

Easy Access English

For better or for worse





Activity One – Find **opposites** for the following words

Better	Worse
Bad times	
Sickness	
Loyalty	
Loyal	
Difficult	
Difficulties	
Insecure	
Secure	
Fidelity	
Faithful	
True	
Truth	
Forgiving	

Activity Two – ***Loyalty***. (Ask the questions to your partner or teacher). Answer using one of the following expressions to introduce your opinion on the subject:

To my mind *It seems to me* *I think that*
In my opinion *I feel that* *I believe that*

1. How would you define loyalty?
2. How important is loyalty to you?
3. Who and what are you loyal to?
4. Do you sometimes feel like you are married to your job?
5. To what extent is your employer responsible for your welfare?
6. Is your employer responsible for you welfare in good times and in bad?
7. Do you think that your company invests in you and supports you?
8. Do you think it should?
9. Do you agree that in difficult economic times employees should work harder or for less pay in order to protect the company's future?
10. Have you ever been on strike?
11. Would you go on strike to defend your interests?
12. Do you think industrial action is disloyal to your company (like talking about your family problems in public)?

Activity Three – ***From bad to worse*** – Complete the table.

Bad	*Worse*	*The worst*
Big		
Simple		
Great		
Free		
Complete		
Incomplete		
Good		
Strong		
Weak		





Activity Four – ***Trust*** - Read the text and find comparatives or superlatives to fill the gaps.

Fifty years ago people expected their company to provide a job for life and many big companies were family run. Now in an age of mass lay offs and cost-cutting, new generations are taught to mistrust big companies and fight for their rights. Jobs are getting ……..….. and ……..….. secure.

Some big companies emphasise the fact that they invest in people and value the personal development of their employees, but their real preoccupation is profit and loss. When times are rough companies ask for ……..….. from their workers and often pay ……..….. in bonuses and overtime, however if push came to shove they would not hesitate to make people redundant. So companies ask workers to be forgiving, dedicated and understanding in difficult times but are not being faithful in return. In France the ……..….. obvious examples of this reality came with the closures and lay-offs announced in the car industry.

The image of the carriage clock retirement party after a long career in the same company is a thing of the past. In the years before globalization it was common for a person to spend their entire career in the same company, from apprenticeship to retirement. This meant that 50 years of a person's life could be dedicated to their employer. In return for this ……..….. sense of company loyalty they would have security and feed their family. Their identity, social life, culture and aspirations would be tied to their job. They may not have been free to try new things and have diverse experiences in their working life but they were much ……..….. secure than workers today. At the beginning of the 20th century businesses were often owned by well known families and had a ……..….. patriarchal approach to management. In today's world the real owners of a company are ……..….. often than not, anonymous shareholders. This means that results are the ……..….. factor behind any management decision.

Corporate culture in today's world is all about communication. Companies seek to communicate their values to outside world in order to attract new recruits, and to make them understood by workers to instil a sense of purpose. However new generations are cynical and expectations have changed. This means that it is ……..….. difficult for companies to make employees feel loyal. Employees on all levels of the corporate ladder feel insecure. In times of economic difficulty people are even ……..….. sure about their futures and this creates a situation of anxiety in the workplace.

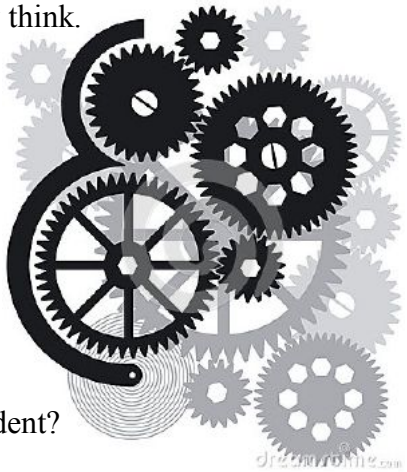
If companies were …… loyal to their workers then it's possible that they would obtain better results and people would be ……..….. productive in general and ……..….. anxious. However because big companies now have a ……..….. reputation than ever before, it would be difficult to change perceptions and inspire trust in the workforce.

Activity Five – ***Faithful*** – Answer the following questions using:
'One one hand… On the other hand..'

- Would you like to work for the same company for most of your career?
- Do you need to feel free or do you like security?
- Would you rather work for a small family owned business or a big corporation?



Activity Six – ***Untrue*** - Give the opposite answer to what you really think.



1. Are you faithful in relationships?
2. Do you like boss?
3. Do you think that you should get paid more money?
4. Do you think you should be promoted?
5. Do you agree with strike action?
6. Do you think that managers should be able to strike?
7. Do you like speaking English?
8. Are you competent in your job?
9. Are you trustworthy?
10. Do you think François Hollande is doing a good job as president?

Activity Seven - Read the articles paying attention to your intonation and stress and then compare welfare capitalism with the welfare state using comparatives and superlatives.

Welfare Capitalism

In the 19th century, some companies—mostly manufacturers—began offering new benefits for their employees. This happened mostly in Great Britain, France, even Canada. They sponsored sports teams, established social clubs, and provided educational and cultural activities for workers. Some offered housing as well. The motive behind these offerings was paternalistic—owners were providing for workers in ways they felt was good for them. These programs did not address the problems of long work hours, unsafe conditions, and employment insecurity.

In the early years of the 20th century, however, business leaders began embracing a different approach. Bosses sought new relations with labour. They offered wage incentives and other benefits. The point was to increase productivity by creating good will with employees. When Henry Ford introduced his $5 a day pay rate in 1914 (when most workers made $11 a week), his goal was to reduce turnover and build a long-term loyal labour force that would have higher productivity. Turnover in manufacturing plants in the U.S. from 1910-1919 averaged 100%. Wage incentives and internal promotion opportunities were intended to encourage good attendance and loyalty. The combination of high pay, high efficiency and cheap consumer goods was known as Fordism. In the U.S., the health care system is largely built around employer-sponsored plans.

By contrast to the experience in the United States, Europe built government operated welfare systems i.e. welfare capitalism in the sense the term is generally understood today. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Germany and Britain created "safety nets" for the citizens, including public welfare and unemployment insurance. It is true, however, that prior to providing government safety nets, many nineteenth century employers in Britain and on the continent provided welfare institutions much like those in the United States. Examples include worker housing assistance provided by the Fried Krupp firm in Germany, including a loan fund established in 1889 and free architect service; free housing provided to coal miners in France by Jules Chagot et Cie; and subsidized worker housing provided by Lever Brothers in Britain.

Today in most European countries the State takes care of the Welfare of its citizens.

- Companies were more…… in the past
- Nowadays companies are less…….
- In the 19th century there was not enough……
- Compare to ….
- Comparatively speaking