

## Lesson plan – Reading a payslip

**Reading a payslip****Topic** Employability**Level:** SfL Entry 3 / SQA National 4 / CEFR B1**Time:** Approx. 1½ hours**Aims**

- To give practice of scanning a payslip for specific detail
- To develop learners' vocabulary related to pay
- To give practice of discussing a problem with an employer.

**Introduction**

This lesson is related to employability and focusses on the language and skills needed to understand a payslip. There is also the opportunity develop speaking and listening skills through a role-play querying unpaid overtime.

**You will need:**

**Worksheets 1 & 2** (word and definition cards), 1 copy of each  
sticky tack

**Worksheet 3** (quiz), 1 per pair (there are two copies on each page)  
Red / green traffic light cards, one set per pair

**Worksheet 4** (sample payslip 1 + vocab definitions), 1 per learner

**Worksheet 5** (questions), 1 per learner (there are two copies on each page)

**Worksheet 6** (sample payslip 2), 1 per learner

**Worksheet 7** (phrases table), 1 per learner

**Procedure****Warmer / Vocab check (10 mins)**

- Before the lesson starts, stick the definition cards from **Worksheet 2** around the room.
- Give pairs the word cards and ask them to move around the room reading the definitions, and to stick the word next to the correct definition.
- Make sure every pair has read every definition.
- Monitor, and discuss any incorrect matchings at the end of the activity.

**Differentiation:** Pair stronger learners together and give them two cards to match.

**Task 1 - Pre-reading (10mins)**

- Display the sample payslip from **Worksheet 4** and elicit what it is (a payslip) and what it's for (to show how much money someone has earned).

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- Give pairs the payslip quiz on **Worksheet 3**, and give them 5 minutes to decide if the sentences are true or false.
- Get feedback by asking pairs to hold up a red card if they think the sentence is false, and green if they think it's true, then hold up the correct card yourself.
- Allow discussion of the answers to develop into a general discussion about payslips. Questions you could ask the class might include: *Are you paid hourly or do you get a salary? Do you get paid for working overtime? Have you ever had any problems with your pay?*

### Task 2 – Vocabulary work (15 mins)

- Hand out **Worksheet 4**.
- Ask small groups to work together to find the words on the payslip which match the definitions and highlight / circle them.
- Invite a volunteer from each small group to circle the correct word on the board.
- Add further explanations as necessary.

#### Differentiation:

- Group learners with little experience of work with those who have more.
- Allow learners to discuss in L1 but not if this means some individuals will be excluded.

### Task 3 – Detailed reading (15 mins)

- Hand out **Worksheet 5**.
- Ask learners to work individually to find the answers to the questions in the payslip.
- Ask learners to check their answers with a partner.
- Check the answers as a class, taking an answer from each pair.
- Refer to the payslip on the whiteboard to guide learners to find the correct answer.

#### Differentiation:

- Give weaker learners a copy of the payslip with the answers highlighted, so they only have to identify which answer matches which question.

### Task 4 – Scanning race (10 mins)

- Hand out **Worksheet 6** and display the payslip on the board.
- Ask for the pieces of information below one by one, and explain that the learners need to race to find them in the text and put their fingers on them.
- Keep a score if the groups like competitive games.
- You don't need to ask for all the pieces of information or in this order. Judge this according to the level of the group and how they performed in the previous task.
  1. This person's National Insurance number.
  2. How much this person got paid, after tax.

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3. How much this person got paid for extra work.
4. This person's employee number.
5. How much this person got paid in total before tax. (appears twice)
6. How much tax this person has paid this year so far.
7. How much this person paid this month for their pension. (appears twice)
8. When this person got paid.
9. How much National Insurance this person has paid this year.
10. How much tax this person paid this month. (appears twice)
11. How much this person got paid for their normal job this month.
12. How much this person has been paid so far this year.
13. How much National Insurance this person paid this month. (appears twice).
14. This person's Tax Code.
15. How much this person paid for their pension, this year.
16. The total amount of money taken off this person's salary.

### Differentiation:

- Position yourself near weaker learners so you can show approximate place on the payslip where they can find the answer.
- As an alternative, divide the class into two (or more) groups, according to ability. Ask the groups for alternate pieces of information so that the learners are only racing against the others in the group. Alternatively, be selective about which information you request from different groups.

### Task 5 – Speaking & listening: a discussion with an employer (20 mins)

- Ask the learners to look at **Worksheet 4** again.
- Explain that Anna did fifteen hours of overtime this month, and ask the learners if they can spot a problem on her payslip (she has only been paid for ten).
- Ask the class what they think she should do about this (speak to her supervisor / manager / payroll department / union rep).
- Tell the class that Anna has decided to speak to her manager.
- Hand out **Worksheet 7** and read through the instructions.
- Check that learners understand the headings.
- Ask learners to work in small groups to complete the table and think of other phrases Anna could use.
- Check as a class and elicit other phrases the groups came up with.
- Write the other phrases on the board for all learners to add to their tables.
- Ask the small groups to plan together what Anna might say. Learners can write down notes and / or whole sentences if they want.
- Monitor and supply extra vocabulary, structures and questions as needed.
- Ask the pairs / groups to role-play the conversation.
- Give feedback along with errors which you heard for learners to self-correct.

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- Alternatively invite volunteers to try the role-play in front of the class with yourself or a strong learner as the manager. Invite constructive feedback from the rest of the class.

**Differentiation:**

- Group stronger and weaker learners together and ask the stronger learners to take the manager's role.

**Cooler – Scanning game: 'Hit the board' (10 mins)**

- Display the payslip from **Worksheet 4** on the board.
- Ask the learners to stand in two columns facing the board.
- Ask for a piece of information, e.g. 'the date she got paid'.
- The two learners at the front of each line race to be the first to hit the answer to get a point for their team.
- They then move to the back of the line and you repeat with the next two, and so on.

**Extension activities / Homework**

- Tell the learners that instead of speaking to her manager, Anna decides to send an email. Ask learners to write the email for homework.
- Ask pairs to write questions about the payslip on **Worksheet 6** for other pairs to answer.
- Ask learners to answer the questions on **Worksheet 5** at home about one of their own payslips. In the next class they could feedback on how easy / difficult they found this and bring any questions about vocabulary they came across which wasn't covered in today's session.

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### Answers

#### Warmer

**salary / wages** - Money you get every month or week for doing your job.

**employer** - The person or organisation which you work for.

**employee** - Someone who is paid to work for someone else.

**freelancer** - Someone who works independently for different organisations and isn't employed by them.

**tax** - Money you pay to the government which is used to pay for public services.

**National Insurance** - Money which workers pay which goes to people who are unemployed, old or ill.

**contract** - The official agreement between a company and a person who starts to work for them.

**earn** - To get money for the work that you do.

**overtime** - Time that you spend doing your job that's extra to your normal working hours.

**National Insurance number** - A reference number which the government gives you and only you have.

#### Task 1

1. true 2. false 3. false 4. true 5. true 6. false (although most do) 7. false (this is not required and may be recorded separately) 8. true

#### Task 2

1. deductions 2. hourly rate 3. overtime 4. value 5. total payments 6. gross pay 7. net pay 8. pension 9. tax code 10. payroll number

#### Task 3

1. Anna Learner 2. JJ123456A 3. 30/11/14 4. 1000L 5. £910 6. 10 7. £975
8. £30 9. £10 10. £935 11. no

#### Task 5

Starting	Explaining the problem
<i>Have you got five minutes?</i> <b>Could I speak to you about my payslip?</b> <b>Excuse me, could I have a word?</b>	<i>There's an error in my payslip.</i> <i>I think there's been a mistake.</i> <i>I'm not sure how this happened, but...</i>
Requesting action	Summing up
<i>Do I need to do anything? (this could arguably be classed as 'summing up' as well)</i> <i>When will this be sorted?</i> <b>So what are you going to do about this?</b>	<i>So, just to be clear...</i> <i>So, let me get this right...</i> <i>Let me check I've understood correctly.</i>