

The interesting most boring man in the world

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Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the words (a–f) to make collocations (1–6).

Vocabulary	Definition
1. a boring	a. a phone call
2. a local	b. a letter
3. to make	c. record
4. a stamp	d. job
5. a world	e. newspaper
6. to write	f. collection

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People often said that Thierry Boyle was the most boring man in the world. Thierry didn't know why people thought he was so boring. Thierry thought he was quite interesting. After all, he collected stamps. What could be more interesting than stamps? It was true that he didn't have any other hobbies or interests, but that didn't matter for Thierry. He had his job, after all. He had a very interesting job. At least, Thierry thought it was interesting. Everybody else said that his job was boring. But he was an accountant! Why do people think that accountants are boring? thought Thierry. Thierry thought his job was fascinating. Every day, he went to his office, switched on his computer and spent seven and a half hours looking at spreadsheets and moving numbers around on them. What could be more interesting than that?

But Thierry was unhappy. He was unhappy because people thought he was boring. He didn't want to be boring. He wanted people to think that he was a very interesting person. He tried to talk to people about his stamp collection. But every time he talked about his stamp collection he saw that people were bored. Because people were bored when he talked about his stamp collection, he talked about his job instead. He thought people would be very interested when he talked about his job, but, no, people thought his job was even more boring than his stamp collection. Sometimes, people even went to sleep when he talked to them.

Thierry thought about how to make himself more interesting. He decided that he needed to be famous for something. He thought about his stamp collection and decided that perhaps his stamp collection could make him famous. Perhaps he had the biggest stamp collection in the world or perhaps he had a very valuable stamp. Yes, this was it, he decided.

He wrote a letter to a local newspaper and asked them if they wanted to come and write an article about a local man with the biggest stamp collection in the world. The local newspaper wrote a letter back to Thierry telling him that actually the Queen of England had the biggest stamp collection in the world. Thierry was very sad to learn this, but wrote back to the newspaper, telling them that he thought he had the most valuable stamp in the world. The newspaper wrote back to him, telling him that the most valuable stamp in the world cost 2,240,000 dollars, and asking him if he was sure that he had it. Thierry wasn't sure that he had it. In fact, he was sure that he didn't have it. Perhaps his whole collection was very valuable though ...

'Is it worth 10 million dollars?' asked the man from the newspaper on the telephone when Thierry called him.

'Erm, no, I don't think so ...'

'Forget it then,' said the man from the newspaper.

Thierry thought about other things to make himself famous. Perhaps he could be the best accountant in the world! Yes, this was it, he decided. He told a friend that he was the best accountant in the world.

'How do you know?' asked his friend.

'Well,' said Thierry, 'I have a good job, I like it ... it's very interesting ... spreadsheets ... numbers ... taxes ... finance ...' He saw his friend going to sleep. 'Hmmm,' he thought. 'Perhaps I'm not the best or the most interesting accountant in the world.'

'Listen, Thierry,' said his friend when he woke up again. 'Perhaps you don't have the biggest or the most valuable stamp collection in the world. Perhaps you aren't the best or the most interesting accountant in the world. But there is one thing – Thierry, you are probably the most boring man in the world.'

Yes! Of course! This was it. Thierry could be famous because he was the most boring man in the world. Now he saw that his friends were right. He phoned the newspaper again.

'Hello!' he said. 'Would you like to do an interview with the most boring man in the world?'

'The most boring man in the world?' said the man from the newspaper. 'Now that's interesting!'

Next week there was a big article in the newspaper. 'The Most Boring Man in the World!' There was a picture of Thierry in his office. There was a picture of Thierry with his stamp collection. There was an interview with Thierry and interviews with his friends. His friends said they went to sleep when Thierry talked about his job or his stamp collection.

The next day the BBC and CNN called Thierry. They wanted stories about the most boring man in the world. 'The most boring man in the world!' they said. 'That's so interesting!'

And so, finally, Thierry Boyle became the official Most Boring Man in the World. You won't find his name in the *Guinness World Records* book, because they said that it was impossible to decide exactly how boring somebody is, but it was no problem for Thierry. Now he was famous. Now he was so boring that he was interesting.

Chris Rose

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. Thierry Boyle thinks he is the most boring man in the world.	True	False
2. Thierry has a stamp collection.	True	False
3. Thierry has lots of hobbies.	True	False
4. Thierry thinks stamps are boring.	True	False
5. Thierry loves his job.	True	False
6. Thierry is an accountant.	True	False
7. Other people think accountants are boring.	True	False
8. Thierry wants to be famous.	True	False
9. Thierry has the biggest stamp collection in the world.	True	False
10. Thierry doesn't have the most valuable stamp in the world.	True	False

Task 2

Complete the sentences using the comparative or superlative form of the adjective in brackets.

1. The stamp in the world is worth more than two million dollars. (valuable)
2. The next day there was an even article about Thierry in the local newspaper. (big)
3. Thierry thought nothing was than stamps. (interesting)
4. Thierry was the accountant in his company. (good)
5. He wanted to be the accountant in the world. (famous)
6. Thierry was than the other accountant he worked with. (boring)
7. The man from the newspaper thought Thierry's story was than the other news that day. (interesting)
8. Thierry was the man in the world. (boring)

Discussion

Did you like the story?

Answers

Preparation task

1. d
2. e
3. a
4. f
5. c
6. b

Task 1

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True
6. True
7. True
8. True
9. False
10. True

Task 2

1. most valuable
2. bigger
3. more interesting
4. best
5. most famous
6. more boring
7. more interesting
8. most boring