

BBC Learning English

6 Minute English

26 September 2013

When is it time to stop working?



- Neil:** Hello, I'm Neil. Welcome to 6 Minute English from bbclearningenglish.com. Finn is with me today. Hi Finn.
- Finn:** Hello Neil.
- Neil:** Let's begin with a question. It's about retirement and I would like to know what the official age of retirement is in Japan.
- a) 60
 - b) 65
 - c) 70
- Finn:** I know the Japanese have a reputation for working hard, so let's say c) 70.
- Neil:** I will let you know the answer later on. I was asking that question because today we are talking about when is it time to stop working – another way of saying to stop is to quit – quitting work.
- Finn:** Neil, the official word for stopping work is retiring. People take **retirement** when they reach an age when they cannot or do not want to work anymore. Are you thinking about retirement Neil?
- Neil:** No – like many of us, we still have many years of work still to do. Giving up work – or retiring – is usually **a financial decision**.
- Finn:** You mean you can only do it if you have enough money to live your life without having to go to work? When would you like to retire Neil?
- Neil:** I would like to retire at the age of 60. Then I can get my **pension** – a regular payment from savings I make each month. And later I will get a **state pension** – a payment from the government. How about you Finn?

Finn: It's not really about the money for me – I just want to work forever. I get **job satisfaction** and as long as I enjoy it, I'll keep doing it.

Neil: Job satisfaction – that is a good reason. I know many people who do their job for the love of it – but sometimes you have to say **enough is enough** – you have done your best and you can't carry on anymore.

Finn: In sport you would say it is time **to hang up your boots**. In fact there is one very popular sportsman who retired after a long time in the job. He was the manager of Manchester United football club, Sir Alex Ferguson.

Neil: Yes, he was manager for 26 years! So, why did he decide to 'hang up his boots' and retire – was he too old?

Finn: He was 71 years old – but is 71 too old to be a football club manager? Let's hear from Alex Ferguson talking about some of the reasons that made him think about retirement. How does he describe his health at the moment?

Sir Alex Ferguson:

As you get older you're not guaranteed your health, no one is when you get into your seventies. But touch wood that my health remains for a long time yet. At the moment everything is hunky-dory but you never know.

Neil: He has a very strong Scottish accent. He said that as we get older our health is not guaranteed – so we cannot be certain of how long we will stay healthy for.

Finn: Ah, but he says at the moment, his health is **hunky-dory**! That is a strange expression. It means it is good and without problems.

Neil: And he said '**touch wood**' it will remain good for a long time. Why does he say 'touch wood'?

Finn: It is an informal phrase meaning 'with luck' and is said to avoid bad luck. Some people actually touch a piece of wood when they say it.

Neil: Well, touch wood, we all have good health. So, Sir Alex's reason for retirement is to enjoy life while he has good health. A good reason.

Finn: And recently, another person from the world of football said he was retiring. It doesn't mean he is never going to work again. Instead, he is giving up playing professional football.

- Neil:** You are talking about David Beckham! He's not really that old is he?
- Finn:** No – at 38, he's younger than you! But at that age it's a level of competition he feels he can no longer take part in. He's had a good career and is one of the world's best-known footballers. What do you think of him Neil?
- Neil:** He was good but not the world's best. He was probably better known for being a celebrity. Anyway, he just felt the right time in his career to stop.
- Finn:** But what about people who are in positions that they just can't give up?
- Neil:** Such as members of the royal family? Being a king or a queen is not a job they choose to do – it is hereditary – so something passed on from parent to child.
- Finn:** So, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands – after 33 years as Queen she recently decided to retire – or a royal way of saying this is **to abdicate**. Speaking through an interpreter, this is what she said. What has she been given since she announced her retirement?

Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands:

Since I announced my intention to retire, I have been struck by overwhelming expressions of heartfelt sympathy. This was accompanied by a broad understanding for the desire to now hand over my role to the Prince of Orange.

- Neil:** So, since she announced her abdication, she has been struck by overwhelming expressions of heartfelt sympathy. Now it's time to give you the answer to today's question. Earlier I asked what the official age of retirement is in Japan.
- Finn:** And I said 70.
- Neil:** You were wrong. The answer is 60, which was option a)
- Neil:** Thanks for joining us. Please do listen again to another 6 Minute English.
- Both:** Bye.

Vocabulary and definitions

retirement	the time when you stop working, especially because you have reached the age when you are officially too old to work
a financial decision	a choice based on how much money you have
pension	a regular payment from a company or the government, paid to someone who has reached an age where they officially stop working
job satisfaction	a feeling that you are enjoying your job
enough is enough	a time to stop because you have achieved what you want to
to hang up your boots	to give up playing (usually football)
hunky-dory	good or going well
to resign	to officially give up your job
to abdicate	to give up power

Read and listen to the story online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/2013/05/130925_6min_retirement.shtml

More on this story:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/22447018>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-22523679>