
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Working for yourself



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Georgina

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Georgina.

Rob

And I'm Rob.

Georgina

Rob, what's the best job you've ever had?

Rob

Err well, this one, of course! It's very creative, with lots of variety.

Georgina

OK, any other reasons?

Rob

Well yes – it's a permanent job - a staff job - with regular income and a pension.

Georgina

Yes, these things can be important, but have you ever been **freelance** – by that I mean, working for yourself and selling your skills and services to different businesses?

Rob

Well, I worked as a paperboy once – delivering newspapers. But not really – it's a risky way to earn an income.

Georgina

It can be Rob. But many people choose to, or have to work as a freelancer to survive. And that's what we're talking about in this programme. But let's start with a question for you, Rob.

Rob
OK.

Georgina

This is about job titles – back in the 19th Century, what kind of job was a drummer? Were they...

- a) someone who played the drums?
- b) a travelling salesman?, or,
- c) a music publicist – who **drums up** – meaning encourages, support for a band?

Rob

Well, it's got to be someone who plays the drums – that's my kind of job.

Georgina

OK, Rob, we'll find out if that's right at the end of the programme. But let's talk more about work now. Long gone are the days of a job for life, where you spent your adult life working your way up the career ladder at the same company.

Rob

Yes, that's right. We work in many different ways now because the needs of businesses change frequently and it needs to be **agile** – changing the size and type of work force in order to meet demand.

Georgina

So, people need to adapt and some choose to work for themselves, offering their skills to different businesses as and when they are needed. But it can also be a lifestyle choice, as we're about to find out.

Rob

Yes, some people have chosen to become self-employed – working for themselves - but also, because of the recent coronavirus pandemic, some people have been forced into this situation. Let's hear from Carla Barker, who set up her own business after giving up her regular job. She told BBC Radio 4's programme You and Yours how she felt...

Carla Barker

You know the idea of giving up a solid, permanent, full-time, paid, comfortable, role is a bit **petrifying**... It is super-scary because ... you then have that fear of 'oh my goodness can we do this'? You also have things creeping in that say you know like **self-sabotage** – are you good enough to do this? Are people going to want to take me on as a business?

Georgina

So, Carla decided to go it alone – an informal way of saying work for herself. She described giving up a full-time job as **petrifying** – so frightening you can't speak or move. She may have been exaggerating slightly but she also said it was 'super-scary'!

Rob

I guess working for yourself must be scary as you're solely responsible for your own success. It's no surprise Carla had feelings of **self-sabotage** – having doubts and fears that stopped her achieving something.

Georgina

Luckily, she persisted and things went well. And many other people who have become self-employed or freelance have overcome the fear and discovered the benefits.

Rob

Like Fiona Thomas, who's the author of a book called 'Ditch the 9 to 5 and be your Own Boss'. She also spoke to the BBC's You and Yours programme and explained why she gave up the 9 to 5 – the regular, full-time staff job – and how it helped her...

Fiona Thomas, Author

A kind of combination of wanting some creative **fulfilment** from a job, compared to the job that I was in before, which was very much customer based and working face-to-face in hospitality. But I also wanted the flexibility to accommodate my mental health because I suffer from depression and anxiety and I found working in a rigid schedule and being in front of a lot of people all the time really exacerbated a lot of my symptoms. And I also wanted the **financial freedom** to be able to, over time, increase my income without just having to wait on being promoted or getting a pay rise in traditional employment.

Georgina

So, working for herself gave Fiona a good feeling that she achieved something she wanted to do – it gave her creative **fulfilment**. It also meant she could work more flexibly and that helped her with her mental health because she didn't have to follow a fixed rota of tasks.

Rob

And it gave her **financial freedom** – meaning the money she earned was not controlled by someone else, and she didn't have to wait for someone else to give her a pay rise. Of course, that can be risky too.

Georgina

Let's get back to my quiz question now, Rob. Earlier I asked you if you knew what job a drummer used to do back in the 19th Century?

Rob

And obviously, a drummer plays the drums!

Georgina

Well, you are sort of right but a **drummer** also used to be an informal way of describing a travelling salesperson – because their job was to **drum up** business for a company – meaning they tried to increase sales.

Rob

Ahh very interesting, although I know which drummer I would rather be – a freelance drummer in a rock band!

Georgina

And **freelance** is one of the words we've mentioned today. To freelance means to work for yourself, selling your skills or services to different businesses.

Rob

Becoming self-employed can be **petrifying** – frightening, so you can't speak or move. And starting out on your own can lead to **self-sabotage** – having doubts and fears that stop you achieving something.

Georgina

But it can also give you **fulfilment** – a good feeling of achieving something for yourself.

Rob

And having **financial freedom** means being able to control how you earn and use your money.

Georgina

That's it for this programme. We have plenty more 6 Minute English programmes to enjoy on our website at bbclearningenglish.com. And check us out on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Bye for now.

Rob

Goodbye.

VOCABULARY

drum up

increase or encourage support or sales for something

freelance

work for yourself, selling your skills or services to different businesses

petrifying

frightening, so you can't speak or move

self-sabotage

having doubts and fears that stop you achieving something

fulfilment

good feeling of achieving something for yourself

financial freedom

able to control how you earn and use your money