Thinking about self-employment

Topic: How to work in self-employment

**Level:** Entry 1 - 3 / National 2- 4 / CEFR A1 - B1

Time: Around 90 minutes

Aims

* To practise discussing advantages and disadvantages
* To develop learners’ ability to read for gist and detail
* To develop learners’ vocabulary for talking about self-employment
* To raise awareness of self-employment as an option after release from prison

Objectives

**Learners will be able to;**

* understand what ‘self-employed’ means
* suggest two or three advantages and disadvantages of being self-employed
* read two interviews with self-employed ex-offenders and match headings to show understanding of gist
* read two interviews and answer questions to show understanding of detail
* understand some vocabulary useful when talking about self-employment (differentiated)
* suggest qualities and skills useful for self-employment.

Introduction

This lesson introduces learners to the idea of self-employment after release from prison as well as equipping them with some of the vocabulary they need to talk about the topic. It provides students with opportunities for discussion, reading and pair-work speaking.

**Preparation**

**You will need:**

* **Resource 1** –displayed or one large copy,in colour if possible.
* **Resource 2** –cut out. Stick each text on the wall at the front of the classroom. Option: Print a few extra copies so learners can check their answers.
* **Resource 3** – enough copies for each group of three learners. Cut each set into strips. NB: For lower-levels, cut up the comments in the white call-outs only. For E3 / N4, prepare both the white and grey call-outs, including the blank call-outs.
* **Resources 4a** and **5a** – one copy for every Entry 1/2 / or National 2/3 learner.
* **Resources 4b** and **5b** – one copy for every Entry 3 / National 4 learner,
* If you have a mixed-level class and are using both 4a/b and 5a/b, prepare an **answer sheet** for learners to check their own answers.
* **Resource 6** – one copy for every learner.

**Tip!** Equip yourself with information about self-employment for ex-offenders before the lesson. There is a lot of information about useful organisations such as the Princes’ Trust (<http://www.princes-trust.org.uk>) and Unlock (<http://www.unlock.org.uk/>) and your prison’s resettlement team may be able to give you information.

**Tip!** Find a visitor to talk to your learners about business courses in a subsequent lesson. This could be a teacher from your prison’s business course/ or a local college that runs business courses.

Procedure

Warmer (15 minutes)

* Display the images of Maria and Peter (**resource 1**). Ask what they do and whether any of your learners have experience doing this.
* Explain that Maria and Peter are self-employed. Ask if any learners know what this means and elicit or explain its meaning.
* Write ‘self-employed’ on the board as learners will need this word for the warmer.
* Explain and write up any other words from **resource 2** which you think your learners may be unfamiliar with.
* Divide the learners into two mixed-level teams.
* Pair up the learners within the teams. With mixed-level groups, try to have one stronger writer in each pair. Give the stronger writer the role of ‘writer’ and the other learner the role of ‘reader’ (discreetly so as not to undermine the weaker writer’s confidence). The readers stand and the writers remain seated.
* Carry out a running dictation using **resource 2** (see instructions below if you haven’t used this activity before), with half the class using the text about Maria and the other half about Peter.
* Print out spare copies of **resource 2** and when they have finished, have learners check their writing for accuracy, especially use of the past simple.
* Pair each learner up with a learner from the other team.

**Tip!** A quick way of doing this is to point to all the learners who read about Maria in turn, giving each of them a number (e.g. 1 to 6 if there were 6 on this team). Repeat this with all the learners who read about Peter, using the same numbers (e.g. 1 to 6 again). Ask everyone to stand and to go and sit with the person with the same number.

* Ask the learners who read about Maria to explain her story, and the learners who read about Peter to explain his story to their partner.

|  |
| --- |
| **Tip!** Running dictations   * Stick the two texts on the wall at the front of the class, sufficiently far away from the ‘writers’ so that they can’t read it. * The ‘readers’ must go up to their allocated text, read a line and remember it, then go back to their ‘writer’ and tell him / her the line. The ‘writer’ must write it down. The ‘reader’ returns to the text and repeats with the second line. * There are some rules; No shouting is allowed. The readers cannot write anything down. Everyone must be careful and abide by health and safety rules (make sure there are no trip hazards between the readers and the writers.) * The winning pair is the pair that finishes first with reasonable accuracy. |

Activity 1 – Discuss advantages/ disadvantages of self-employment (15 minutes)

* Ask the learners if any of them have thought of being self-employed, or if any of them have experience of running their own business.
* Ask for examples of what they think would be good and what would be difficult about having your own business.
* Tell the learners they are going to read some of Maria’s and Peter’s comments on being self-employed, and decide if they think it is an advantage or a disadvantage (check learners understand these terms).
* Elicit or explain the meanings of these words which appear in the resource; *skills, success, boss, paperwork, the long term.*
* Re-arrange the learners so they are working with learners of roughly the same English level.
* Give each group of two or three learners a set of cards (**Resource 3**) and ask them to make two columns (advantages and disadvantages) with the ideas.
* Get some feedback from the whole class and deal with any new vocabulary that has come up (e.g. for your Entry 3 learners; *focus, responsibility, re-offend, fail* and *tough*).

**Differentiation/ extension**

* For lower-level learners, use the comments in the white call-outs.
* For higher-level learners, use the white *and* grey ones which include trickier vocabulary. Additionally, there are two blank call-outs for learners to add their own ideas as an extension if they finish early.

Activity 2 – Reading for gist (15 minutes)

* Keep the learners in their same-level groups.
* Tell learners they are going to read interviews with Maria and Peter. Ask learners what questions they would like to ask Maria and Peter (e.g. *Was it difficult?*) and write up any suggestions on the board. Don’t insist on accuracy; write their questions with correct grammar but don’t focus on grammar here. The point of the activity is to generate ideas and provide a reason for reading.
* Give out **resource 4a** to your Entry 1/ Entry 2 learners and **resource 4b** to your Entry 3 learners.
* Ask all learners to read the questions in Task 1 and compare against their ideas on the board.
* Check learners understand the meaning of ‘*personal qualities’* (question c, Task 1). Elicit or explain its meaning then elicit examples from your learners. Make sure they understand the meanings of *patient, calm, hardworking* and *organised* as these words appear in the texts. See below for ideas on how to do this.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *patient* | Say ‘I’m meeting my friend at 10.00. She is not here. It’s 10.30. I am not angry. I can wait.’ Mime looking at your watch, but look relaxed and happy. |
| *calm* | Mime angry / stressed, then look calm and relaxed as a contrast. |
| *hardworking* | Ask learners to tell you what a hardworking person does. Ask questions such as; *‘Am I often busy? Do I sit around watching TV a lot? Do I do lots of work?’* |
| *organised* | Show a diary with appointments. Tidy all the things on your desk. Ask questions such as ‘*I am an organised learner. Is my file tidy? Can I find things easily? Do I know when I need to give my teacher my homework? Do I plan my time?’* |
| Drill and write up the words. Allow learners times to make a note of them f they wish. Ask learners if they think any of the words describe them. Entry 1 and 2 learners will come across these words again in Task 3 of Resource 4a. | |

* Distribute the reading texts (**resource 5a** for lower levels, **resource 5b** for higher) and ask learners to match each question to an answer to complete Task 1. When finished, they check in pairs then as a class.

**Tip!** Entry 3 / National 4 learners have an extra heading to match.

**Activity 3 – Reading for detail and vocabulary (25 minutes)**

* Keep learners in same-level groups.
* Learners work individually to complete the detailed reading activity in **resource 4a/ b** (Task 2) and before checking in pairs.
* Learners work individually to complete the vocabulary activity (Task 3) before checking in pairs.

**Tip!** Task 3 is different in rResources 4a and 4b. If you are using both in a mixed-level class, you might find it useful to prepare answer sheets for learners to check their own answers while you monitor and answer any questions they have. If you are using only one or the other, you could go over the answers as a whole class.

**Extension**

Ask learners to brainstorm other personal qualities and then use them to describe themselves. This could lead onto personal statement or CV writing in future lessons (Teacher’s pack ‘Looking for work outside’ has a unit on CV writing if you wish to pursue this).

Activity 4 – Speaking and listening (20 minutes)

* This task revisits some of the vocabulary and ideas from the first two tasks.
* Ask learners to work with a partner within their level groups. In pairs, ask them to think about the information in the interviews and decide what sort of person you need to be to be self-employed.
* After a few minutes, get some feedback from the class.
* Ask if anyone at this stage likes the idea of being self-employed.
* Tell the learners you would like them to ask each other questions then discuss whether or not they think self-employment would be a good option.
* Distribute **Resource 6** and monitor whilst they carry out the questionnaire in pairs.

**Differentiation**

Fold or cut resource 6 where indicated so that lower-level learners have fewer and easier questions.

Entry 3 / National 4 learners should ask all questions and if they finish early, think of another one or two questions to add to the questionnaire.

Activity 5 – Speaking and listening (10 minutes)

* Reorganise learners into mixed-level groups of three or four and give each a large sheet of paper (e.g. flipchart paper)
* Ask learners to brainstorm what skills people learn in prison (these could be skills used in prison jobs, or skills learned on a course, such as numeracy skills)
* After five minutes, ask learners to look at their list and decide whether or not they think these skills are useful for self-employment, e.g. *I think numeracy skills are useful because you need to be able to look after your money*. *If you have worked in the sewing workshop, you can start a sewing business.*
* Draw attention to any interesting ideas you have heard in whole class feedback.

Cooler (5-10 minutes)

* Play ‘board run’ with today’s vocabulary.
* Ask learners to shout out any new words or phrases that have come up today. As they do this, write them on the board.
* Ask learners to stand up in two lines. These are the two teams. Give the person at the front of each line a board pen.
* Give a definition of one of the words on the board, without saying the word itself e.g. for self-employed you might say ‘*This is an adjective to describe a person who works for herself.’*
* The two players at the front of the line have to find and circle the correct word. Whoever does so first wins a point for his / her team.
* They give the pens to the next person in the line and go to the back of the line.
* Repeat the procedure until all the words have been circled then add up the points and congratulate the winning team.

Follow-up activity

Arrange a visit from either a teacher on a business course (in prison, or a local college) or someone who has successfully started their own business. During the lesson before the visit, learners work in pairs to think of questions they would like to ask.

Answer key to reading tasks

*Resource 4a*

*Task 1 – a) 4, b) 3, c) 6, d) 2, e) 5, f) 1*

*Task 2 – 1) Maria, 2) Peter, 3) Both, 4) Peter, 5) Maria*

*Task 3 – organised – disorganised, calm – angry, hardworking – lazy, patient – impatient*

*Resource 4b*

*Task 1 – a) 4, b) 3, c) 7, d) 2, e) 5, f) 1, g) 6*

*Task 2 - 1) Maria, 2) Peter, 3) Both, 4) Peter, 5) Maria, 6) Peter*

*Task 3 – start a business, set up a business, run a business, make a profit, make money, make decisions, make a success of something, be determined, be hardworking, be your own boss, be patient*

**Resource 1 – Maria and Peter**





**Resource 2 – Running dictation**

**Running dictation 1 ✂**

|  |
| --- |
| While Maria was inside, she worked in the prison gardens. She took courses in English, maths, gardening and business. When she got out, she started her own gardening business. She loves being self-employed. |

**Running dictation 2 ✂**

|  |
| --- |
| Peter always loved cooking. When he was in prison, he took a course in catering and decided he wanted to start his own business. Now he runs a small cafe in a town centre. He loves being self-employed. |

**Running dictation 1 ✂**

|  |
| --- |
| While Maria was inside, she worked in the prison gardens. She took courses in English, maths, gardening and business. When she got out, she started her own gardening business. She loves being self-employed. |

**Running dictation 2 ✂**

|  |
| --- |
| Peter always loved cooking. When he was in prison, he took a course in catering and decided he wanted to start his own business. Now he runs a small cafe in a town centre. He loves being self-employed. |

**Resource 3 – Advantages and disadvantages of being self-employed ✂**

|  |
| --- |
| **You can make lots of money in the long term.** |
| **It’s great to be your own boss.** |
| **No-one tells you what to do.** |
| **You don’t make much money at the beginning.** |
| **There’s a lot of paperwork.** |
| **You can use the skills you learned in prison.** |
| **It is sometimes stressful.** |
| **It’s good to see your hard work become a success.** |
| **It’s a lot of responsibility.** |
| **You have a focus. This helps stop you re-offending.** |
| **Your business can fail.** |
| **You’ve got to be prepared for tough times. It’s hard work.** |
| **You make all your own decisions.** |
| *Think of another advantage and write it here* |
| *Think of another advantage and write it here* |

**Resource 4a**

**Task 1 – Reading for gist**

Read the interviews with Maria and Peter. Match these headings to their answers.

1. Do you enjoy being self-employed?
2. Do you need any qualifications?
3. What personal qualities do you need?
4. Why a gardening business?
5. Did you have any help to start your business?
6. Why did you want to start your own business?

**Task 2 - Reading for detail**

Maria or Peter? Who said these things? Write **Maria**, **Peter** or **Both** in the gap.

1. ........................ went to ESOL classes.
2. ........................ thinks it’s important to be patient.
3. ........................ thinks doing a course is a good idea.
4. ........................ had someone to help start the business.
5. ........................ thinks you need to be organised.

**Task 3 (if you have time) – Vocabulary**

Look at these words from the interviews;

***organised calm hardworking patient***

These words describe **personal qualities**; what kind of person you are.

Match the words with their opposites. Write a number in the right hand column.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | organised |  | impatient |  |
| 2 | calm |  | disorganised |  |
| 3 | hardworking |  | lazy |  |
| 4 | patient |  | angry |  |

Now circle the words above which you think describe you.

**Resource 4b**

**Task 1 – Reading for gist**

Read the interviews with Maria and Peter. Match these headings to their answers.

1. Do you enjoy being self-employed?
2. Do you need any qualifications?
3. What personal qualities do you need?
4. Why a gardening business?
5. Did you have any help to start your business?
6. Why did you want to start your own business?
7. Do you have any advice for prisoners thinking about starting their own business when they get out?

**Task 2 - Reading for detail**

Maria or Peter? Who said these things? Write **Maria**, **Peter** or **Both** in the gap.

1. ........................ went to ESOL classes.
2. ........................ thinks it’s important to be patient.
3. ........................ thinks doing a course is a good idea.
4. ........................ had someone to help start the business.
5. ........................ thinks you need good organisational skills.
6. ........................ enjoys making decisions.

**Task 3 – Vocabulary**

Read the interviews again and find the phrases *in italics*. Use the words in the box to fill the gaps.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ...................... a business  ...................... a business  ...................... a business | make ............................  make ............................  make ............................  make ............................ | be ....................................  be ....................................  be ....................................  be .................................... |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| hardworking | | patient | a profit | start | your own boss |
| set up | money | run | determined | decisions | a success of something |

**Resource 5a**

**Maria**

**(1) ........................................................**

In our prison ESOL class, a woman came in to talk to us. She started a business when she left prison. She really enjoyed making her business a success. I thought ‘I want to try that!’

**(2) ........................................................**

I worked in the gardens in prison. I like being outdoors and working with my hands.

**(3) ........................................................**

You don’t need qualifications but it helps. I got some English and maths certificates first, then took courses in gardening and business.

**What personal qualities are important?**

I think you need to be organised with your time and paperwork, and calm when there are problems.



**Peter**

**(4) ........................................................**

I love it! It’s great to be your own boss. If I have a new idea, I can just do it. No need to check with anyone!

**(5) ........................................................**

Yes. When I got out of prison, a charity called ‘Get started’ really helped me. They gave me a mentor who I met every week. He gave me lots of advice and helped me get a loan.

**Do you have any advice for other prisoners thinking about starting their own business when they get out?**

Yes. Get as much information and advice as you can now. Find out about charities that can help you and enrol on a business course.

**(6) ........................................................**

You have to be hardworking and believe in yourself. Also, it’s important to be patient; you won’t make lots of money straight away.

**Resource 5b**

**Maria**

**(1) ........................................................**

When I was in prison, I was in an ESOL class one day when someone came in to talk to us. She was an ex-offender who had *started her own business* on release. She talked about how great it was to *make a success of something* she enjoyed. She sounded so positive. I thought ‘I want to do that’.

**(2) ........................................................**

I worked in the gardens in prison. I always liked being outdoors and working with my hands. I thought I could use the skills I had learned to *set up a gardening business.*

**(3) ........................................................**

I think your attitude and determination is more important, but it definitely helps to have some qualifications. I got some English and maths certificates first, then did a City and Guilds qualification in horticulture and finally took a course in business.

**What personal qualities are important?**

You need to *be determined* to make it work, organised with your time and paperwork, and calm when dealing with problems. If you have these qualities, I say, ‘go for it’! You can *run your own business!*



**Peter**

**(4) ........................................................**

I love it! It’s a lot of responsibility but it’s great to *be your own boss* and *make your own decisions*. If I have a new idea, I can go ahead and try it out. No need to check with anyone! It’s very rewarding to work hard at something and see it become a success.

**(5) ........................................................**

Yes. When I was released, a charity called ‘Get started’ really helped me. They gave me a mentor who I met regularly. He gave me lots of advice and helped me write my business plan. They also gave me a start-up loan to help me buy equipment and pay for my first few months’ rent for the premises.

**(6) ........................................................**

Yes. Get as much information and advice as you can now. Find out about charities that offer support and enrol on a business course to help you understand the basics.

**(7) ........................................................**

You have to *be hardworking* and believe in yourself. Also, it’s important to *be patient*; your business won’t *make money* overnight. You might have to work hard for several months before you *make a profit*.

**Resource 6**

**Ask your partner these questions. Listen carefully and tick yes or no, then say if you think he / she would enjoy being self-employed.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| What’s your name? ................................................... | Yes | No |  |
| Are you hardworking? |  |  |  |
| Are you patient? |  |  |  |
| Are you organised? |  |  |  |
| Are you calm under pressure? |  |  |  |
| Do you have good maths and English skills? |  |  |  |
| Are you trying to improve your maths and English? |  |  |  |
| Are you good with money? |  |  |  |
| Have you got good communication skills? |  |  |  |
| Do you have any skills that you could use? For example, catering, gardening, sewing or cleaning. |  |  |  |
| Do you want to know more about self-employment? |  |  |  |
| Do you like responsibility? |  |  | Fold under or cut |
| Do you like making decisions? |  |  |  |
| Are you determined? |  |  |  |
| *Write your own question here.* |  |  |  |
| *Write your own question here.* |  |  |  |