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Average worker wastes 2 hours a day

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THE ARTICLE

Average worker wastes 2 hours a day

BNE: Time is money and according to a new survey*, workers waste a lot of working time. A questionnaire completed by 10,000 employees reports an average of 2.09 hours per day is idled away in businesses. This is twice as much as company bosses thought. It means companies lose an amazing \$759 billion in the USA. However, bosses are not angered by these figures. Many executives think this idle time is beneficial to a company. Salary.com's Bill Coleman called it "creative waste".

The top time-wasting activity was using the Internet for personal use – 44.7% of workers confessed to this. Other big time-wasters were chatting with co-workers (23.4%), personal business (6.8%) and staring into space (3.9%). The top time-wasting excuse was not having enough work to do (33.2%). Workers also complained about feeling underpaid (23.4%) and being distracted by co-workers (14.7%). The survey also found that men and women wasted equal amounts of time.

*<http://www.salary.com/>

WARM-UPS

1. MY TIME: In pairs / groups, talk to each other about how much time you spend each day doing different things. What takes up most of your time at home? What takes up most of your time at work or school? Do you waste a lot of time during each day? Talk about your time management skills.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Time / time is money / wasting time / surfing the Internet / chatting / daydreaming / not having enough work to do / being underpaid

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. WASTE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "waste". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

4. SPACING OUT: In pairs / groups, talk about how often you space out – daydream or stare into space. Is your mind blank or active? Describe what happens in each of these situations when you space out:

- At your desk at work / school
- In a meeting
- On the bus or train
- Watching TV at home
- Driving a car
- Being with family or friends
- Alone with your partner
- Other

5. WASTING TIME: According to a Salary.com survey, these are the nine biggest ways in which workers waste time. Do you waste time in these ways? How could the following examples of time wasting be "creative"?

	GUILTY?	CREATIVE?
1 Surfing Internet (personal use)		
2 Socializing with co-workers		
3 Doing personal business		
4 Spacing out (daydreaming)		
5 Running errands away from the office		
6 Making personal phone calls		
7 Applying for other jobs		
8 Planning personal events		
9 Arriving late / Leaving early		

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. The average worker wastes 25% of his/her working time. | T / F |
| b. Companies did a secret check on their workers. | T / F |
| c. Company bosses thought workers wasted an hour a day. | T / F |
| d. Many executives think time wasting is beneficial to a company. | T / F |
| e. Drinking tea and coffee is the biggest time waster. | T / F |
| f. Almost 40 % of employees waste time by daydreaming. | T / F |
| g. Many employees complain that they do not have enough work to do. | T / F |
| h. Women waste much more time than men. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| a. completed | extraordinary |
| b. idled away | daydreaming |
| c. amazing | upset |
| d. angered | private |
| e. beneficial | discovered |
| f. personal | filled in |
| g. confessed | sidetracked |
| h. staring into space | admitted |
| i. distracted | wasted |
| j. found | favorable |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. according | completed by 10,000 employees |
| b. a questionnaire | work to do |
| c. idled | as company bosses thought |
| d. twice as much | underpaid |
| e. this idle time is | use |
| f. for personal | away |
| g. workers confessed | amounts of time |
| h. not having enough | to a new survey |
| i. feeling | beneficial to a company |
| j. equal | to this |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

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twice
according
beneficial
average
creative
angered
completed
away

The top time-wasting _____ was using the Internet for personal _____ – 44.7% of workers _____ to this. Other big time wasters were chatting with co-workers (23.4%), personal business (6.8%) and _____ into space (3.9%). The top time-wasting _____ was not having enough work to do (33.2%). Workers also complained about _____ underpaid (23.4%) and being _____ by co-workers (14.7%). The survey also found that men and women wasted _____ amounts of time.

distracted
use
excuse
confessed
equal
activity
feeling
staring

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'creative' and 'waste'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT TIME SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about time and how valuable it is.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| • according | • top |
| • completed | • big |
| • twice | • space |
| • amazing | • complained |
| • angered | • distracted |
| • creative | • equal |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you think when you read this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Did the article describe your working habits?
- d. Do you waste a lot of time?
- e. How important is time?
- f. Are you a productive worker / student?
- g. Do you think it's OK to waste time?
- h. Do you also waste 25 per cent of your working / studying day?
- i. Do you think waste can be creative?
- j. Do you think these kinds of surveys are accurate?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. What kind of worker are you?
- d. Do you waste time surfing the Internet?
- e. Do you use company / school time on personal business?
- f. Do you stare into space or daydream a lot?
- g. What do you do when there isn't enough work to do?
- h. What complaints do you have about your company?
- i. Who are the biggest time wasters, men or women?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

GET STUDYING (ENGLISH):

In pairs / groups, think of ways how you can make better use of your time to study English more.

SITUATION	HOW TO USE TIME TO STUDY ENGLISH MORE
Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Going to work / school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Watching TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Walking around town	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Surfing the Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Bedtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••

After you have finished, change partners and tell each other about your ideas. Give each other advice on how to make your ideas better.

Return to your original partner and use the advice you got to make your ideas better.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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The top time-wasting activity was using the Internet for _____ ____ - 44.7% of workers confessed to this. Other big _____ _____ were chatting with co-workers (23.4%), personal business (6.8%) and staring into space (3.9%). The top time-wasting _____ was not having enough work to do (33.2%). Workers also complained about feeling _____ (23.4%) and being distracted by co-workers (14.7%). The survey also found that men and women wasted _____ _____ of time.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on worker productivity. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. CREATIVE WASTE: Look again at the nine ways in which employees waste time (on p.3). Write some advice to company bosses about how the wasted time could be reduced and working time increased. Show and explain your advice to your classmates in your next lesson. Assess them and provide feedback.

4. ONE DAY: Record how you spend your day. Try to note down how much time you spend doing various activities throughout the course of one day. Report your findings to your classmates in your next lesson. Were there any big surprises (shocks)? Could you use your time better / more productively?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. F c. T d. T e. F f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. completed	filled in
b. idled away	wasted
c. amazing	extraordinary
d. angered	upset
e. beneficial	favorable
f. personal	private
g. confessed	admitted
h. staring into space	daydreaming
i. distracted	sidetracked
j. found	discovered

PHRASE MATCH:

a. according	to a new survey
b. a questionnaire	completed by 10,000 employees
c. idled	away
d. twice as much	as company bosses thought
e. this idle time is	beneficial to a company
f. for personal	use
g. workers confessed	to this
h. not having enough	work to do
i. feeling	underpaid
j. equal	amounts of time

GAP FILL:

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The top time-wasting **activity** was using the Internet for personal **use** – 44.7% of workers **confessed** to this. Other big time wasters were chatting with co-workers (23.4%), personal business (6.8%) and **staring** into space (3.9%). The top time-wasting **excuse** was not having enough work to do (33.2%). Workers also complained about **feeling** underpaid (23.4%) and being **distracted** by co-workers (14.7%). The survey also found that men and women wasted **equal** amounts of time.