

### Starting up

- Think about your country or one that you know well. As far as you know, are sabbaticals allowed/encouraged for the following types of personnel: university lecturers, school teachers, army officers, managers in manufacturing companies, managers in financial services organisations, journalists, and any other groups you can think of.
- Even if they are not currently able to take sabbaticals, what might the members of each group do to take advantage of them?
  
- Read through the whole article. Then do the exercises.

### Reading 1

Read the article again to find:

- a) a book about working in new ways
- b) the person who wrote it
- c) another person who took a sabbatical
- d) her employer in the UK
- e) her job
- f) the country where she does voluntary work
- g) the organisation she works for there
- h) its objective

## How a sabbatical can benefit you – and your employer

In the pursuit of a good work/life balance, employees are increasingly opting for sabbaticals. They are taking unpaid leave — for weeks or even months — to recharge batteries, pursue a project or even change careers. And despite knowing that some staff will not return, a growing number of companies now offer opportunities to take a break. If you feel it is time to take a break, how do you decide what type of break you need; how do you prepare; and how do you get the best out of your time off?

Emma Rosen, 26, is author of *The Radical Sabbatical*. She left a job she hated and used a sabbatical to try out 25 potential new career options. Before leaving her job she still thought carefully about how she was going to spend her time and what she aimed to get out of it. "If you are considering time out because you are unhappy then it is important not to make any snap decisions," says Ms Rosen, as it can be "quite hard to analyse these feelings". She advocates taking a week or a month to write a note at the end of each day. "Then you can have a more objective view." If you want to take a "work"-based approach to your sabbatical, Ms Rosen suggests setting out what you enjoy doing and what sort of working environment you want, without any particular jobs in mind. Then you can use these criteria to help you seek out possible work options.

In Ms Rosen's case, she also had to think about how she would sell her career break to a new employer. She believes there is a misconception that a sabbatical is a big holiday, so it is important to make it clear to employers what you have learnt, she says. It is easier to sell the hard skills and focus less on the soft. "I learnt about social media, marketing and advertising. I'd learnt to work in an environment of constant change. I showed I had initiative and could challenge norms," Ms Rosen adds. Following her experience, she is now a writer and speaker advocating for alternative ways of working.

Others just want a break and then to return to their original roles — but perhaps with different working arrangements. Liz Neate, an assistant director in financial advisory at Deloitte, took four months off to do volunteer work for The Land and Equity Movement of Uganda. She had been involved with the organisation — which helps to support Uganda's poor to claim their land rights — since 2012 and had ambitions to live and work overseas. "The only way to do that was to put a pause on my career," she says. As in the case of Ms Rosen, preparation is key. Ms Neate informed her team and started planning for the break six months before. "The projects I was working on were very long-term . . . so I had to give a lot of notice to my team," she adds. On returning to work, Ms Neate says one of the main benefits was renewed energy and perspective. "Stepping away for four months . . . I think it definitely refreshed my approach to my projects," she says. The feeling of coming back to projects almost with new eyes "was really beneficial".



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**Vocabulary – synonyms**

Look at the whole article. Replace the words and expressions in *italics* below with the alternative that has the closest meaning. (The item must also fit grammatically into the surrounding context, which does not change.)

- 1 In the *pursuit of* a good work/life balance ...  
a) journey for                      b) objective for                      c) search for
- 2 employees are increasingly *opting for* sabbaticals.  
a) going on                      b) looking for                      c) selecting out
- 3 They are taking unpaid *leave* ... to recharge batteries, pursue a project or even change careers.  
a) off                      b) absence                      c) break
- 4 a *growing* number of companies now offer opportunities to take a break.  
a) increasing                      b) rising                      c) upping
- 5 Emma ... left a job she hated and used a sabbatical to try out 25 *potential* new career options.  
a) possible                      b) actual                      c) probable
- 6 Before leaving her job she still thought carefully about ... what she *aimed* to get out of it.  
a) objected                      b) targeted                      c) wanted
- 7 She *advocates* taking a week or a month to write a note at the end of each day.  
a) suggests                      b) recommends                      c) forces
- 8 Ms Rosen suggests *setting out* what you enjoy doing and what sort of working environment you want, without any particular jobs in mind.  
a) listing                      b) starting                      c) planning
- 9 She believes there is a *misconception* that a sabbatical is a big holiday ...  
a) disbelief                      b) unthinking                      c) misunderstanding
- 10 It is easier to sell the hard skills and *focus* less on the soft.  
a) look at                      b) examine in                      c) concentrate
- 11 "I showed I *had initiative* and could challenge *norms*," Ms Rosen adds.  
a) could work on new ideas      b) could work with a manager      c) could work independently
- 12 She .. had *ambitions* to live and work overseas.  
a) the desire                      b) the willing                      c) the liking
- 13 "I think it definitely *refreshed* my approach to my projects," she says.  
a) restarted                      b) renewed                      c) rebegan
- 14 "The projects I was working on were very long-term ... so I had to give a lot of *notice* to my team," she adds.  
a) note                      b) sign                      c) warning
- 15 The feeling of coming back to projects almost with new eyes "was really *beneficial*".  
a) supportful                      b) helpful                      c) advantageous

## Level: B1

**Grammar – past simple and past continuous**

Complete these sentences with the correct form of the verbs in italics. Where possible, use a past continuous form and a past simple form. There is one sentence that does not contain both forms – explain why.

- 1 The projects I \_\_\_\_\_ (work) on were very long-term, so I \_\_\_\_\_ (have) to give a lot of notice to my team.  
*The projects I was working on were very long-term, so I had to give a lot of notice to my team.*
- 2 Brigitte, originally a lawyer, \_\_\_\_\_ (opt) to be a professional cook while she \_\_\_\_\_ (follow) a cooking course in Italy.
- 3 He \_\_\_\_\_ (do) charity work in his spare time when he \_\_\_\_\_ (received) an offer of a full-time job there.
- 4 They suddenly \_\_\_\_\_ (realise) what their real priorities were while they \_\_\_\_\_ (make) a list of their skills.
- 5 Emma \_\_\_\_\_ (hate) her job, so she \_\_\_\_\_ (leave) it.
- 6 Nigel \_\_\_\_\_ (want) to resign, but he \_\_\_\_\_ (wait) for the right moment to tell his boss.
- 7 Elif \_\_\_\_\_ (give) a presentation about sabbaticals when an audience member \_\_\_\_\_ (walk) out.
- 8 I \_\_\_\_\_ (quit) my job just as I \_\_\_\_\_ (get) good at it.
- 9 He \_\_\_\_\_ (think) of going on a permanent sabbatical when he \_\_\_\_\_ (be) promoted.
- 10 She \_\_\_\_\_ (earn) a lot of money as a consultant when she \_\_\_\_\_ (join) one of her former clients as an in-house manager.

**Reading 2**

According to the article, which statements are true (T), which are false (F), and which are not mentioned (NM)?

Sabbaticals...

- a) can be a way of finding a new line of work.
- b) can be inconvenient for employers.
- c) can be a way of relaxing.
- d) should be taken at very short notice.
- e) should be very specific in terms of types of jobs to do during them.
- f) are considered as holidays by many people.
- g) are easy to 'sell' to employers if you mention soft skills you have learnt.
- h) are encouraged by the UK tax system.
- i) are a good way of doing charity work in the UK.
- j) are just one of the aspects of alternative ways of working on which Emma Rosen does consultancy.

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### Further discussion / Group work

- 1 Think about your job or one you would like to have. Would a sabbatical be good idea? How long would it be, ideally? What would you do with the time?
- 2 Sabbaticals are one form of flexible/alternative ways of working. List some of the others, along with their advantages and disadvantages. (For example, *job sharing* allows two people to work less, leaving them time to do other things, but each may spend a lot of time explaining to the other person what they have done and what needs to be done next.)

**ANSWER KEY****Reading 1**

- a) *The Radical Sabbatical*
- b) Emma Rosen
- c) Liz Neate
- d) Deloitte
- e) assistant director in financial advisory
- f) Uganda
- g) The Land and Equity Movement
- h) It helps to support Uganda's poor to claim their land rights.

**Vocabulary**

- |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |
|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1c | 2a  | 3b  | 4b  | 5a  | 6c  | 7b  | 8a |
| 9c | 10c | 11c | 12a | 13b | 14c | 15b |    |

**Grammar**

- 2 Brigitte, originally a lawyer, opted to be a professional cook while she was following a cooking course in Italy.
- 3 He was doing charity work in his spare time when he received an offer of a full-time post there.
- 4 They suddenly realised what their real priorities were while they were making a list of their skills.
- 5 Emma hated her job, so she left it. (*Verbs such as 'hate' which describe states or feelings do not take the continuous form.*)
- 6 Nigel wanted to resign, but he was waiting for the right moment to tell his boss.
- 7 Elif was giving a presentation about sabbaticals when an audience member walked out.
- 8 I quit my job just as I was getting good at it.
- 9 He was thinking of going on a permanent sabbatical when he was promoted.
- 10 She was earning a lot of money as a consultant when she joined one of her former clients as an in-house manager.

**Reading 2**

- a) T
- b) NM
- c) T
- d) F
- e) F
- f) T
- g) F
- h) NM
- i) NM
- j) T

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