

SHOULD YOU TAKE A CAREER BREAK?

Watch the [video](#) "Why a sabbatical can actually save your career" by GBR.

1 WARM UP

Where would you go if you had a one-year career break? Read the destinations in the box, then rank them from 1-6.

Bali	Canada	Brazil	New Zealand	India	Tanzania
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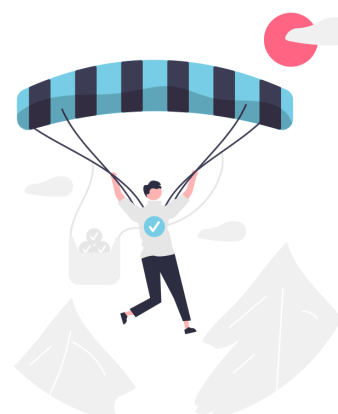
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____



What would you do if you had a one-year career break? Read the options in the box, then rank them from 1-6.

volunteer	travel	personal project	learn a new skill	network	relax
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1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____



Discuss: Are career breaks common in your country? Do you know anyone who has taken a career break? Does your company offer this benefit?

2 KEY WORDS

Match the words from the box to the correct definitions.

revitalise 2/5	hesitate 3	sabbatical 1	new outlook 4
upskill 6	recharge 2/5	self-discovery 8	put off 7

1. an extended break from work for personal or professional development.
2. to be refreshed and in an energetic state.
3. to pause or show reluctance before taking action or making a decision.
4. a fresh or different perspective or viewpoint on a situation or life in general.
5. to regain energy, strength, or vitality by resting or replenishing.
6. to improve or acquire new skills to enhance one's abilities and employability.
7. to postpone or delay doing something, usually due to lack of interest or motivation.
8. the process of gaining knowledge and understanding of oneself, including one's values, interests, and strengths.

Complete the sentences using the new words. You may need to change the tense.

- a) After attending a motivational seminar, Maria had a **new outlook** on life and started pursuing her dreams with renewed enthusiasm.
- b) Sarah took a **sabbatical** to travel the world and explore new cultures.
- c) After the vacation, I felt **revitalised/recharged**.
- d) Although I **hesitated** at first, I eventually asked my manager for a raise.
- e) After a long week, I **revitalise/recharge** my energy by spending a day at the beach.
- f) In order to stay relevant in today's job market, it's important to **upskill**.
- g) Through journaling, Sarah is on a journey of **self-discovery**, gaining insights into her thoughts, emotions, and personal growth.
- h) In order to be productive, you should not **put off** important tasks; instead, you should complete them as soon as possible.

Discuss the following questions as a class.

1. Do you think attitudes toward the idea of a sabbatical have changed in recent times?
2. How can taking a sabbatical help individuals **revitalise** their professional and personal lives?
3. What are some common reasons why people **hesitate** to take a sabbatical, and how can they overcome these concerns?
4. In what ways can a sabbatical provide an opportunity for **self-discovery**? What changes can this self-discovery lead to?
5. Are there any specific strategies or activities that can help individuals **recharge** during a sabbatical?
6. How can delaying or **putting off** a sabbatical impact an individual's overall well-being and career satisfaction?
7. If a person is unable to take a sabbatical, in what other ways could they gain a fresh perspective and develop a **new outlook** on life?
8. What are some potential challenges that people may face when attempting to **upskill** during a sabbatical, and how can these challenges be overcome?
9. What are some effective ways for individuals to maintain their **new outlook** and mindset even after their **sabbatical** ends?
10. If you were the CEO of a company, would you allow your employees to take a **sabbatical**? Explain.



3 CASE STUDIES

Read the following case studies, then answer the questions.

Sarah

Before the break, Sarah was a successful marketing executive, climbing the corporate ladder with determination. However, she felt burned out and needed a break. Sarah put off going on a sabbatical for years but she finally decided to go after years of hesitation.

During her career break, Sarah went on a journey of self-discovery, travelling to new places, immersing herself in different cultures, and exploring her passions. This break revitalised her spirit and provided much-needed clarity.

After her career break, Sarah's break recharged her creativity and provided her with a new outlook. She used this fresh energy to implement innovative marketing strategies inspired by her travel experiences. Her unique approach propelled her to a managerial role, and she now enjoys a fulfilling career with a healthy work-life balance.

Emily

Before the break, Emily had a successful career as a software engineer, working diligently on demanding projects. However, she felt a strong desire to make a positive impact on society beyond her professional achievements.

During the break, Emily took a sabbatical to volunteer with a non-profit organisation focused on improving education in small communities. She worked directly with students, teaching coding skills, empowering them by upskilling their technological knowledge.

Effect on career since returning: Emily's break enabled her to develop a strong sense of purpose and fulfilment. She returned to her career with a newfound passion for using technology for social good. She transitioned to a role that allowed her to combine her technical expertise with her desire to make a difference. Emily now works on developing educational software and mentors aspiring engineers.

Discuss the following questions as a class.

- Describe why each person decided to take a career break. Can you identify with any of their feelings?
- What did each person do during their career breaks? Which would you prefer to do? Describe the pros and cons of each one.
- How did the career breaks affect each person's career when they returned to work?
- What are some possible negative effects that a career break could have on one's career? Brainstorm three possible negative effects, and how to overcome them.

4 VIDEO DISCUSSION

Watch the [video](#), then complete the following sentences by completing the phrases.

rejuvenated	stimulate	pitch	benefit
productivity	burnt out	deskbound	mental

If you're feeling **burnt out** or overwhelmed at work, it might be time to take a break.

Studies show that workers who take an extended leave from their job return **rejuvenated** and more productive.

First, find out if your company allows extended breaks. Either way, you will likely need to **pitch** the idea to your boss.

Create a plan and outline how learning a new skill or even travelling the world can **benefit** the company when you return.

If you think about work nonstop, the **mental** break from taking a sabbatical can help you make space for new projects. Travelling can expose you to other cultures and different ways of thinking.

Taking a class, pursuing a hobby, or even writing a book can **stimulate** your creativity and open you up to new ideas.

If you are **deskbound** at your current job, a sabbatical might help you reinvigorate your body as well as your mind. Establish regular exercise routines and sleep schedules to improve your health.

Better health means taking less sick time when you return to work, and more **productivity**.

Answer the questions below that use the vocabulary from the video.

1. What are the symptoms of burnout? Have you ever felt this way?
2. If one is unable to take a career break, how else can a person feel rejuvenated?
3. Think of three ways an individual taking a career break can benefit a company.
4. Without taking a career break, how can one stop thinking about work nonstop?
5. How can taking classes and hobbies help your performance at work?
6. Are you deskbound at work? How do you overcome this health risk?
7. If you pitched the idea of a career break to your boss, what would they say? Explain.
8. In the next exercise, you learn how to pitch ideas at work. First, consider how you would ask your manager for a career break. How would you structure your pitch?

5 PHRASES FOR PRESENTING A PERSONAL CASE

Match the titles from the box to the correct expressions.

Arguing persuasively Dealing with objections Recapping key points	Explaining benefits Stating motivation Stating what you want
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1. Stating what you want.

- It's been a long-term goal of mine to...
- I intend to...
- I'd really appreciate it if...

2. Stating your motivation.

- I've been inspired by...
- I'd like to do this because...
- My motivation for this comes from...

3. Explaining benefits.

- It's a win-win situation because...
- The experience I'd gain would be invaluable for...
- The advantages are...

4. Recapping key points.

- It's a once in a lifetime opportunity...
- This is a chance that I can't afford to miss.
- I'll never be satisfied unless...

5. Dealing with objections.

- I understand your doubts, but...
- I don't think that's a fair reflection. The way I see it is...
- But you have to consider and too.

6. Arguing persuasively.

- To sum up...
- As mentioned earlier...
- I will send a summary of the key points to you via email.



6 ROLE PLAY

You are going to take part in a role play exercise in which you will practise how to present a personal case. Follow the instructions below, then present a personal case for each of the scenarios (a-h). Work in pairs.

Instructions

1. Decide what type of job you have. You can use your own.
2. Plan how you will present your case for a career break to your manager.
 - a. State what you want.
 - b. State your motivation.
 - c. Explain the benefits.
 - d. Plan how you will argue persuasively.
3. Think of objections your boss might have and plan answers to overcome them.
4. Use the key phrases from exercise 6 of this lesson plan.

Scenarios

1. You want to take a three month career break to travel around Asia.
2. You have been offered the opportunity to volunteer in a small village, teaching English to children for six months.
3. You are suffering from burnout and want to take a two month career break to rest and recover.
4. You have been accepted onto a university course. Ask your manager if you can take a one-year career break in order to complete the full-time course.
5. You would like to take paternity / extended maternity leave.



7 DEBATE

Study the arguments, then choose which side you agree with, explaining why. Use the language from the table to expand your argument . Have fun!

1. Taking a career break is a waste of time and hinders career progression.
2. Employers should be legally required to provide paid sabbaticals,
3. A career break negatively affects employability and makes it difficult to re-enter the workforce.
4. Career breaks are a luxury that only privileged individuals can afford.
5. Sabbaticals should only be allowed for childcare or family-related emergencies.
6. Career breaks are a sign of laziness and a lack of commitment to one's career.
7. Employees who take sabbaticals should be required to make up for lost time through increased working hours upon their return.
8. Sabbaticals are only beneficial for those in creative or non-traditional career paths.

<p style="text-align: center;">Express an opinion</p> <p>It seems to me that...</p> <p>I feel that...</p> <p>I'm absolutely convinced that...</p> <p>In my opinion,...</p> <p>I believe / suppose / feel (that)...</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Express disagreement</p> <p>I don't agree with you about...</p> <p>I can't accept your view that...</p> <p>I have a different opinion...</p> <p>I'm not sure if...</p> <p>I'm not convinced that...</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Express pro's and con's</p> <p>There are two sides to this point...</p> <p>On the one hand...,on the other hand...</p> <p>An argument for / against is...</p> <p>Some people think that...,others say that...</p> <p>The advantages / disadvantages are...</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Summarise</p> <p>So, in conclusion...</p> <p>To summarise..</p> <p>Overall, it is clear that...</p> <p>As a result..</p> <p>The bottom line is...</p>



8 LET'S TALK!

Discuss the following questions as a class. This is your time to practise speaking and improve your English level, so say as much as possible and have fun!

1. What are some effective strategies for managing stress and maintaining work-life balance?
2. Do you think employees should be given more vacation time? Explain.
3. What are the benefits of taking regular time off from work, and how can it contribute to productivity and overall job satisfaction?
4. What do you do during your vacation time to ensure you return to work feeling refreshed and rejuvenated?
5. What are some of your healthy habits or activities that help you de-stress after a challenging period at work?
6. How can employers create a supportive work environment that promotes mental well-being and encourages employees to take time off when needed?
7. What are some warning signs of burnout, and how can individuals proactively address them to prevent further negative impacts on their mental health?
8. What role can hobbies play in helping individuals recharge after work?
9. How do you effectively manage work-related expectations and avoid bringing work stress home?
10. What are some strategies for disconnecting from work during vacation time or at the weekends?
11. How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance when faced with demanding work schedules or high-pressure job environments?
12. Does your company offer mental health support in the workplace? What can companies do to reduce the stigma around taking time off for mental well-being?



HOMework

Read the following article, then complete the exercises on the next page.

1 CAREER BREAK: PROS AND CONS FOR A COMPANY

Taking a career break can have both positive and negative impacts on a company. This article explores the benefits that a career break can bring to a company, as well as the challenges that may arise during this period. Let's delve into the topic and understand how a career break can affect an organisation.

Diverse Perspectives: Employees who take a career break often return with fresh ideas and a broader perspective. They may have gained new skills or experiences during their time off, which can bring innovation and creativity to the workplace. This infusion of new ideas can lead to improved problem-solving and decision-making within the company.

Enhanced Productivity: A career break allows employees to recharge and rejuvenate, reducing the risk of burnout. When employees return from their break, they tend to be more motivated, focused, and productive. They bring a renewed sense of commitment and energy to their work, which positively impacts overall company performance.

Retention and Loyalty: Offering career breaks demonstrates that the company values work-life balance and cares about the well-being of its employees. This can increase employee loyalty and reduce turnover rates. When employees feel supported in taking time off, they are more likely to remain dedicated to the company in the long run.

Knowledge and Skills Gap: During a career break, employees may miss out on industry developments and technological advancements. This knowledge gap can pose challenges when they return to work, requiring additional training and time to catch up. Companies must be prepared to provide necessary resources and training to bridge this gap effectively.

Workforce Planning: Planning and managing the workload during an employee's absence can be challenging. Distributing responsibilities, training temporary replacements, and ensuring smooth workflow does require careful coordination. Proper planning is crucial to minimise disruptions and maintain productivity in the employee's absence.

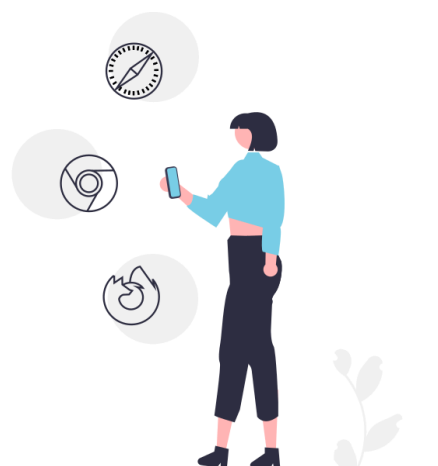
Cost Considerations: Companies may face financial implications when providing career breaks, especially if they need to hire temporary replacements or invest in training programs. These costs must be taken into account when evaluating the feasibility of offering career breaks and developing budget plans accordingly.

While career breaks can present challenges for companies, they also offer significant benefits. The infusion of fresh perspectives, increased productivity, and improved employee loyalty can outweigh the difficulties. By addressing the challenges proactively, companies can leverage career breaks to create a supportive and dynamic workplace.



Research the definitions of the words and phrases, then use them in example sentences.

1. burnout.
2. reduce turnover rates.
3. work-life balance.
4. knowledge gap.
5. pose challenges.
6. bridge this gap.
7. feasibility.
8. outweigh.



On a separate piece of paper, write detailed answers to the following questions.

- a) What are the advantages of bringing a new perspective to the decision making process? Does an individual have to take a career break to get a new outlook?
- b) The article states that a career break could enhance productivity. Describe the arguments for and against this claim.
- c) How could a career break increase staff retention and loyalty? Would you be more loyal to a company that offered this benefit? Explain.
- d) How can a career break create a skills gap? In your opinion, could the opposite be true through upskilling during a career break? Explain.
- e) What strategies can companies employ to effectively plan and manage workloads during an employee's absence due to a career break?
- f) What financial considerations should companies take into account when evaluating the feasibility of providing career breaks?
- g) What are some examples of industries or roles where career breaks can be particularly beneficial for employees and companies alike?
- h) If you were the CEO of a company, would you allow your employees to take a career break? If not, explain your reasoning. If yes, state why and the criteria employees would have to meet in order to take a career break.

