the conversation and find words that have equivalent meanings to the ones below. The first one is done for you. Then listen again and check your answers.

1. to be told to take a month off work: to be given a month's leave
2. worried: a _____
3. clear, unmistakable: o _____
4. stressful, difficult (e.g. a job): high-p _____
5. pieces of academic research: s _____
6. work done with the hands: m _____ work
7. an office job (involving copying or calculating): a c _____ job
8. a job involving a lot of the same repeated activities: a r _____ job
9. obeying / respecting rules: f _____ rules
10. what you are meant to do: what you are e _____ to do
11. to fix a problem: to s _____ a problem
12. to be moved (to another department): to be t _____
13. to carry out two tasks at the same time: to c _____ tasks

D Discussion

Laura mentions that you cannot always tell if someone is stressed just from talking to them. What are some common symptoms of workplace stress? How can individuals and companies reduce stress?

E Webquest

Enter the terms *workplace stress* and / or *stress at work* into a search engine and report on any interesting links that you find, especially from news stories as well as more academic sources.

Listening transcript: Level 1 (Intermediate)

Laura, a new employee in the company, is talking to Tom, who has been working at the same company for a long time. They are talking about causes of stress in the workplace.

Tom: Did you hear about George in the Accounts department?

Laura: No?

Tom: He's been diagnosed with work-related stress and has been given a month's leave.

Laura: Really? That's terrible.

Tom: Yes, I was very surprised. He always seemed so happy when I spoke to him. He didn't look especially tired or seem tense or anxious.

Laura: Well you can't always tell that somebody is suffering from stress just from talking to them. Sometimes the symptoms aren't obvious.

Tom: Yes, that's fair enough. But another reason I was surprised to hear about George is that I didn't think his job was particularly difficult or high-pressure. I mean, you read a lot about 'executive burnout', but George isn't even a manager. In fact, I don't think he has anybody reporting to him. All he has to do is check people's expenses claims.

Laura: That's not very fair! It isn't only people in senior jobs who can suffer from stress, you know. I was reading an article about workplace stress last week. There have been some studies in the US that show that the most stressful jobs are manual work and lower-level office jobs like secretaries or routine jobs like the one George does. In fact, the chances of suffering a first heart attack are 2.5 times higher among manual and clerical workers than they are among executives and senior managers.

Tom: Well, I never knew that. But why would someone get so stressed that they need time off work? What causes it?

Laura: Well, according to the article I read, there are lots of possible reasons. For example, to go back to what we were just talking about, maybe George is depressed because of the way his job is designed. It's quite common for that to happen, you know, especially in a job like George's.

Tom: What do you mean by that?

Laura: Well, if you think about it, George's job is to check people's expenses claims. But he never gets to meet the people making the claims, or even talk to them. All he has to do is make sure the figures add up and people are following the company expenses rules. And he never gets to travel anywhere himself!

Tom: Yes, I can see why not talking to people would make you stressed. Now I have the opposite problem. My phone is ringing all day long, and I'm always getting lots and lots of emails. So it takes me ages to do all the things I need to do. And sometimes there's a fire alarm test or the computer system breaks down, so I have to stop what I'm doing. That's what causes me stress. And I'm sure I'm not the only person to hate constant interruptions. (pause) So what about you, Laura? Have you ever felt stressed at work?

Laura: Yes, I have. The last time I felt really stressed at work was when I was promoted to a new job. I didn't have a job description straight away, and I was working for two different managers. I wasn't really sure what I was expected to do, or whether I was succeeding or failing. That was really stressful.

Tom: Yes, it must have been.

Laura: And another time I had a big argument with one of my colleagues which lasted for several months. That was stressful, too.

Listening transcript: Level 1 (Intermediate)

Tom: I'm sure it was. Did you manage to solve the problem?

Laura: Well, in the end, the problem was solved for me.

Tom: How?

Laura: She was transferred to another department.

Tom: Oh, I see.

Laura: But I'm not saying that all workplace stress is caused by work. There are often personal factors as well.

Tom: What do you mean by personal factors?

Laura: Well, for example, someone could get stressed because they were having financial problems. They might be finding it hard to pay their monthly rent or mortgage.

Tom: Yes, that's true.

Laura: And a lot of women get stressed because they have to combine work with looking after their family. And there are lots of other reasons. For example, they could be having problems with their marriage or their children.

Tom: Fair enough. So, if there are so many reasons for stress, are there things that companies can do to reduce the risk?

Laura: Well, yes there are. For example, they can ... (fade)