

SESSION 1: WHAT SHOULD WORK BE LIKE?

Age range: 11-18 years

Time: 1 hour

Outline Learners will draw on their knowledge of work, from their personal work experience and the work experiences of family and friends, to explore what ‘decent work’ means to them. What makes work good or decent is subjective and learners will think critically about the different factors which contribute to what makes work decent including pay, terms of employment, health, safety and well-being, work-life balance and the work itself. Learners will discuss their ideas and opinions with others and develop their opinions about which of these factors are most important to them.	
Learning objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop understanding of some of the factors which affect whether work is good or decent. To discuss opinions and ideas effectively in groups. 	Learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners will consider and develop their own ideas about the world of work, including what they think about the different factors which contribute to decent work. Learners will discuss their ideas and reflect on other people’s opinions about what makes work decent.
Key questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What should work be like? What are the most important factors which contribute to ‘decent work’ and why? How are your views about decent work different from other people? 	Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What makes work decent? slideshow (slides 1 to 7)</i> Resource sheets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Dimensions of decent work</i> <i>Factors of decent work – Version A</i> <i>Factors of decent work – Version B</i>
Curriculum links	
Wales Careers and World of Work Framework Key Stage 3 and 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider their own and other people’s ideas about learning, careers and the world of work to inform opinions and decisions Communicate clearly in English or Welsh, as appropriate, about careers and the world of work Post 16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore their own and other people’s assumptions and aspirations and make best use of this in their decision-making Communicate confidently and coherently, in English or Welsh, as appropriate, about careers and the world of work in a wide range of contexts 	

Activity 1.1 (10 mins)

What are our needs and wants?

- Ask learners what we mean by the word 'work'? Learners should think of their own experiences of work and the experiences of people they know. Learners can share their answers in pairs or small groups. Some learners may find it difficult to imagine what work is like. Encourage them to think of people they have some contact with in their day to day lives who are working in different ways such as receptionists, teachers, health professionals, shop assistants, stay at home parents, bloggers and website owners. Show slides (three to seven) with pictures of people working to support learners' ideas.
- Ask learners to imagine themselves working. Ask them to think about what the work is like, the conditions and what it is like working there.
- Follow this up by asking learners what they think of when they imagine 'decent work'. In a perfect world what would good or decent work be like?

Activity 1.2 (30 mins)

What makes work decent?

- Learners will now consider the different areas of what makes work decent including: pay; health, safety and well being; the work itself; work-life balance and the terms of employment.
- There are two possible options for carrying out the next step of the activity:
 - Organise learners into pairs or small groups and give each pair or group a copy of *Dimensions of decent work*. Ask learners to discuss in their pair or group what they think about each aspect.
 - Write each set of questions from *Dimensions of decent work* on a separate piece of flipchart paper. Organise learners into pairs or small groups and ask learners to discuss what they think about each aspect. Ask learners to write their ideas on sticky notes and place these on the relevant pieces of flip chart paper.
- Organise learners into five equal groups and ask each group to discuss one of the aspects of the *Dimensions of decent work* in more detail, reflecting on some of the ideas shared by other members of the class. Invite each group to present a summary of their discussion to the rest of the class.
- Finally, discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - *What is the most important aspect of decent work?*
 - *What is least important?*
 - *Did everyone agree?*
 - *Why were there different opinions? Has anyone's opinion changed? Why?*

Activity 1.3 (20 mins)*Prioritising what makes work decent*

- Show learners the *Factors for decent work* sheet. Use either Version A or Version B. Version A has fewer factors which could be used with younger learners. For a more in-depth discussion with older learners use Version B. Learners discuss in pairs which are the most important factors. Are there any other factors that learners would like to add to the list?
- Tell learners that they each have 5 votes and give each learner 5 sticky dots. Ask learners to place their dots next to the factors that are most important to them. Do this as a class on an enlarged A3 copy of the *Factors for decent work* sheet. Learners can place as many dots next to each factor as they wish depending on how important it is to them.
- Finish by discussing the following questions:

Which factors did the class think were most important for decent work?

Did any factor have no or very few votes? Which factor was it? Is it less important? Why do you think this?

What do you think work might be like in the future? Will it change? Why do you think this?

Differentiation

Make it easier: Use Factors of decent work - Version A.

Make it harder: Use Factors of decent work – Version B or ask learners to devise their own factors for decent work.

Further ideas

- Learners could research what other classes or year groups in the school think about what work should be like and what makes work decent.
- Ask learners to write interview questions and then interview family and friends about what decent work means to them. Share learners' research as a whole class.
- Learners could look at job adverts and consider how employers advertise vacancies.
Which factors do they highlight as being important to try to attract potential employees? Does the information provided include the factors which learners identified as being most important to them?
- Ask learners to write a 'day in the life of' themselves in the future of a typical work day. Include what the work is like, how they feel about the work, what has happened which had led them to this role, what are their hopes and wishes for the future.
- Further develop learners' understanding of work, including unpaid work by breaking down the individual tasks of different roles such as a nurse, stay at home parent, self employed person, someone caring for a relative, a cleaner or a bank manager. This could be through research or by interviewing or shadowing someone working.

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Dimensions of decent work**Pay**

- Is it about being paid fairly?
- Is it about being paid enough money to meet your basic needs?
- Is it about being paid enough money to meet your basic needs, enjoy your hobbies and go on holiday?
- Is all work paid? Should it be? Why?

Health, safety and well-being

- Who is responsible for your health, safety and well-being?
- What is most important about health, safety and well-being? Physical health and well-being or mental health and well-being?

The work

- What is important here? Is it about having control over the tasks you do, good relationships with colleagues or the ability to be involved with decisions being made?
- Is it important that you develop within the organisation? Is it important that you learn new skills and improve on the skills you have?

Work-life balance

- Is it important that you have time for hobbies and doing what you enjoy during your leisure time?

Terms of employment

- What is important to you? Is it job security, pensions, paid holidays or sick leave?

Factors of decent work**Pay**

1. An hourly rate or salary that is at least enough to cover basic needs such as food, housing and the things that most people take for granted without getting into debt
2. Access to financial benefits beyond pay such as help with childcare and signposting to additional support

Terms of employment

3. Regular and predictable working hours
4. A job in which there is no discrimination because of who I am and where I am able to raise my voice within the workplace

The work itself

5. Supportive colleagues
6. Work that provides me with a sense of purpose and meaning

Health and safety

7. A safe working environment free from physical and mental risk or harm
8. Appropriate support to help employees return to work following absence as a result of injury or ill-health

Work-life balance

9. Work that does not involve excessive working hours and where I have enough time to do all the tasks required of me
10. Flexibility in choosing my working hours

Factors of decent work**Pay**

1. An hourly rate or salary that is at least enough to cover basic needs such as food, housing and the things that most people take for granted without getting into debt
2. Being paid fairly compared to other similar jobs
3. Being paid fairly compared to senior staff
4. Predictable take-home pay
5. Access to financial benefits beyond pay such as help with childcare and signposting to additional support such as tax credits

Terms of employment

6. Paid holidays and paid sick leave
7. Job security
8. Regular and predictable working hours
9. Available and effective representation to raise my voice within the workplace
10. Opportunities for promotion and career progression
11. Access to suitable and convenient training opportunities
12. A job in which there is no discrimination because of who I am

The work itself

13. Ability to develop and use skills in current role
14. A supportive line manager
15. Supportive colleagues
16. Control and flexibility over how I deliver my work
17. Work that I believe is socially worthwhile
18. Work that provides me with a sense of purpose and meaning
19. Varied work

Health and safety

20. A safe working environment free from physical and mental risk or harm
21. Appropriate support to help employees return to work following absence due to injury or ill-health

Work-life balance

22. Enough time to do all the tasks required of me
23. Work that does not involve excessive working hours
24. Flexibility in choosing my working hours
25. A job that is easy to get to from where I live
26. An employer who does not expect me to arrive before or leave after my allocated hours or undertake unpaid overtime