

## The World of Work

### Possible answers and solutions

Die Lösungen sind nur Beispiele, die mögliche Lösungsansätze repräsentieren. Sie sollen Anregungen im Hinblick auf sprachliche Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten geben und inhaltliche Ansätze darstellen. Sie repräsentieren ein relativ gutes Leistungsniveau und erheben weder den Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit, noch sind sie ausschließlich und alleingültig.

### Comprehension

1. Briefly sum up the scene and the content of the conversation.

The narrator meets Philip Sanders a teacher of electrical engineering at the university. While walking through different sections of the institution, Sanders is continuing his usual working scheme and is talking about his experience at the same time.

The topic of the conversation is the difficult situation of electrical engineering. In the course of the conversation Sanders particularly complains about the American students' reluctance to enrol in subjects like engineering, mathematics and natural sciences.

Obviously Dr. Sanders speaks most of the time and in the end the conversation more or less turns out to become a lecture by the teacher who displays his view on the reasons for the lack of engineers.

### Analysis

2. Analyse Dr. Sanders' character and his attitude towards work.

Above all Dr. Sanders proves to be very committed to his field of work and studies which is revealed by the deep worries he expresses about the future of the USA. Furthermore he appears to dispose of well-founded knowledge in his field. The direct characterization the author provides right at the beginning introduces Dr. Sanders as a very reliable person.

The fact that he underlines his statements with facts and figures discloses a very precise and academic mind. While talking he never stops walking respectively working, i.e. he is used to acting efficiently, avoiding unnecessary loss of time.

As he never involves the narrator very much in his musings, i.e. lectures him, he seems to regard discussions with laypersons as a waste of time and energy. The very short statements demand no discussing or contradicting.

Sanders generally is very adamant, particularly concerning his judgement that the vices of American society are the root cause for the lack of students willing to try hard. They rather want to go into "investment banking" or become lawyers.

Sanders' attitude towards work seems to be that we do not have to regard our own ease and advantage when we choose our professional future, but have also got to take the future of our country into consideration. He argues in favour of a certain degree of selflessness and against an entirely egoistic approach. Since the calamity is very urgent what he says is not debatable in his own view. He makes it very clear that the question of employment and lack of technological expertise also raises the question of work ethics.

3. Examine the devices the author uses to convince the reader.

One of the most convincing devices is that the narrator assumes the role of a layperson and thus the reader can identify with him in being instructed by Dr. Sanders about modern work issues. In this way the author points out that the majority of people is not completely aware of the issue at stake.

A very large part of the text is dedicated to the positive characterization of Dr. Sanders which conveys the impression that the reader can rely on his revelations.

But on the other hand Dr. Sanders is also shown as a person like you and me who can express his ideas in a simple way which shows that the issue affects everybody.

I maintain that the most clever device the author makes use of, is to be seen in the way he conveys the urgency of the issue by the swiftness and briskness he makes Mr. Sanders move and talk. "As if he was afraid of losing me" contains an almost metaphorical allusion that might refer to the lack of understanding average people have concerning the problem Sanders talks about. Another metaphor referring to a similar idea is "He unlocked a door", as though he opens up new sources of knowledge to the reader.

Sometimes there is a tendency to make use of irony: The expression "balance sheet" derives from the very field of finance that Sanders denounces as the actually "wrong" one.

All in all the author succeeds in justifying Sanders' worries by making the reader gradually comprehend the whole scope of the issue.

### Comment

4.1. Comment on Dr. Sanders' arguments against the background of your own attitude and experience.

Der Kommentar wird wahrscheinlich zunächst einmal auf die aktuelle Situation auf dem deutschen Arbeitsmarkt eingehen. Ebenso wird die technologisch-mathematische Ausbildung an den Schulen thematisiert, wie es auch Sanders tut.

Der Ansatz zum Kommentar fokussiert sich auf die Frage der Motivation für die eigene Wahl des Studiums/Berufes und auf die Frage, durch welche schulischen, familiären und gesellschaftlichen Faktoren diese Wahl bestimmt ist. Dieses wird dann mit Sanders Ausführungen verglichen und mündet in abschließende, zusammenfassende Bemerkungen.

### Creative Writing

4.2. An Indian student of electrical engineering writes a letter to his family wondering at the situation she/ he experiences in the USA and her/his university.

Der Brief ist formal ein privater Brief, wird aber kaum allzu „colloquial“ sein. Er geht einerseits auf die studentische Situation ein (workload, difficulties, satisfaction), andererseits auf den Mangel an amerikanischen Experten bei einer steigenden Zahl asiatischer Rückkehrer auf Grund der verbesserten Chancen in Asien.

Die Sorge um die Zukunft der USA, welche dem Verfasser des Briefes so viele Möglichkeiten geboten haben, sollte deutlich werden.