

# Career choices

## 1 Three careers

a) Read the following profiles. In a grid, make notes about why these people chose their careers.

“I’m **Chiara**, and I’m 26 years old and from Manchester. When I was a girl I lived opposite a church, and every weekend I had the chance to see weddings. I *loved* watching the brides<sup>1</sup> in their beautiful white dresses and I always thought,  
5 “What a pity: Just one day for such a pretty dress and such a lovely party with family and friends. If only *every* day could be a wedding!” Well, very soon, every day really *did* become a wedding for  
10 me.

When I was 21, I helped my older sister plan her wedding. I found the perfect dress for her, the perfect restaurant for the reception, the perfect food for the big wedding dinner, and the perfect  
15 decorations, and a great DJ. I just presented her my different ideas, and she chose what she liked best. It was fun for me, and *relaxing* for her, which is important when you’re getting married. And it was a *huge* success! Two wedding guests asked if  
20 they could book me to organize *their* weddings. So, I was in business! I love to see people happy, and it’s very satisfying<sup>2</sup> to help make the most important day in a person’s life special. And wonderful!”



“Hi. I’m **Andrew**. I’m 26 years old, from L.A. Three years ago Dale, a friend from college, invited me to stay with his family up in Santa Barbara for the weekend. That was when I met Dale’s 18-year-old  
25 brother, Brian, for the first time – and it changed my life.

I had been working in junior management<sup>3</sup> at a big construction company that specializes<sup>4</sup> in million-dollar homes, and I was making very  
30 good money. I had a hot car, knew hot girls and went to hot parties. But somehow, something seemed to be missing in my life.

I had never really spent time with  
35 handicapped people, and it was easy to see that Brian didn’t have an easy life. But: Dale and his family gave him lots of love and care. Brian couldn’t do anything by himself, so they gave him his bath, took him to the bathroom, dressed him, fed him, told him stories, took him everywhere  
40

with them in his wheelchair. It was hard work – but they did it with a *smile*. I loved that. It made *me* want to help people who couldn’t help themselves.

The next Monday, I registered<sup>5</sup> for a training program to get the qualifications to work in an assisted-living center<sup>6</sup>. And now, three years later, it’s my full-time job to take care of other teens like Brian. The  
45 money isn’t the best, the hours can be long, and I’ve hurt my back a few times lifting people out of bed or a chair. But at the end of the day, when I look in the mirror, I like the person I see much better than the cool guy who used to sell million-dollar homes.”



“Hi, I’m **Diane**, and I’m 29 years old, from America. I knew from a very early age what I wanted to do. My father worked as a diplomat for the US government, and it was exciting to meet people from so many different countries. I knew I wanted to work internationally.

You might think being a diplomat is all about having lots of privileges<sup>7</sup> – a big house, a pool, a chauffeur. But being a diplomat also means a lot of hard work – and sometimes even danger.

First of all, before you even apply to the Foreign Service, you have to have a college education, excellent grades, *very* good all-around knowledge, and good language and intercultural skills.

And once you pass the difficult exams (many don’t) and become a diplomat, you can be sent to dangerous places, and even ‘safe’ places can suddenly become dangerous. Also, what many people don’t know is that diplomats are sent by their governments to a new country every three or four years – whether they want to go or not.

As a diplomat you have to be flexible and do what your *country* wants, and not always what you want; it’s about duty. But I like representing my country. And being flexible also means that things stay interesting. Sure, and being able to speak several languages really helps when you travel as much as I do. But best of all: I have friends on every continent!”



b) Discuss the results of your grid with the class. Why did Chiara, Andrew and Diane choose their careers?

## 2 Discussion: Job satisfaction<sup>8</sup>

What is ‘job satisfaction’? Explain the ways Chiara, Andrew and Diane experience it in their jobs.

## 3 Your turn

What aspects of a job would bring you the most job satisfaction? Why?

## 4 Role plays: A talk show

On a TV talk show, the theme today is ‘What makes a job a good job?’ You and your classmates now have the chance to act out roles on this talk show yourselves.

1. Form groups of four. In each group, one person plays the talk-show host, and the other three take on the roles of Chiara, Andrew and Diane.
2. After you have decided who is doing which role, take 5 minutes to think of what questions the host might ask / think about the answers to possible questions about the jobs Chiara, Andrew and Diane told you about.
3. Now each group presents its ‘show’ in front of the class.

<sup>1</sup>bride [braɪd] – Braut • <sup>2</sup>satisfying [ˈsætɪsfaɪɪŋ] – befriedigend • <sup>3</sup>junior management [ˌdʒuːniə ˈmæniʒmənt] – lower level of management • <sup>4</sup>to specialize in sth [ˈspeʃlaɪz] – sich auf etw spezialisieren • <sup>5</sup>to register for sth [ˈredʒɪstə] – sich für etw anmelden • <sup>6</sup>assisted-living center [əˈsɪstɪd ˈlɪvɪŋ ˌsentə] – (Pflege-)Heim mit umfassender medizinischer/therapeutischer Betreuung • <sup>7</sup>privilege [ˈprɪvɪlɪdʒ] – Privileg • <sup>8</sup>satisfaction [ˌsætɪs ˈfækʃn] – Zufriedenheit

## Lösungen

### Lösungsvorschläge Seite 1

**1**

Reasons for choosing their careers:

#### Chiara

Thought it was a pity for a wedding to be over so quickly and so she wanted weddings regularly; loves planning and organizing; likes to see people happy

#### Andrew

had a good job and money, but felt something was missing; meeting his friend's handicapped brother changed his life; wanted to help people who can't help themselves

#### Diane

knew about the job by her father's career, wanted to work internationally; likes to represent her country

### Lösungsvorschläge Seite 2

**2**

Reasons for job satisfaction:

#### Chiara

loves making people happy; loves making the most important day in a person's life special, wonderful, etc.

#### Andrew

loves looking after people; loves looking in the mirror at the end of the day and seeing a happy person, and not just a 'cool' person with a good job and lots of money; the money isn't important

#### Diane

never knowing what the next day will bring keeps things interesting; speaking several languages is helpful; best of all is having friends on every continent

**3**

### Individuelle Schülerlösungen

**4**

Examples of talk show questions / answers:

Question: What tips do you have about finding good jobs?

Answer: – Think about what you enjoy:  
People? Travel? Being outside?  
Being in a business environment?  
Working by yourself?

Question: What is the best thing about your job? Why?

Answer: – I like doing something useful.  
– I enjoy looking after other people.  
– I like seeing people smile / making people happy.  
– I like seeing the world.  
– I enjoy change.  
– I don't like desk jobs, so my job is perfect for me.

Question: Does a good job have to pay well?

Answer: – It's all a question of what you think is important. We all need money, but the question is: How much?  
– For some people, yes; for others, no.

Question: What's the best advice for choosing the right job you could give to people still in school or just beginning university?

Answer: – Talk to people who are already doing jobs that you might like.  
– Visit people on the job.  
– Do internships on your summer holidays.  
– Be active; don't wait for the job to come to you!

Question: Even if you enjoy your job, are there ever days you think, "I can't work today, I hate my job"?

Answer: – Yes, I think everybody has had that experience!  
– Never! I love my job every day!

# A letter of application

## 1 Applying for a job

- a) Peter Hogarth from New York is fresh out of high school and has a great personality. He's the most popular waiter at the diner<sup>1</sup> he works at, where he is saving money to go to college; everybody likes him. However, if he worked at an expensive restaurant, he could earn better tips. Read the ad that Peter found in the New York Times this morning (Nov. 3, 2009).



### The Sky Club

Our stylish restaurant and lounge in New York's trendy Tribeca district is now accepting applications for an experienced, friendly and self-confident<sup>2</sup> waiter who knows what first-class service is and how our first-class clientele would want to be treated.

If you are interested, please send your application to:  
Ryan Price, 257 Washington Street, New York City,  
NY 10013

- b) Peter has experience in the restaurant business, and he also thinks he's friendly and self-confident. He decides to apply for the job. Unfortunately, the letter he sends to 'The Sky Club' restaurant is definitely not a model letter. Read that letter, on the right.

The Sky Club  
257 Washington Street  
NY, NY 10013

Peter Hogarth  
101 Ascan Avenue  
  
NY, NY 11211

Hi Mr. Price,

My name is Peter. I am looking for a new restaurant job. Right now, I work at a diner here in my neighborhood. It's great, but I need to make more money (for college later), so I want to work at a better restaurant. Your restaurant sounds pretty cool, so maybe I could be a waiter there.

I would be very happy to come in for an interview. But because I am very busy, I only have time for interviews on Mondays from 9:00 am – 11:00 am or Fridays from 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm. I hope that won't be a problem for you, but I don't think it will be as your restaurant is open from 8:00 am – 11:00 pm anyway.

At my interview, it would be very nice to discuss not only my hourly wage<sup>3</sup>, but also my vacation days. I love to travel and meet new people, so I will need to know when I can go on vacation, and for how long. I always make lots of new friends on vacation, and I'm also a popular waiter at my diner. So I think I have the right background for a job at your restaurant.

I am looking forward to talking to you and hope to hear from you as soon as possible.

Peter

<sup>1</sup>diner ['daɪnə] – small American restaurant • <sup>2</sup>self-confident [ˌself ˈkɒnfɪdnt] – *selbstbewusst* • <sup>3</sup>wage [weɪdʒ] – pay



## 2 Your help is needed!

- a) With a partner, go over the letter again and note down what mistakes Peter made. Think of these points:

- **Language register**  
→ Remember what you learnt about 'the right language for the right situation'? Check to see if Peter's letter is formal enough for a future employer.
- **Structure of letter**  
→ Is everything there that should be there?
- **Making the best possible impression**  
→ Has Peter made a good impression? Has he 'sold' himself well enough so that the restaurant will want to 'buy' him? Or has he not worked hard enough to sell himself?

- b) **Homework:** With your partner, rewrite the letter the way you think it should have been. Use your notes above. Present it to the class (e.g. on a whiteboard or via a projector), showing what you changed and why. What things did the other pairs do the same as you? What things were different?

- c) Now compare the different letters in your class with the **model letter** you see here. How close were you to that letter? (**Note:** Don't worry if your letter isn't just like the model letter, or uses words you wouldn't have used; it is only meant to be an example to compare your letter with. The **key** you see after the model letter explains what was wrong with Peter's original letter.)

The Sky Club  
257 Washington Street  
NY, NY 10013

Peter Hogarth  
101 Ascan Avenue

NY, NY 11211

November 3, 2009<sup>1</sup>

Your *New York Times* ad of November 3, 2009<sup>2</sup>

Dear Mr. Price,<sup>3</sup>

I am writing to apply for the job as waiter at The Sky Club.

I have been working as waiter at a small restaurant since I was in high school. This has given me very good experience in dealing with customers and working under pressure.<sup>5</sup>

Now I am looking for an opportunity to develop my skills, and a very good restaurant like The Sky Club would be perfect. I am popular with customers because they always feel well served and I would provide your clientele with a first-class service.<sup>6</sup>

I am available for an interview at any time and I look forward to hearing from you soon.<sup>7</sup>

Yours sincerely,<sup>8</sup>

**Peter Hogarth**<sup>9</sup>  
Encl. résumé<sup>10</sup>



## Key to model letter:

<sup>1</sup> Peter forgot the date in his original letter.

<sup>2</sup> A heading like this was missing in Peter's original letter.

<sup>3</sup> Register problem: 'Hi' is for friends, not for a future employer. Peter should have used 'Dear' in his original letter.

<sup>4</sup> Peter should have mentioned what he is writing about in his very first line; that would have been enough. It wasn't necessary to say "My name is Peter"; that sounds very childish.

<sup>5</sup> In Peter's original letter, he talked about how he wanted a better job to make more money for college; that was a mistake. It wasn't good for Peter to talk about money in a letter; the interview is the place for that. And Peter only said the truth when talking about his college plans; but before he mentioned college, he really should have talked about the restaurant he is trying to get a job at. That is why in the new version of the letter he says that 'The Sky Club' is a "very good restaurant". He also mentions the fact that he has experience and skills ("working under pressure", etc.). *That* is what an employer wants to hear.

<sup>6</sup> This is a good example of how one can 'sell oneself', i.e. talk about one's good qualities; in America especially, it is OK to talk about one's positive personality. But you mustn't overdo it! And you must always add some useful information as you see here, e.g. talking about how Peter would like to show the high-class clientele good service.

<sup>7</sup> In Peter's original letter, it was completely unacceptable of him to talk about how he was almost too busy for an interview; he showed that he isn't flexible. And even worse: He talked about vacation schedules! That is the *last* thing an employer wants to hear about in a letter of application. (And in the original letter he even said, "At my interview ...", which makes it sound like Peter was definitely going to have an interview, but it of course is not *his* decision to make; it's Mr. Price's.)

<sup>8</sup> Register problem: Peter forgot to end his original letter with a closing like 'Yours sincerely' or 'Sincerely yours'. Leaving it out was much too casual.

<sup>9</sup> Register problem: Peter should have ended his original letter more formally, i.e. with his first *and* last name.

<sup>10</sup> Peter didn't mention a résumé in his original letter, but he should have.