

Reading and
Use of English

Part 6

Cross-text multiple matching

You are going to read commentaries by four different writers on their experience of executive burnout. For questions 1–4 on page 29, choose from the commentaries A–D below. The commentaries may be chosen more than once.

Time to move on?

Four writers comment on their experience of executive burnout at work.

- A** I would like to write a piece about the wisdom gained following my disillusionment with my work, but that would be fictitious. When I graduated, I accepted a contract with a major insurance company. During the first seven years, I steeled myself against the relentless pressure, and my achievements were recognized in every glowing performance appraisal. But when I was eventually offered a senior management position, there was an initial sense of elation and then the anti-climax. I soldiered on until it reached the point where I quite literally collapsed from exhaustion and required a period of time off work. I expected my employers to be sympathetic but I was, in essence, given an ultimatum; get back to work or move on, and it was this attitude that has left a bitter taste. Anecdotal evidence suggests mine was hardly a unique case, which makes me wonder how corporations can ever reach their productive potential.
- B** From the point at which I left school until my early thirties, I worked for an international bank. As most clients were operating in different time zones, you had to be available at all hours. It was physically and emotionally draining, but that's the nature of the executive lifestyle – colleagues were suffering the same degree of exhaustion. Yet with each move up the career ladder came a substantial pay rise and my ego found this irresistible. Essentially, it was my decision to tolerate the circumstances. But the time came when I simply could not face going into work anymore. I handed in my notice and the relief was immense. This gave me the opportunity to take stock and see how I could combine my passion for music with a new career. Having said all that, in a time of recession, I was one of the fortunate few that that could enjoy a lifestyle many would envy so I bear no grudge.
- C** That desperate phenomenon of being 'used up' by years of corporate servitude is something I knew was prevalent but never contemplated happening to me. In my case, I gave ten years of my life to a leading fashion magazine, during which time circulation figures saw a 22 per cent rise – something I feel I can take considerable credit for. I wanted our product to be the best on the market, so I often found myself unwilling to delegate tasks I knew I could do better myself. As a result, the stress was constant and burnout inevitable. In retrospect, I see how this ridiculous situation was self-inflicted – a result of my need for perfection. I took a sabbatical and finally had the mental space to reassess my priorities and myself: whereas I once regarded my obsessive qualities as a professional advantage, since then, I have made a conscious effort to suppress them. At the same time, I resent the fact that my superiors were well aware of my level of fatigue and anxiety and did nothing to alleviate it. You know then that you are a mere cog in the machine.
- D** For the first six years at a major PR company, I had no qualms about working extremely long hours. Then came my first child and a workload which had been feasible became overwhelming, compounded by a lack of sleep. It became apparent that I could not devote myself to the job to the degree required. Indeed, realizing my own limitations was a steep learning curve; it helped me redress the balance I needed in life and identify new priorities. I hold nothing against the company; they were entirely willing to allow me a sabbatical but I made my decision not to return within half that time. I feel that industry in general has come a long way in terms of employee welfare; there was a time when you got the sense that executives were being driven to the point of collapse, but corporate ethos appears to have changed since then.

Which writer

- takes a similar view to writer C regarding their responsibility for their experiences? **1**
- expresses a different opinion from the others on the way their experience contributed to their personal development? **2**
- shares writer A's attitude towards the companies that formerly employed them? **3**
- has a different view from the others on the extent to which burnout is endemic within business? **4**

Verb + noun collocations

- 1** Complete the sentences with a noun from the box.

credit effort grudge notice potential qualms taste way

- 1** Management's insensitive handling of redundancies has **left a bitter** _____ in the mouths of many long-serving employees. (A)
 - 2** We aim to get the best out of our employees and encourage them to **reach their** _____. (A)
 - 3** Don't **hand in your** _____ here without having another job to go to: make sure you have a firm job offer before resigning. (B)
 - 4** It's not like Lucy to **bear a** _____, but you can understand her resentment at the way she was treated by her bosses. (B)
 - 5** I came up with the original idea, but it's the design team who should **take** _____ **for** the final product; without them it would never have been a success. (C)
 - 6** The company has **made a conscious** _____ **to** minimize its impact on the environment. (C)
 - 7** The architect spent just two months on the project but he **had no** _____ **about** requesting a seven-figure payment; in fact, he seemed upset when we questioned it. (D)
 - 8** The construction industry has **come a long** _____ **in terms of** safety but there are still far too many accidents occurring each year. (D)
- 2** Check your answers in the reading text on page 28. The letters in brackets refer to the relevant sections of the text.

Compound nouns

Complete the sentences with a noun from the box then check your answers in the relevant section of the reading text. The letters in brackets refer to the relevant sections of the text.

career learning management pay performance

- 1** After a succession of **glowing** _____ **appraisals**, she was finally promoted to the **senior** _____ **position** she so clearly deserved. (A)
- 2** My brother and I are very different; he does not share my ambition and has absolutely no desire to **move up the** _____ **ladder**. (B)
- 3** Having been promised a **substantial** _____ **rise**, employees were furious to discover that their salaries had been frozen. (B)
- 4** She had no training or experience so at the beginning it was a very **steep** _____ **curve**, but she seems on top of the job now. (D)

Vocabulary

Wordlist on page 210 of the Coursebook.

A Body idioms

- 1 Complete the body idioms with words from the box. You may need to use a word more than once.

| | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----|------|------|-------|------|------|------|
| brains | eye | face | head | knees | nose | feet | foot |
|--------|-----|------|------|-------|------|------|------|

- 1 Angela **put** her supervisor's _____ **out of joint** last week; instead of consulting him, she **went over his** _____ and spoke directly to the manager. Her supervisor was furious.
 - 2 Tim **got off on the wrong** _____ with his new boss by daring to contradict her on his first day in the company. He doesn't **see** _____ **to** _____ **with** his line manager either; they disagree on almost everything.
 - 3 'Can I **pick your** _____? You know a lot about banks. Which ones are offering the best deals on loans at the moment?'
'I'm not sure. I can't tell you **off the top of my** _____. I'll have to check.'
 - 4 Lynda only started up the company two months ago, so she's still **finding her** _____. But she's **got a good** _____ **for business** and I'm sure she'll do well.
 - 5 It's pretty obvious you like the new boss. It's **written all over your** _____, Hannah. He only has to say 'hello' to you and you **go weak at the** _____.
- 2 Match the idioms in exercise 1 with the meanings a-j.
- a from memory and without checking
 - b start a relationship badly
 - c annoy someone
 - d be good at things relating to business
 - e be affected by a strong emotion
 - f disagree with someone
 - g be obvious from one's expression
 - h go to a person with more authority in order to get what you want
 - i become familiar with and confident in a new situation
 - j ask someone who knows a lot about a subject for information or an opinion

B Time

Complete the sentences with one of the words from the box.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-------|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|----|
| at | aside | for | of | in | to | out | on | off | up |
|----|-------|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|----|

- 1 Sorry, I can't stop to chat – I'm a little **pressed** _____ **time**.
- 2 We had hoped to discuss the matter in the meeting but we **ran** _____ **of time**.
- 3 I always try to **set** _____ **some time** each day to read the newspaper.
- 4 We have a huge garden, which **takes** _____ **most of my free time**.
- 5 Not many people have heard of her, but **it's only a matter** _____ **time before** she becomes famous.
- 6 I did as much as I could _____ **the time available**.
- 7 We didn't arrange to meet _____ **any specific time**, but he should be here by now.
- 8 He is retiring from his post in order to **devote more time** _____ his family.
- 9 She gets straight to the point; she doesn't like to **waste time** _____ small talk.
- 10 All pregnant women have the right to **take time** _____ **work** for antenatal care.

Self help

Add the expressions in **bold** in B to your vocabulary notebook.

Language focus



Grammar reference on page 218 of the Coursebook.

A Gerunds and infinitives

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Use the word given, without changing it in any way. There is an example at the beginning (0).

- 0 She will often panic if there is a problem.

TENDENCY

She has a tendency to panic if there is a problem.

- 1 I was surprised when he said he wouldn't work overtime.

REFUSAL

His _____.

- 2 Don't bother to read that book.

WORTH

It _____.

- 3 Shall I carry your bag for you?

LIKE

Would _____?

- 4 He tried very hard to give up junk food.

EFFORT

He _____.

- 5 I'm very grateful to you for coming at such short notice.

APPRECIATE

I really _____.

- 6 I found it impossible not to laugh when he said that.

HELP

I _____.

- 7 If you don't leave now, you'll miss the bus.

BETTER

You _____.

- 8 I find it difficult to remember names.

DIFFICULTY

I _____.

- 9 They made us clean up the mess.

MADE

We _____.

- 10 She didn't like the fact that he had been treated so badly.

BEING

She objected _____.

B Punctuation

Each line in the following article contains a punctuation mistake. Correct the mistakes. There is an example at the beginning (0).

0 A heating company near Birmingham has introduced group hugs to ^{its} ~~it's~~ workforce
 1 in a drive to boost staff morale. Since, employees at Farrelly Engineering started
 2 hugging first thing in the morning and last thing at night; profits have more than
 3 doubled Now the firm is introducing other initiatives, including soothing music
 4 and regular nights' out at company expense. The idea came after Jerry Farrelly,
 5 the director went on a motivational course in an attempt to improve morale. He
 6 explained, that while many of his staff were suspicious at first, they soon came to
 7 appreciate the regime. Often new staff raise their eyebrows when they see what
 8 goes on, but we have found they soon get into the mood,' he said. Padma Mistry
 9 who works in the accounts-department, commented on the difference between the
 10 attitudes of men and women, 'The girls decided among themselves to start hugging
 11 each other,' she explained. 'The men dont want to join in, but they have tried to
 12 shake each others hands each day. A hug is a superb start to the day. We never
 13 argue now as everything is so relaxed. Its a really fun place to work.' Rob Carter,
 14 who has worked for the firm for five years said he used to work long hours and get
 15 very stressed. However that's all changed. 'It may sound strange, but I actually look
 16 forward to going in to work on Monday now, he confessed.'

Reading and Use of English

Part 1

Multiple-choice cloze

For questions 1–8, read the text below and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).

Dream job?

A holiday company is advertising a 'dream job' as a waterslide tester (0) someone with the opportunity to earn £20000 a year. The advertisement joins a list of job offers which just happen to be (1) by a detailed press release. Remember when a job as the 'caretaker' of one of the world's most beautiful island paradises (2) the news? Charity worker Ben Southall reportedly (3) 35000 applicants and, even before he was (4) as the winner, the head of Tourism Queensland said the stunt had (5) the organization £55m. One airline passenger who complained about the quality of the in-flight food was given a job as a taster by Virgin Airlines, although it is perhaps a (6) of opinion whether that meets the criteria for 'dream job'.

The holiday company says that shortlisted applicants will be taken to a water park to (7) who gets the job and that the successful candidate will (8) slides based on the 'adrenalin factor', as well as share their experiences via social media.

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 0 A offering | B giving | C <u>providing</u> | D inviting |
| 1 A attended | B supplemented | C combined | D accompanied |
| 2 A made | B filled | C attracted | D involved |
| 3 A challenged | B overcame | C beat | D opposed |
| 4 A awarded | B announced | C stated | D claimed |
| 5 A earned | B gained | C acquired | D profited |
| 6 A case | B matter | C sense | D point |
| 7 A influence | B elect | C figure | D determine |
| 8 A value | B rate | C regard | D qualify |