

Five jobs that are surprisingly enjoyable

Level 2 • Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. In three minutes, write at least five jobs you would really hate to do.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

b. Choose the worst one and say why you would not want to do it.

c. Skim the article and see whether any of the five jobs mentioned are similar to the ones you wrote down.

2 Key words

Write the key words next to the definitions. Then, find the words in the article to read them in context. The sections of the article are given to help you.

Sections 1 to 3

batch
excrement

deadlines
hazardous

plants
rewarding

disinfecting
silo

1. an amount of a food that is prepared at one time _____
2. specific times or dates by which you have to do something _____
3. giving you satisfaction or pleasure _____
4. making something very clean by putting a substance on it that kills bacteria _____
5. dangerous, especially to people's health or safety _____
6. the solid waste that your body gets rid of _____
7. a tall, round tower on a farm used for storing things such as grain and crops _____
8. factories that produce power or process chemicals etc _____

Sections 3 to 5

eel
monotonous

endangered
rush

enthusiastic
waste

monitor
wriggle

9. the useless materials, substances or parts that are left after you use something _____
10. a long, thin fish that looks like a snake _____
11. at risk of extinction _____
12. regularly check something to find out what is happening _____
13. move by twisting or turning quickly _____
14. very boring because everything is the same and you have to keep repeating it _____
15. very interested in something or excited by something _____
16. a sudden strong emotion, especially of pleasure _____

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Donna Ferguson

5 January, 2015

We asked five people who do some unusual jobs how much they are paid, what the worst parts are and why they enjoy their work.

1. Dog-food taster

The job: Tasting dog food to make sure it meets a top brand's quality standards

What it involves: Opening sample tins of each batch of dog (or cat) food, smelling it and eating it. "Although dogs' sense of taste is different from ours, tasting is an important quality check to ensure each different ingredient is perfectly balanced in just the right way," says Philip Wells, the chief taster for Lily's Kitchen pet food.

Typical salary: £20,000 for an entry-level job in the quality department. However, Wells says an experienced technical director can easily earn £50,000 or more.

Worst part of the job: The deadlines, for Wells, who admits he quite likes the food. The meat used in pet food has to come from animals that are fit for human consumption, under the Animal Feed Regulations 2010. He adds: "There are some pretty terrible pet foods out there and, although I don't taste them, the smell is enough to turn the stomach."

Job satisfaction: "No two days are ever the same." Wells finds it rewarding that a project he has worked on will "help pets to become happier and healthier". However, he acknowledges that some of the credit must go to another "key member" of the tasting team: Lily, the border terrier.

2. Hygiene technician

The job: Disinfecting areas that might have been exposed to bio-hazardous situations

What it involves: Cleaning up crime scenes, road accidents and suicides. Clearing houses full of rubbish, rats and excrement ... among other things. "The job is about keeping people safe," says Richard Lewis, a hygiene technician for Rentokil. "We deal with some extremely dirty sites."

Typical salary: The entry-level salary is usually around £14,500 and a top salary can be up to £22,000.

Worst part of the job: Cleaning up after suicides. "You get used to the job being disgusting but the emotional side of it is still hard," he says. "You also

need to have a sense of humour because some days can be difficult."

Job satisfaction: Lewis finds the variety of tasks exciting. "One day, I'm cleaning up after a dead body; another day, I'm in a prison cell or high in the air being lowered down into a silo to clean it." He also takes pride in the changes he makes: "It's satisfying to make a hazardous site safe again. And it benefits society."

3. Biogas engineer

The job: Setting up biogas plants in developing countries

What it involves: Linking a system – which can be filled with human excrement, animal dung and other waste products – to toilets to produce a biogas that can be used for cooking and lighting. "You have to know what size and shape the mixing pit needs to be, how to create the best temperature for the process and where to build the biogas plant," says Baburam Paudel, chief technical officer in Nepal for the charity Renewable World.

Typical salary: An entry-level salary is around £10,000, while a typical salary for a chief technical officer is £30,000.

Worst part of the job: For Paudel, it's seeing people struggling to survive on very little income. "You have to be willing to get your hands dirty during the build process and inspections. Unsurprisingly, the anaerobic digestion (the process that takes place when bacteria eat the waste and produce methane) smells like rotten eggs. It can be disgusting and there is no room for mistakes."

Job satisfaction: "I find it very satisfying to know that I am helping people to increase their incomes and allowing girls to go to school by replacing the need to collect firewood," says Paudel. "My work improves the health and hygiene of whole communities."

4. Eel ecologist

The job: Conserving the critically endangered European eel

What it involves: To monitor the size of the endangered eels, ecologists walk into the Thames and other London rivers full of eels, sometimes up to their armpits, and reach into a net filled with up to 20 adult eels to take one out with their bare hands. "Adult eels can be a metre long, or even larger, and weigh up to 2kg. They're not at all dangerous but they are almost pure muscle and they can be a little bit slimy," says Stephen Mowat, an eel conservationist and ecologist for the Zoological Society of London. "We have to weigh and measure them, and they wriggle ... a lot.

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It's difficult to look professional while crawling on the ground chasing an eel across the grass."

Worst part of the job: "Eels are really tricky creatures to work with" says Mowat. "You also have to be ready to jump from one project to the next. I once had to cut up some dead eels to examine parasites living in them, moments before putting on a suit for a meeting." But, for Mowat, the worst part of the job is definitely not handling the eels – he believes baby eels (known as elvers) are "as cute as pandas": "The worst thing about the job is regularly learning how much damage we are doing to the environment."

Job satisfaction: "Working outdoors and seeing British wildlife up close is the best part of the job," says Mowat. "Eels are beautiful creatures and working with eels doesn't just benefit the eel – it helps rivers and coastal areas. That is something worth doing."

5. Shopping channel presenter

The job: Selling and demonstrating a wide range of products on live TV

What it involves: Presenting hours and hours

of monotonous TV, while, at the same time, demonstrating the products and appearing to be enthusiastic and knowledgeable about everything that you're selling. "I prepare and research as much technical and practical information as possible on every single product beforehand," says Shaun Ryan, presenter for Ideal World TV.

Typical salary: A trainee presenter would start on a minimum of £30,000, while an experienced presenter can expect over £55,000.

Worst part of the job: "The unsociable hours," says Ryan. "An experienced presenter like me generally has to work weekends, bank holidays and very late evenings, plus, occasionally, a 5am shift."

Job satisfaction: "I love the rush of live presenting and having to think on my feet every second," says Ryan. "I also get an adrenaline rush from knowing that, at times, I have thousands of viewers ordering the product that I have just been presenting."

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3 Collocations

Match the words to make collocations from the article.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. adrenaline | a. areas |
| 2. bare | b. scenes |
| 3. crime | c. accidents |
| 4. developing | d. department |
| 5. top | e. rush |
| 6. quality | f. hours |
| 7. coastal | g. countries |
| 8. road | h. brand |
| 9. rotten | i. hands |
| 10. unsociable | j. eggs |

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4 Comprehension check

a. Use the collocations from task 3 to complete the sentences.

b. Write the job that each person does after the sentences.

1. Shaun Ryan doesn't like having to work _____ but he says that he gets an _____ from knowing that thousands of people are buying the products.

Job: _____

2. Philip Wells works in the _____ of a company that makes a _____ of pet food.

Job: _____

3. Richard Lewis's job involves cleaning up at _____ and after _____.

Job: _____

4. Stephen Mowat has to catch wriggly creatures with his _____. His job helps the environment, especially rivers and _____.

Job: _____

5. Baburam Paudel works in _____. The products used in systems he builds can sometimes smell like _____.

Job: _____

5 Expressions

Complete the expressions from the article with the missing word. The first letter is given to help you. Find the expressions in the article and talk about what they mean.

1. fit for human c_____ (section 1)

2. t_____ the stomach (section 1)

3. t_____ pride in (section 2)

4. think on my f_____ (section 5)

6 Discussion

- Talk about the worst or most unusual job you have ever done. What was so bad or unusual about it?
- Find out if anyone else in the group has done a similar job.

7 Writing

Write a job advertisement for one of the five jobs in the article. Try to make the job sound as attractive and interesting as possible. Include information on what tasks the person will have to do and give the salary (if known).

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KEY

2 Key words

1. batch
2. deadlines
3. rewarding
4. disinfecting
5. hazardous
6. excrement
7. silo
8. plants
9. waste
10. eel
11. endangered
12. monitor
13. wriggle
14. monotonous
15. enthusiastic
16. rush

5 Expressions

1. consumption
2. turn
3. take
4. feet

3 Collocations

1. e
2. i
3. b
4. g
5. h
6. d
7. a
8. c
9. j
10. f

4 Comprehension check

1. unsociable hours; adrenaline rush – Job: shopping channel presenter
2. quality department; top brand – Job: dog-food taster
3. crime scenes; road accidents – Job: hygiene technician
4. bare hands; coastal areas – Job: eel ecologist
5. developing countries; rotten eggs – Job: biogas engineer