

UNDERSTANDING WORK AND THE WORKPLACE

LESSON 1: DEFINING WORK

Lesson aim:

- ↘ To broaden students' understanding of work, workplaces and associated issues.
- ↘ To teach students about the different types and forms of work which people undertake.

Learning objectives:

At the end of this lesson students will be able to:

- ↘ define what work is, explain the concept and the reasons why people work;
- ↘ explore and outline the different forms of work; and
- ↘ conduct a survey, analyse it and present findings to the group.

Lesson outline:

Ask students to create a mind-map of words which are related to the world of work. The word "WORK" should be written onto a large sheet of paper and students can then complete their own individual map. These will then be used to input into a large map for the classroom. (This exercise is useful for raising and identifying familiar and non-familiar issues for students.)

On completion of the classroom map, it should be put on display for the class to refer to during periods spent working on this module.

In-class activity: Discussion

Teachers should provide students with some of the formal definitions related to work and ask:

- ↘ What is your first reaction to these definitions? What do you think of the definition(s)?
- ↘ What is the difference between school work and other work?

- ↘ Working in groups, ask each group to put together their own definitions of work. Each group is to elect a spokesperson to report their new definition to the class and why they chose it. (These definitions could be reworked into the class mind-map.)

Student activity: Exploring work

Provide students with copies of **Worksheet 1a** for completion as a homework assignment. This activity should be followed up with classroom discussions, which will share ideas but also resolve any difficulties students may have had with the assignment.

In-class activity: Exercise recap

Ask students to consider:

- ↘ What did you learn from this exercise?
- ↘ Identify and explain what:
 - interested you;
 - surprised you;
 - you didn't know before completing this exercise; and
 - you hadn't considered before.
- ↘ Has this exercise changed your view of work and the workplace? Please give details of how and why this is.

Student activity: Forms work take

Explain to students that work comes in a variety of packages and takes different forms using the list provided in the information section. Provide students with copies of **Worksheet 1b** for completion as a homework assignment. There should also be time set aside in class for students to discuss the answers and resolve any difficulties they may have had with the assignment.

LESSON 1: DEFINING WORK (CONTINUED)

In-class activity: Exercise recap

After the exercise is completed discuss with students the following:

- ✚ Were you familiar with all the forms of work available?
- ✚ What forms of work:
 - had you heard about before? How?
 - had you not heard about before? Why do you think this is so?
 - would you consider taking/not taking up when you leave school? Why? Please give some reasons.
- ✚ How are changes handled in the workplace? Do you think this is fair? Did any of the workers interviewed have any input to workplace changes? How would you handle changes in the workplace? Where can assistance be sought if there is a difficulty with changes in the workplace?
- ✚ What was the most/least surprising thing you learned from this exercise?
- ✚ Has your view of the workplace changed since carrying out this survey? Give details.

Student activity: Researching the real world of work

Students should conduct a survey to learn about people's real working lives, compare the range of jobs they do, how they are defined and how they obtained them. (NOTE: Teachers should decide the most appropriate number of people who should be interviewed.)

Provide students with **Worksheet 1c** which can be supplemented with additional questions of their own. When completed each student should analyse the responses and compile a short report of what they have found.

The report should outline **at least** the following:

- ✚ What are the main differences between how jobs are defined and described? Why do you think people define their work this way?
- ✚ List the top three reasons why people work. Did this surprise you?
- ✚ How many people interviewed were in their ideal job? Do you consider this high or low? Why? What do you think might be the reasons for this?

Student activity: Essay writing

Students should write an essay no longer than 500 words starting with one of the following:

- ✚ "Work is important to society because..."
- ✚ "People work because..."
- ✚ "Work is defined by people. People are defined by work." Discuss and evaluate the merits of this statement drawing your own conclusions.

LESSON 1: DEFINING WORK (CONTINUED)

Student assignment: Jobs in the local community

The aim of this assignment is to get a sense of the type and range of jobs performed in the local community. This can help to focus the mind of students about what is available and what to expect from local employers/organisations. It can also help to inform decisions students need to make which will impact on their future careers and lives.

- ✚ Ask students to identify a local business/employer or organisation (it can be in the business, state, voluntary or community sector) which they would like to study in more detail.
- ✚ Students should write to the owner, manager or CEO of the particular organisation explaining that they wish to learn more about their organisation and potential career opportunities. They should request a meeting outlining the areas which they wish to cover, see **Worksheet 1d**.
- ✚ A prepared set of questions is contained in **Worksheet 1d**, which students should be provided with and which should be taken with them to interview. Alternatively, students can send the request with the worksheet questions attached for completion.

In-class activity: Assignment review

Following completion of the assignment above, ask students to consider the following:

- ✚ What did you learn from this exercise?
- ✚ Would the information gathered help if you were considering leaving school and working in the community? How?
- ✚ Did the range of jobs and opportunities in that organisation surprise or disappoint you? Explain.
- ✚ Did you consider the employer's expectations of employee qualities reasonable or not? Explain.
- ✚ Do you feel they are qualities which you have or can easily acquire? Explain.