

Lesson 07: A Career Change

Phil is thinking about changing careers. Listen to his conversation with Andrew, and answer the comprehension questions. Then, learn the expressions they use.

- 1. For Phil, the worst part of a job interview is...**
 - a. answering tricky questions
 - b. salary negotiations
 - c. talking about himself
- 2. The potential new job is _____ Phil's current job.**
 - a. better than
 - b. not as good as
 - c. about the same as
- 3. Which reason for leaving teaching does Phil NOT mention?**
 - a. higher salaries elsewhere
 - b. long working hours
 - c. uncertain future of teaching
- 4. Phil specializes in...**
 - a. consulting
 - b. math
 - c. programming
- 5. Andrew thinks the industry jobs Phil mentions are...**
 - a. in high demand
 - b. not very interesting
 - c. unlikely to lead to promotions
- 6. Phil is mainly worried that...**
 - a. he'll have a hard time finding employment
 - b. he will miss working with students
 - c. he won't enjoy working in industry
- 7. Andrew says that...**
 - a. Phil should remain a teacher
 - b. Phil should try a different career
 - c. he doesn't know what to suggest to Phil

Conversation Text

Andrew: So, how'd your interview go?

Phil: I think it went pretty well. They seemed to like me.

Andrew: Yeah? That's great. You were super nervous about it.

Phil: I know. I hate interviews. I just don't perform well when I'm the center of attention and I have to **brag** about my skills and stuff. It feels unnatural, and I always sound **awkward**.

Andrew: I'm sure you're **being too hard on yourself**, but I'm glad it went well. What'd you think about the job?

Phil: It sounds like it has potential. It'd certainly be **a step up** from my current position. So, if it were just between those two choices, it'd be an easy decision. But I still have to consider other options.

Andrew: What do you mean?

Phil: Well... I'm **toying with the idea** of leaving teaching **altogether**.

Andrew: Really? **What brought this on?**

Vocabulary

brag = talk about yourself and your accomplishments in an arrogant way

awkward = strange, socially uncomfortable

being too hard on yourself = demanding too much from yourself

a step up = an improvement

toying with the idea = casually considering the idea

altogether = completely

What brought this on? = What caused this?

Phil: Well, **higher education** is just so unstable right now. College costs **a huge chunk of change**, and there's been a major **uptick** in online learning... so who knows what'll happen in the next ten or fifteen years? Plus, I can earn a lot more in industry. It's important to like your job and everything, but... passion **doesn't pay the bills**.

Andrew: Do you think your skills could easily transfer from academics to industry?

Phil: Um, no, not directly... but having a **Ph.D.** proves that I'm at least somewhat competent, right? I dunno, I guess I'm just **hoping and praying** that companies have a use for someone with a math brain.

Andrew: Right. What areas are you considering?

Phil: **As far as I can tell**, there's currently a demand for data miners and actuaries.

Andrew: Yeah, **I have no clue** what those are.

Phil: Data miners sort through large amounts of information to find **patterns**, and actuaries use statistics to **assess** risk. For instance, actuaries work for insurance companies to calculate how much they should charge their clients.

Andrew: Hmm. It sounds kind of **dull**.

Vocabulary

higher education = colleges and universities

a huge chunk of change = a lot of money

uptick = increase

doesn't pay the bills = doesn't provide enough money to survive/live

Ph.D. = doctorate degree

hoping and praying = greatly hoping

as far as I can tell = based on the available information

I have no clue = I have absolutely no idea

patterns = repeating designs or events

assess = evaluate

dull = boring

Phil: Tell me about it. That's what worries me – what if I make the transition and end up hating it? I don't want to be stuck in a **cubicle** all day doing something that makes me miserable. And if I leave teaching, it might be really hard to go back. I don't want to **shoot myself in the foot**.

Andrew: Well, good luck with that, buddy. I'm afraid I don't have any **words of wisdom** for you. **I'd hate to be in your shoes** right now.

Vocabulary

Tell me about it =
You're completely correct; I agree

cubicle = small office area in a larger room; a "box" divided from the other office areas by temporary walls

shoot myself in the foot = accidentally cause damage to myself or my progress

words of wisdom =
good advice

I'd hate to be in your shoes = I would not want to be in your situation

Vocabulary Quiz

Complete each sentence with a word from the box. Two words are not used.

altogether	awkward	hard on me	step up
as far as I can tell	bragging	hoping and praying	uptick
assess	dull	pattern	words of wisdom

1. After the adventure of a round-the-world trip, small-town life seemed extremely _____.
2. Before buying such an old building, we need a couple of experts to _____ it and see if it's structurally sound.
3. This milk is a day past its expiration date, but _____, it's still OK. Smells fine.
4. I went on a blind date and there were a lot of _____ silences in the conversation. We probably won't go out again.
5. My cousin's always _____ about how popular she is on social media - I can't stand it!
6. Sheila, you've got the most experience. Do you have any _____ for us?
7. He played the guitar less and less over the years, and by the time he was 30 he'd stopped playing _____.
8. The _____ in the country's growth is the result of developing relationships with new trading partners.
9. My parents were very _____ when I was growing up. They wouldn't settle for anything less than perfect.
10. The top of the cake is decorated with an elegant floral _____.

Speaking Task

Have you changed jobs or careers at some point in your life? Describe the transition and the factors that went into your decision. (Or, if you've never changed careers, talk about why you chose your current career and how you got your first job in it.)

Record your answer at www.speakpipe.com/espressoenglish or send the MP3 to me at homework@espressoenglish.net to get my feedback!

Answers

Comprehension Questions

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

Vocabulary Quiz

1. dull
2. assess
3. as far as I can tell
4. awkward
5. bragging
6. words of wisdom
7. altogether
8. uptick
9. hard on me
10. pattern