

Work–life balance

Listen to a radio interview about maintaining a good work–life balance to practise and improve your listening skills.

Before listening

Do the preparation task first. Then listen to the audio and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. work–life balance
2. overtime
3. a best-selling book
4. an advantage
5. a concept
6. to fade
7. freedom
8. mobility

Definition

- a. a successful book
- b. giving the right amount of time to work and to the rest of your life
- c. an idea
- d. working more than your normal work hours
- e. the ability to work from different places
- f. a positive thing about something
- g. to become less clear or visible
- h. being free to do what you want

Tasks**Task 1**

Circle the best answer.

1. How popular is Chris Svensson's book?
 - a. Not very popular
 - b. Very popular
 - c. It's new. People don't know it yet.

2. What is the work–life balance like in traditional workplaces?
 - a. Work lives and private lives are clearly divided.
 - b. People work too much overtime and so they have no private life.
 - c. People are free to manage the balance themselves.

3. How often do people do overtime?
 - a. Often
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. They don't.

4. In traditional workplaces, do people work at weekends or when on holiday?
 - a. Yes, it's normal.
 - b. No, never.
 - c. Usually, they don't.

5. How has technology helped people work with more flexibility?
 - a. They can send and receive emails from their phones from home.
 - b. Their working hours can be easily tracked.
 - c. Robots can do their work for them.

6. Traditional divisions between work and life are fading. What does this mean for employees?
 - a. Everyone has to do overtime, all the time.
 - b. People have to work while they're on holiday.
 - c. They can be flexible to work when and where it suits them.

Task 2

Write the ideas in the correct group.

Possible to work weekends or while on holiday	Flexible working hours	Hobbies and sports only in the evening or at weekends
Fixed working hours	Hobbies and sports can be done at other times, also during the day	No working at weekends or on holiday

Traditional workplaces	Modern workplaces

Discussion

How do you manage your work–life balance?

Transcript

Presenter: Good morning, everyone. On today's show, we've got Chris Svensson with us, the author of *No more nine to five*, the new best-selling book about work–life balance in the current working world. Good morning, Chris. Thanks for coming.

Chris: Thanks for having me, Anna.

Presenter: So, Chris, tell us about your book and how the concept of a work–life balance has been changing?

Chris: Well, in the more traditional workplaces, people's working lives and their private lives are, or were, clearly divided. People often work from nine in the morning until five or six in the evening. People sometimes stay late in the office and work in the evenings. This is called working overtime.

Presenter: OK, and what else?

Chris: Well, in these environments it isn't common for people to work at the weekend or while they're on holiday. They can clearly separate their working lives and their private lives. And the evenings, weekends and holidays are free to focus on non-work areas of life, such as hobbies, interests, sports, spending time with the family and friends, and so on. It's important and healthy not to spend all your time just working, right?

Presenter: Right! So what has changed? How are things different now?

Chris: Well, for a start, most people can now access their work emails from their mobile phones. So they are more likely to quickly reply to an important mail in the evening or at the weekend. The same goes for laptops. It's easier to access your work in the evenings from home or even from your hotel when you're on holiday.

Presenter: That doesn't sound like much of a work–life balance. It sounds like all work.

Chris: Exactly, but this new mobility brings a lot of advantages with it. More people are now able to work flexibly, so if they need to leave the office early one afternoon to be with their family, they can catch up on work that evening from home or somewhere else.

Presenter: That sounds good. So, what you're saying is that although traditional divisions between work and life are fading, many employees now have more freedom to do their work from different locations and at different times.

Chris: Yes, that's it.

Answers

Preparation task

1. b
2. d
3. a
4. f
5. c
6. g
7. h
8. e

Task 1

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

Task 2

Traditional workplaces	Modern workplaces
Hobbies and sports only in the evening or at weekends Fixed working hours No working at weekends or on holiday	Possible to work weekends or while on holiday Flexible working hours Hobbies and sports can be done at other times, also during the day