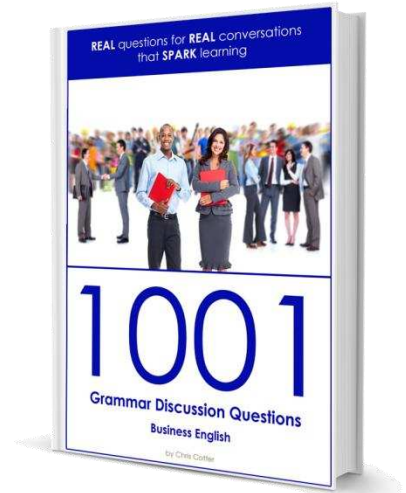
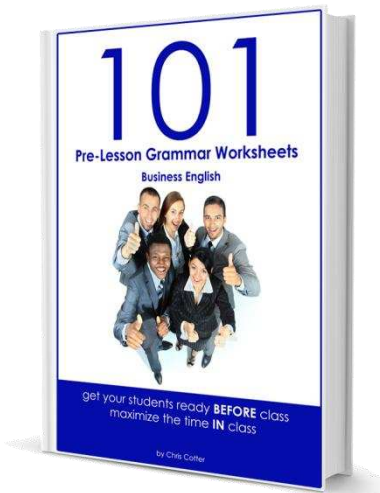
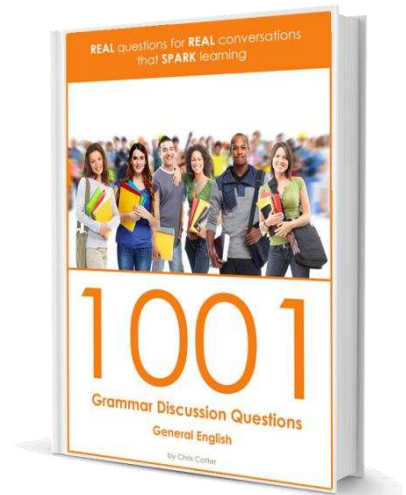
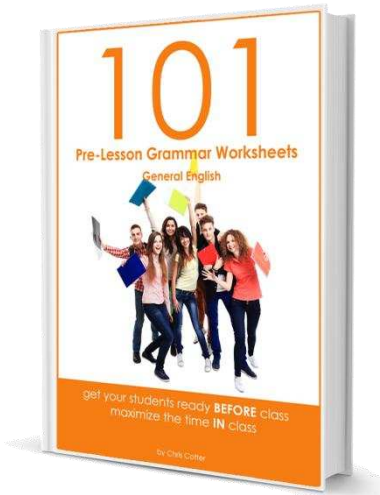
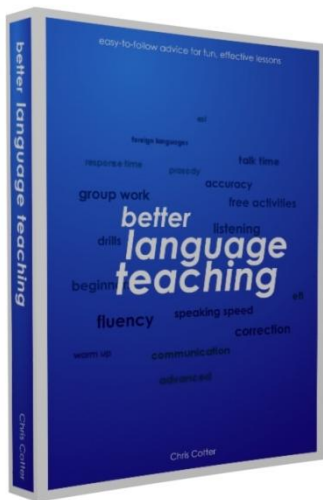


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the ARTICLE (for teachers)

## Vacations and Mini-Retirements

Few would argue that workers need vacations to best maintain productivity and recuperate after the stresses and pressures of the office. Some countries have fully embraced this philosophy. Take France as an example, whose work week is only thirty-five hours in order to enhance the quality of life there. And the Germans almost believe that their one month vacations are a sacred right.

Other countries have opposite practices, though. Japanese employees use only a small fraction of their allotted vacation time, for fear of being labeled lazy and not full contributors to the team. In the US, work habits continue to change. Fewer employees take their full share of entitled days off, the average of which is nine days per year. The economy, as it worsens, warrants part of the blame for the shift. Many employees fear layoffs as companies post weaker profits, and so they want to be viewed as hard workers who are always at their posts.

But a growing movement advocates mini-retirements. Rather than short vacations each year, or no vacation whatsoever, the mini-retirement can be viewed as an extended vacation. However, an important point of the mini-retirement comes down to enjoying an active youth instead of working until old age and then taking a "macro" retirement. In addition, several months away from work allows the pursuit of personal goals and aspirations, as well as full immersion in a foreign country and culture (assuming you want to travel abroad). And with remote technology, Internet cafes, and free Wi-Fi services, it's even possible to keep abreast of developments at the office while away.

Life should be more than work, money, and savings. Hopefully more offices around the world will not only encourage vacation, but take up the mini-retirement concept, too.

Teacher's Notes:

\* Underlined words in red typeface are the recommended vocabulary for this lesson.

## WARM-UPS

Select one or all of the following warm-up activities.

**1: Define:** What does "vacation" mean? Can you use it in a sentence? Can you give examples? How does it differ from "retirement?"

**2: Brainstorm:** Brainstorm with a partner(s) words and ideas associated with "vacation" for 2 minutes. Spend another 5 minutes or less discussing the words and ideas together.

**3: Speculate:** Write in the missing word for today's article title: "Vacations and Mini- (                      )." Why did you choose this word for the blank?

**4: Do you agree or disagree? Why?**

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| a. | I work too much!  |
| b. | I look forward to my retirement. (Or I'm already retired and I really enjoy it.)                        |
| c. | Employees shouldn't take long vacations because there could be problems at the office.                  |
| d. | I would be much happier and enjoy life much more if I could take at least one long vacation every year. |
| e. | Vacations don't have much benefit.  |

**5: Discuss:** Talk about the possible retirements with a partner. Which ones would you enjoy? Which ones wouldn't you enjoy? How could some of these retirements be made better?

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| a. | Move to a foreign country and travel a lot.  |
| b. | Open a small restaurant in an area visited by tourists, meet many people, and make many new friends. |
| c. | Regularly volunteer time at a community center and help people.                                      |
| d. | Sit at home, read, and watch TV.   |
| e. | Take up many new hobbies that you couldn't do when you were younger.                                 |

**VOCABULARY**

Select one of the following vocabulary acquisition activities.

**1: Vocabulary match:** Individually or in pairs/groups, match the words in column A (from the article) with the best choice in column B.

a.	recuperate	q.	deserve
b.	embrace	r.	increase
c.	enhance	s.	up to date
d.	entitle	t.	recommend
e.	warrant	u.	allow
f.	advocate	v.	desire
g.	aspiration	w.	recover
h.	immerse	x.	idea
i.	abreast	y.	involve
j.	concept	z.	accept

**2: Fill in the Blanks:** Fill in the blank with the correct word.

	warrants	recuperate	concept	aspirations	entitled
	enhance	immersion	advocates	embraced	abreast
a.	Few would argue that workers need vacations to best ( ) after the stresses of the office.				
b.	Some countries have fully ( ) this philosophy.				
c.	France's work week is only thirty-five hours in order to ( ) the quality of life there.				
d.	Fewer employees take their full share of ( ) days off, the average of which is nine days per year.				
e.	The economy, as it worsens, ( ) part of the blame for the shift.				
f.	A growing movement ( ) mini-retirements.				
g.	Several months away from work allows the pursuit of personal goals and ( ).				
h.	It allows full ( ) in a foreign country and culture (assuming you want to travel abroad).				
i.	With remote technology, it's even possible to keep ( ) of developments at the office while away.				
j.	Hopefully more offices around the world will take up the mini-retirement ( ), too.				

**3: Define:** Define each word, correctly pronounce it, explain the meaning and/or usage, and offer an example sentence to the class.

a.	recuperate	c.	enhance	e.	warrant	g.	aspiration	i.	abreast
b.	embrace	d.	entitle	f.	advocate	h.	immerse	j.	concept

**WORD RECOGNITION**

**1: Word Search:** Find the target words (in bold). Time yourself, and see how many words you can find in three minutes. In five minutes. In ten minutes.

warrants	recuperate	concept	aspirations	entitled
enhance	immersion	advocates	embraced	abreast
T A I E Q W S Z N J A L E E N P B N W T T A O J S C M Q N O E R M E K A I R P H B I U T I C E L Q T S C I R R F P Z I T N A Q P R A R O A A M I J T A O S C E D A R C V C N F H L R C T M M T Q E E D D I T P E I C M S I Z D O M P Z A B S D P I S O E T A R E P U O C E R S B N F S D B V H F L C Y K U A S E A D V O C A T E S E T E E N O O S S R M N W U N H R C S J Q X W D M W T E N H A N C E M U L A F L D N O I S R E M I B V P Z Y Y Y C N B O M N O W				

**2: Target Word Pool:** Find the target words (in bold) with their exact match. Time yourself, and see how many words you can find in three minutes. In five minutes. In ten minutes.

warrants	recuperate	concept	aspirations	entitled
enhance	immersion	advocates	embraced	abreast
conception	cresting	conscripted	immersed	embrace
	recuperate			enchant
adversary		spirited	warren	advocating
	enhancement		titled	perception
immersion		merge	aspiration	warrants
warranty	embraced		recuperated	vested
abreast	aspire	entitlement		advocated
advocates	recuperating	advocacy	embarrassed	
immersing		unenchanting	concept	recoup
	warrant	breasted		immaterial
perspiration	unentitled	conceive	enhance	embracing
enhancing		warranted	breast	entitling
	cooperate	entitled	aspirations	

**pre - or post- COMPREHENSION**

**1: Word Association:** Brainstorm words associated with today's topic for two minutes. Present to the class.

**2: Brainstorm Questions:** Brainstorm questions that you would like to ask about today's topic. Answer the questions without looking at the article.

**3: True or False?:** Guess (before the article) or answer (after the article) whether the sentence is true or false. If false, correct the sentence.

a.	Vacations are important because work can be stressful.	T / F
b.	People in the US now take a lot of vacation time.	T / F
c.	Many employees in the US are worried about the economy, which affects their time off.	T / F
d.	Mini-retirements have become more popular, but they don't give time to pursue personal goals.	T / F
e.	More offices around the world have begun to encourage mini-retirements.	T / F

**4: Questions:** Answer the questions to check comprehension.

a.	According to the article, why are vacations important?
b.	According to the article, which countries have favorable vacation policies?
c.	Why do employees in the US have trouble taking vacation time nowadays?
d.	What is a mini-retirement?
e.	According to the article, what are the pluses of mini-retirements?

**5: Vocabulary:** In pairs/groups, remember how the words were used in today's article.

a.	<b>recuperate</b>	c.	<b>enhance</b>	e.	<b>warrants</b>	g.	<b>aspirations</b>	i.	<b>abreast</b>
b.	<b>embraced</b>	d.	<b>entitled</b>	f.	<b>advocates</b>	h.	<b>immerse</b>	j.	<b>concept</b>

**6: Fragments:** Remember how the fragments were used, and complete the sentence from today's article.

a.	<b>Take France as an example, whose work week is...</b>
b.	<b>And the Germans almost believe that...</b>
c.	<b>Fewer employees take their full share of entitled days off, the average...</b>
d.	<b>Rather than short vacations each year, or no vacation whatsoever, the mini-retirement...</b>
e.	<b>Life should be...</b>

## post-COMPREHENSION

**1: Vocabulary:** Circle any additional unknown words/phrases in the article. In pairs/groups, use your dictionaries to understand the meanings. Present to the class.

**2: Class Questions:** Read through the article once more, and write down any questions that you would like to discuss in pairs/groups or as a class. Discuss.

**3: Summarize:** Work with a partner to summarize the article in your own words.

**4: Discuss:** Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| a. | Did you like this article?  |
| b. | What was your general impression after reading this article?                                    |
| c. | Do you think that you work too much? Why/not?   |
| d. | Have you ever canceled, postponed, or limited your vacation because of work? Please explain.    |
| e. | What do you think about the idea of mini-retirements versus regular vacations? Please explain.  |
| f. | What are the pluses and minuses of mini-retirements from an employer's point of view?           |
| g. | What are the pluses and minuses of mini-retirements from an employee's point of view?           |
| h. | If you could take a mini-retirement next month, where would you go? What would you do there?    |
| i. | What is the balance between work, vacations, and retirement in your country? Please explain.    |
| j. | What will the balance between work, vacations, and retirement be in the future? Please explain. |

**5: Role play:** Convince your boss to let you take a mini-retirement. Think of the pluses and minuses, then present the ideas to your boss in a logical and persuasive manner. Try to get him/her to allow you at a three months' absence from work. Switch roles with a partner after you have given your presentation.

--

**6: Google Search:** Type "mini-retirement" into Google news and read additional articles on this topic. Discuss or write an essay about your findings.

**STUDENT HANDOUT (the article)**

**Vacations and Mini-Retirements**

Few would argue that workers need vacations to best maintain productivity and recuperate after the stresses and pressures of the office. Some countries have fully embraced this philosophy. Take France as an example, whose work week is only thirty-five hours in order to enhance the quality of life there. And the Germans almost believe that their one month vacations are a sacred right.

Other countries have opposite practices, though. Japanese employees use only a small fraction of their allotted vacation time, for fear of being labeled lazy and not full contributors to the team. In the US, work habits continue to change. Fewer employees take their full share of entitled days off, the average of which is nine days per year. The economy, as it worsens, warrants part of the blame for the shift. Many employees fear layoffs as companies post weaker profits, and so they want to be viewed as hard workers who are always at their posts.

But a growing movement advocates mini-retirements. Rather than short vacations each year, or no vacation whatsoever, the mini-retirement can be viewed as an extended vacation. However, an important point of the mini-retirement comes down to enjoying an active youth instead of working until old age and then taking a "macro" retirement. In addition, several months away from work allows the pursuit of personal goals and aspirations, as well as full immersion in a foreign country and culture (assuming you want to travel abroad). And with remote technology, Internet cafes, and free Wi-Fi services, it's even possible to keep abreast of developments at the office while away.

Life should be more than work, money, and savings. Hopefully more offices around the world will not only encourage vacation, but take up the mini-retirement concept, too.

**Notes:**



**STUDENT HANDOUT (fill in the blank)**

Fill in the blank with the correct word.

enhance	retirement	aspirations	assuming	concept
contributors	warrants	recuperate	abreast	advocates
immersion	opposite	layoffs	embraced	entitled

**Vacations and Mini-Retirements**

Few would argue that workers need vacations to best maintain productivity and (a. \_\_\_\_\_) after the stresses and pressures of the office. Some countries have fully (b. \_\_\_\_\_) this philosophy. Take France as an example, whose work week is only thirty-five hours in order to (c. \_\_\_\_\_) the quality of life there. And the Germans almost believe that their one month vacations are a sacred right.

Other countries have (d. \_\_\_\_\_) practices, though. Japanese employees use only a small fraction of their allotted vacation time, for fear of being labeled lazy and not a full (e. \_\_\_\_\_) to the team. In the US, work habits continue to change. Fewer employees take their full share of (f. \_\_\_\_\_) days off, the average of which is nine days per year. The economy, as it worsens, (g. \_\_\_\_\_) part of the blame for the shift. Many employees fear (h. \_\_\_\_\_) as companies post weaker profits, and so they want to be viewed as hard workers who are always at their posts.

But a growing movement (i. \_\_\_\_\_) mini-retirements. Rather than short vacations each year, or no vacation whatsoever, the mini-retirement can be viewed as an extended vacation. However, an important point of the mini-retirement comes down to enjoying an active youth instead of working until old age and then taking a "macro" (j. \_\_\_\_\_). In addition, several months away from work allows the pursuit of personal goals and (k. \_\_\_\_\_), as well as full (l. \_\_\_\_\_) in a foreign country and culture ((m. \_\_\_\_\_) you want to travel abroad). And with remote technology, Internet cafes, and free Wi-Fi services, it's even possible to keep (n. \_\_\_\_\_) of developments at the office while away.

Life should be more than work, money, and savings. Hopefully more offices around the world will not only encourage vacation, but take up the mini-retirement (o. \_\_\_\_\_), too.

**STUDENT HANDOUT (extended listening)**

Listen and fill in the missing sentences. Compare your answers with a partner, and then listen once more.

**Vacations and Mini-Retirements**

Few would argue that workers need vacations to best maintain productivity and recuperate after the stresses and pressures of the office. a) \_\_\_\_\_.

Take France as an example, whose work week is only thirty-five hours in order to enhance the quality of life there. And the Germans almost believe that their one month vacations are a sacred right.

Other countries have opposite practices, though. b) \_\_\_\_\_, for fear of being labeled lazy and not full contributors to the team. In the US, work habits continue to change. Fewer employees take their full share of entitled days off, the average of which is nine days per year. The economy, as it worsens, warrants part of the blame for the shift. Many employees fear layoffs as companies post weaker profits, c) \_\_\_\_\_.

But a growing movement advocates mini-retirements. Rather than short vacations each year, or no vacation whatsoever, the mini-retirement can be viewed as an extended vacation. However, an important point of the mini-retirement comes down to enjoying an active youth instead of working until old age and then taking a "macro" retirement. In addition, d) \_\_\_\_\_, as well as full immersion in a foreign country and culture (assuming you want to travel abroad). And with remote technology, Internet cafes, and free Wi-Fi services, it's even possible to keep abreast of developments at the office while away.

Life should be more than work, money, and savings. e) \_\_\_\_\_, too.

**STUDENTHANDOUT (notes)**

**ANSWER KEY**

**Vocabulary**

**1. Vocabulary Match:**

a.	w	f.	t
b.	z	g.	v
c.	r	h.	y
d.	u	i.	x
e.	q	j.	s

**2. Fill in the Blanks:**

a.	recuperate	f.	advocates
b.	embraced	g.	aspirations
c.	enhance	h.	immersion
d.	entitled	i.	abreast
e.	warrants	j.	concept

**pre- or post-Comprehension**

**1. True or False:**

a.	T
b.	F
c.	T
d.	F
e.	F

**2. Fragments:**

a.	only thirty-five hours in order to enhance the quality of life there.
b.	their one month vacations are a sacred right.
c.	of which is nine days per year.
d.	can be viewed as an extended vacation.
e.	more than work, money, and savings.

**Student Handout**

**1. Fill in the Blanks**

a.	recuperate	i.	advocates
b.	embraced	j.	retirement
c.	enhance	k.	aspirations
d.	opposite	l.	immersion
e.	contributors	m.	assuming
f.	entitled	n.	abreast
g.	warrants	o.	concept
h.	layoffs		

**2. Extended Listening**

a.	Some countries have fully embraced this philosophy
b.	Japanese employees use only a small fraction of their allotted vacation time
c.	and so they want to be viewed as hard workers who are always at their posts
d.	several months away from work allows the pursuit of personal goals and aspirations
e.	Hopefully more offices around the world will not only encourage vacation, but take up the mini-retirement concept