Talking about leisure and hobbies at the workplace

Most of us spend so much time working as we barely have time for our families and personal lives. Working for long hours has negative effects on our physical and mental health. For that, we must have hobbies and use leisure time for ourselves, because life needs balance. Work and leisure are both important. In this lesson students will understand the meaning of leisure and hobbies and the different forms of leisure activities. They will also learn how to describe their hobbies and leisure activities. Finally, they will know the importance of balancing between leisure and work.



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# The meaning of leisure and hobbies

## What is leisure?

**Leisure** is the [time](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time) spent away from [work](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment), studying, or housework. It is spent on doing leisure activities which can be hobbies, like: gardening, painting, knitting, collecting, fishing, etc. It can also be used to do other leisure activities for relaxation, like: sleeping, watching TV, lounging, etc.) Leisure activities may change according to what is going on in our life. For example, if someone is experiencing a lot of stress, their most important leisure need will be to relax. If they

have a lot of extra energy, their leisure time may be active.

## What is a Hobby?

**A hobby** is a regular activity that a person does for enjoyment, typically during one's leisure time. So, a hobby can be part of our leisure time, as we have mentioned above. Hobbies include [collecting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collecting) themed items and objects, engaging in creative and artistic pursuits, playing [sports](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sport), etc. A person’s hobby is usually connected to what they enjoy. For example, a person who likes to create things with their hands may want to knit or do woodwork.

Hobbies tend to follow trends in society, for example: [*collecting*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stamp_collecting) *stamps* was popular during the 19th and 20th centuries as postal systems were the main means of communication, while [*video*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_games)[*games*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_games) are more popular nowadays following technological advances.

# Forms of leisure activities

Leisure activities are divided into three main forms: (look at the figure below)

* **Serious Leisure Activities**: are those undertaken by people in their spare (free) time for a long term. These activities usually entail elements of perseverance, passion, and commitment, and people can eventually turn them into a career if they wish. They usually require the cultivation of special skills, knowledge, and experience, such as musical skill. There are four groups of people who may be involved in these activities; they are:
  + **Amateurs:** who participate in serious leisure activities across many different fields, including: arts, sciences, sports, and entertainment. Amateurs may have relationships with professionals – who undertake the same activities in public for commercial reasons – and also with the public, when pursuing their leisure activities.
  + **Hobbyists:** who do serious leisure activities as a hobby in their spare time. They usually do not have the relationships with professionals like amateurs. They are classified into five categories: *collectors* (who collect stamps, coins, shells, etc.); *makers and tinkers* (such as: inventors and craftsman); *participants in activities* (such as: fishing, bird watching, singing in the choir.); *sports/games players*; and *liberal arts Enthusiasts* (such as: writers, historians, artists, musicians, dancers, etc.)
  + **Volunteers:** who offer help for the benefit of others, usually with no pay. They participate in helping activities (such as: healthcare, religious, social, environmental activities, etc.)
  + **Devotee Work:** People engaged in devotee work are usually inspired to pursue a specific occupation in their leisure time, motivated by a sense of achievement through the activity that offers a pathway towards self-enhancement and self-growth. Examples of these people include: people involved in small businesses during their leisure time, or skilled trades and even the liberal and consulting professions.
* **Casual Leisure Activities:** are those that people engage with to occupy their spare time which usually require no specific skills or training, and which are usually short term and intrinsically pleasurable. They include: *play activities*; *relaxation activities* (napping, lounging, walking); *passive entertainment* (listening to music, reading books, watching a television series); *active entertainment* (such as games); *social conversations*; *sensory stimulation activities* (eating and drinking); *pleasurable aerobic activities* (walking, running, cycling, swimming, etc); and *casual volunteering* in a more unskilled manner.
* **Project-Based Leisure Activities:** these activities may require significant planning, effort, skill, and knowledge, and as such can be differentiated from casual leisure. They are also differentiated from serious leisure activities by the fact that these activities are not in themselves undertaken with the same degree of long-term interest. They may include similar activities to those within the serious leisure categories, such as making and tinkering, volunteering, and being involved in the arts.

**Note:** - The activities that are done inside a house or a building are called **‘indoor activities’** such as: watching TV, palying video games, cooking, etc., and the activities that are done outside a building, most commonly in natural settings, are called **‘outdoor activities’** such as: hiking, fishing, cycling, running, sailing, skiing, etc.

- Some activities can be done **individually**, such as: running, playing piano, painting pictures, etc., and some others must be performed in **groups or teams**, such as: football, volleyball, tennis, aerobics classes, etc.

**Casual Leisure Activities**

**Leisure Activities**

* Healthcare
* Religious
* Social
* Environmental

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| **Serious Leisure Activities** | |
| **Amateurs**   * Art * Science * Sport * Entertainment | **Hobbyists**   * Collecting * Making/Tinkerin * Activity participat * Sports and Games * Liberal Arts Purs |
| **Volunteers** | **Devotee Work** |

* Liberal Professions
* Consulting Professions
* Some Skilled Trades
* Some Small Businesses
  + Play
  + Relaxation

**Project-based Leisure Activities**

* + Passive/Active Entertainment
  + Social Conversation
  + Sensory Stimulation
  + Pleasurable Aerobic Activities
  + Casual Volunteering
    - Making/Tinkering
    - Liberal Arts
    - Activity Participation
    - Volunteering
    - Arts Projects
    - Occasional Projects

# Describing hobbies and leisure activities

To describe your hobbies and leisure activities that you do in your free time, you can use many phrases and vocabulary words.

## Describing what you like to do

These are some phrases and expressions that we can use:

In my free time I like to…/ I usually spend my free time in…

When I have some spare time I like to…/ When I get the time I like to…

**Examples:**

* + In my free time I like to read books.
  + I usually spend my free time in gardening.
  + When I have some spare time I like to go out with my friends
  + When I get the time I like to go running.

## Describing what you enjoy to do or interested in

We can use the following expressions:

I (really) enjoy… / I am (really/super) into… / I am keen on…

Some leisure activities that I have enjoyed in the past are… / I am interested in…

**Examples:**

* + I really enjoy playing video games.
  + I am really into lifting weights. / I am super into jogging.
  + Ali is keen on volleyball. He plays for the school team.
  + Some leisure activities that I have enjoyed in the past are: drawing, watching TV, and playing football.
  + Sami is very interested in collecting coins. He just loves knowing about their history.

## Describing sports activities & games

We can use the verbs: ‘**play, do, go**’ to describe the types of sport exercises that we usually do in our free time.

* We use ‘**play**’ for team sports and games; involving two or more teams, where there is a competition.

**Examples:**

* Let’s play football.
* I’m going to play a 60-minute baseball match this Friday. Could you please come and watch me.
* I like to play cards with my friends.
* We use ‘**do**’ for individual sports; involving just one person (martial arts and specific exercises).

**Examples:**

* + I like to do boxing.
  + I like to do meditation near running water.
  + What do you like to do? I like to do gymnastics.
  + I like to do push-ups every morning.
* We use ‘**go**’ for sports that involve moving from one place to another.

**Examples:**

* + I like to go swimming.
  + I like to go running in my spare time.
  + I like to go hiking in the mountain on weekends.

**Note:** we cannot use the verb ‘**practice**’ in place of those three verbs above, so we cannot say, for example: I like practice football or judo We use this verb when we work at trying to improve the

way we do things. **Example:** I’m studying the piano and I practice every day.

# Leisure and work (Work-life balance)

Most of people spend so much time working as they barely have time for their families and personal lives. Working for long hours has negative effects on the physical and mental health of workers. It can cause chronic aches and pains, heart troubles, and hypertension, as well as stress, depression, exhaustion, and burnout.

Many people don’t have hobbies and they don’t use leisure time for themselves. They feel that they should be doing something else with their free time. But life needs balance. Work and leisure are both important.

When someone has a healthy work-life balance, they’re able to allocate their time, so they don’t overwork and can focus on other aspects of life; like doing hobbies and leisure activities such as: collecting and making things, playing sports and games, participating in different serious or casual leisure activities, etc.).

Many studies have found that hobbies and other leisure activities have a positive impact on work. These activities aren’t just a means to have fun and pleasure in our free time; they also help to reduce stress and depression, and then enhance our mental health. Having hobbies can also boost social life and communication and increase creativity, knowledge, and experience which influence and help us perform better at work.

**Language review:**

# Adverbs and expressions of frequency

* Adverbs and expressions of frequency describe how often an action happens. There are six main adverbs of frequency, which are: **always (100%), usually (90%), often (70%), sometimes (50%), rarely (10%),** and **never (0%).** (We just use approximate percentages to show how often the action happens for each adverb, the only ones that are absolute are *always* and *never*). These adverbs go before the main verb and after the verb ‘to be’ (I **usually** wake up at 7 am. / He’s **always** late). We can also place some of them at the beginning of a sentence. (**Sometimes** she does homework with her friends. / **Usually** he wakes up early). When we use adverbs of frequency in the negative or question forms, we place them before the main verb. (Do you **usually** get up so late? / They don't **often** go to the cinema). If there is a modal verb or an auxiliary verb, then the adverb of frequency goes between the modal or auxiliary verb and the main verb. (We should **never** be rude to customers / He has **often** visited France).
* Expressions of frequency (**every “day/week…”, twice “a month/ a year…”, once “a month/ in a while**

**…”, all the time, from time to time, not very often…etc.**) are placed either at the beginning or at the end of the sentence, but usually at the end. (We go to the cinema **once a week.** / I visit my grandmother **twice a month / Once in a while** my sister calls me, *or* My sister calls me **once in a while**…etc.)

# Modals: possibility/ability/request (can, could, ‘be’ able to)

We use **can** + *infinitive* to say that something is possible, or somebody has the ability to do something. (We **can see** the lake from our hotel. / I **can come** and see you tomorrow if you like). The negative form is: **can’t** (I’m afraid I **can’t come** to the party on Friday). We can also say that somebody **is able to** do something; (We **are able to see** the lake from our hotel). The past form is: **could** (We had a lovely room in the hotel. We **could see** the lake). We also use could to say that somebody had the ability to do something. (We were totally free; we **could do** what we wanted). But to say that somebody succeeded in doing something in a specific situation, we normally use **was/were able to** (The fire spread quickly, but everybody **was able to escape**. (not ~~could escape~~). The negative form is: **couldn’**t, and it is possible in all situations. (I looked for Mahdi everywhere, but I **couldn’t find** him). We use **can** or **could** to ask people to do things ‘request’ (**Can/Could** you wait a moment, please?), or asking for things (**Can** I **have** these postcards, please? / **Could** we **have** the menu, please?), or asking to do things (Hello, **can** I **speak** to Steve, please? / **Could** I **use** your phone charger?’).