

Building vocabulary with the dictionary

Introduction

Building a network of useful words is a good way to prepare students before they start to write an essay or give a talk on a particular subject, or a way of revising a topic, say before an exam.

This lesson will show students how if they can start with a word they know – a keyword from the Oxford 3000 – they can use the examples, related entries and notes in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 10th edition* to gather related words.

Procedure

Aims:	to improve students' dictionary skills and revise topic vocabulary
Timing:	45 minutes
Resources:	copies of Worksheet 1 and Worksheet 2 (one per student) copies of the <i>Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 10th edition</i>

Preparation

- Make copies of Worksheets 1 and 2 for each student.
- Ensure that each student can see a copy of the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 10th edition*.

Activity

Tell the class that they are going to revise the topic of employment, and especially vocabulary referring to reasons why someone *isn't* working. They are going to start with one word and explore their dictionaries to build up a collection of useful vocabulary, which they will write on the mind map (Worksheet 2), following the clues on Worksheet 1.

Hand out the worksheets and tell the class that their starting word is going to be **employment**. Explain that it is one of the Oxford 3000 words, which means that they probably know it already. Put students in pairs and ask them if they can think of any adjectives which collocate with this noun, e.g. **full-time**.

When they have had time to discuss, hand out the dictionaries and ask them to look up **employment** to see if their ideas are correct. Hand out Worksheets 1 and 2. Help students to understand that they use the instructions on Worksheet 1 to complete the mind map on Worksheet 2.

Work through the stages with the class to compile the mind map on the board or, if they are already familiar with finding their way around dictionary entries, allow them to fill it in on their own or in pairs and then compare their mind maps with another pair at the end of the lesson.

For box 1, the adjectives are shown in bold in the example sentences within entry for **employment** (**full-time**, **part-time**).

By following signposts in the dictionary to synonyms, students immediately add to their vocabulary in the chosen topic. In this case, they need to look up **work** and they'll quickly see the Synonyms box, as it stands out on a blue tint. (Box 1: **permanent**, **temporary**, **well-paid**, **low-paid**. Box 2: **look for**, **seek**, **find**, **get**, **obtain**, **give sb**, **offer sb**, **create**, **generate**, **provide**)

Wordfinder notes help students to remember words that are related to the keyword in order to broaden their vocabulary. The Wordfinder note at **work** gives more adjectives which collocate with **work/employment**, some of which already appear in the mind map, providing further reinforcement (**administrative**, **freelance**, **managerial**, **manual**, **part-time**, **seasonal**, **skilled**, **temporary**, **voluntary**).

By turning to the individual entries for items within Wordfinder notes and looking around the entry, students can build word families, which will give them flexibility in using these words. **Freelance** is an adjective and a verb. The noun is a **freelancer**. The noun for **voluntary** is a **volunteer**. The completed example sentence is *I work on a voluntary basis*.

Optional extra task: You could ask students to choose one more adjective in box 1 to look up as an individual entry and make notes similar to those in boxes 3 and 4. This gives students an opportunity to build their vocabulary following a clue of their own choosing. They could share the information they've found with a partner.

For box 5, students use the Synonyms box at **job** to complete the gaps (**post, position/appointment**).

Box 6 is for verbs that collocate with **job, post** and **position** and are used to talk about ending employment – which students will find in the Patterns note. You may need to prompt students to look up the definitions of the words in the Patterns note if they are unsure which are used to talk about ending employment (**resign from, leave, quit**).

Box 7 helps students to build the word family from the verb **resign** to the noun **resignation**. The collocations with this noun are **offer, hand in, tender**.

Now that the worksheet is complete, remind students that what they've created is a useful reference sheet for revision.

Finally, ask students to use items from the mind map to complete the conversation in B. Get them to check their answers in pairs. Invite one pair to act out the conversation in order to go through the answers with students. Elicit alternative ways to complete the gaps where appropriate and discuss any differences between them, e.g. *post, position, job*.

Follow-up

Suggest a further topic, starting from one of the Oxford 3000 words, on which the students could compile their own mind map for homework. They should note down how they found the vocabulary they included in order to explain their process to the class in the next lesson.

Key

- A**
- 1 full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary, well-paid, low-paid, administrative, managerial, manual, seasonal, skilled, work
 - 2 look for, seek, find, get, obtain, give sb, offer sb, create, generate, provide
 - 3 *verb*, freelancer
 - 4 basis; volunteer
 - 5 post, position/appointment
 - 6 resign from, leave, quit
 - 7 resignation, offer, hand in, tender
- B**
- Claire: Hi Jane. How are you?
- Jane: Oh, I'm fine, thanks. How about you? Are things still bad at the office?
- Jane: I don't know, I don't work there anymore!
- Claire: Really?
- Jane: Yes, they changed my contract from five days a week to only three days, which was difficult. I couldn't really afford to only do **part-time** work, so I decided to **offer/hand in/tender** my resignation.
- Claire: Wow! So who do you work for now?
- Jane: I work for myself really. I decided to **freelance** and now I have my own clients and I've got a little office in my house.
- Claire: Good for you. Do you like working from home?
- Jane: Yes, it's nice. And the best thing is that I'm earning the same money for fewer hours, which means I can do some **voluntary** work once a week for Paw Friends. Do you remember – it's the animal charity I told you about? So that makes me really happy.
- Claire: That's brilliant. I'm really pleased for you. I'm thinking of **leaving/quitting/resigning from** my job too.
- Jane: Why?
- Claire: Well, I want a job with more responsibility and challenge, to be honest. In fact, I'd really like a **post/job/position** at the university.
- Jane: Great! You should go for it!

Worksheet 1

Building vocabulary with the dictionary

A Fill in the mind map, following the instructions below.

1. Look up the word **employment**. Find two adjectives about working days/ hours which collocate with this noun and add them to box 1 on your mind map, which will show adjectives commonly used with **employment**.
Follow the note which says 'SYNONYMS at WORK' and locate the Synonyms box. Use the Patterns note at the bottom of the Synonyms box to add four more adjective + **employment** collocations to box 1. Note that the collocations gathered go well with **work** as well as **employment**, so add **work** to the central circle.
2. Look at box 2 on the mind map and use the same Patterns note in the Synonyms box to complete the missing verbs.
Find the Wordfinder note at the noun **work**. This note provides even more adjectives that collocate with **work/employment**. Two of these adjectives are provided for you in boxes 3 and 4. Add the other adjectives to complete the gaps in box 1.
3. One of the words in the Wordfinder note is **freelance**. Look up this word. As well as an adjective, is **freelance** a verb or an adverb? Circle the answer in box 3. Look around the entry to find the corresponding noun and add it to box 3.
4. Another of the Wordfinder adjectives is **voluntary**. Look up this entry and complete box 4 by completing the sentence then identifying the corresponding noun.
5. Return to the Synonyms box at **work**. Below the list of five synonyms for **work** is an explanation. The word **job** is used in the explanation to define words for work, which shows that it is a related word. Look up **job**. There you will find another Synonyms box. Find a word which means 'an important job' and add it to box 5. Then find another synonym which is used formally and add it to the box.
6. Next, look at the Patterns note in the Synonyms box and find three verbs used for *ending* employment. Add the verbs to box 6. Boxes 5 and 6 work together to provide useful verb + noun collocations for ending employment.
7. Now look up the verb **resign**. Look around the entry to find the corresponding noun and write it in the correct position in box 7. Use the entry for the noun to find three collocating verbs to complete the box. These provide useful verb + noun collocations to inform a particular employer that you want to stop working for them.

B Complete the conversation using words from your mind map. Use one or two words in each space.

Jane: Hi Claire. How are you?

Claire: Oh, I'm fine, thanks. How about you? Are things still bad at the office?

Jane: I don't know, I don't work there anymore!

Claire: Really?

Jane: Yes, they changed my contract from five days a week to only three days, which was difficult. I couldn't really afford to only do _____ work, so I decided to _____ my resignation.

Claire: Wow! So who do you work for now?

Jane: I work for myself really. I decided to _____ and now I have my own clients and I've got a little office in my house.

Claire: Good for you. Do you like working from home?

Jane: Yes, it's nice. And the best thing is that I'm earning the same money for fewer hours, which means I can do some _____ work once a week for Paw Friends. Do you remember – it's the animal charity I told you about? So that makes me really happy.

Claire: That's brilliant. I'm really pleased for you. I'm thinking of _____ my job soon too.

Jane: Why?

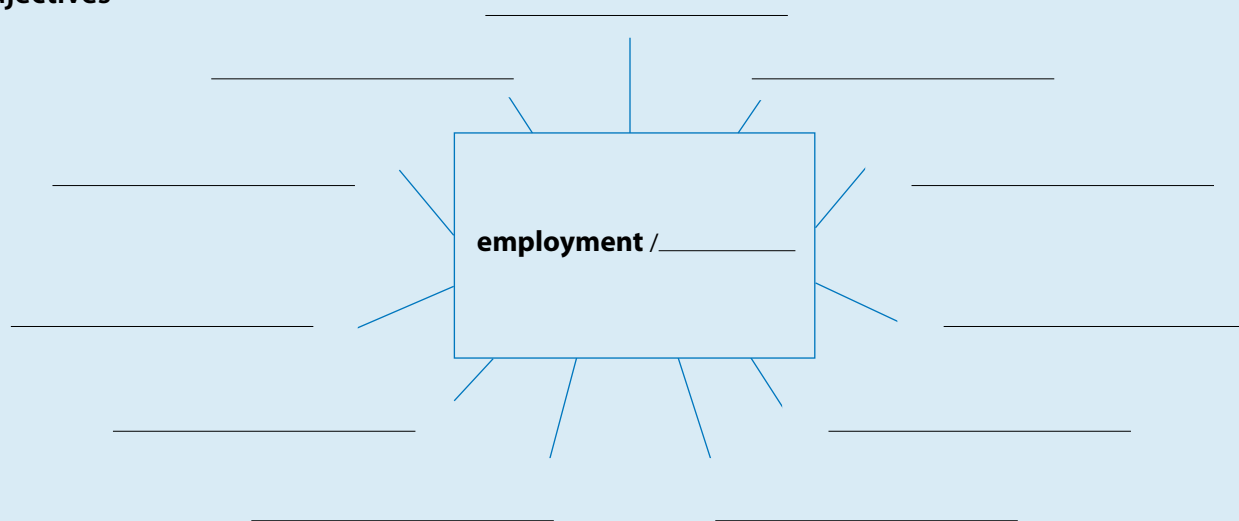
Claire: Well, I want a job with more responsibility and challenge, to be honest. In fact, I'd really like a _____ at the university.

Jane: Great! You should go for it!

Worksheet 2

Building vocabulary with the dictionary

1 Adjectives



2 Verbs

employment/
work

3

freelance (*adj., verb /adv.*)

noun: _____

4

voluntary (*adj.*)

*I work on a **voluntary** _____.*

noun: _____

6 Verbs

+

5 Nouns

job

7

resign (*verb*)

_____ *noun:* _____
