

Work-life Balance

“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.”
— Anne Lamott

Warm up

- What do you think about the quote?
- Do you ever feel like you are busy all the time, and your to-do list never ends?
- What do you normally do to relax after school/work?
- Do you ever check your phone when you should be relaxing?
- Who do you spend more time with: family, friends, or classmates/colleagues?
- Do you think teenagers and adults today generally have a good work-life balance? Why or why not?
- If you had to choose: better grades/salary, or more free time, what would you pick? Why?



1. Work in pairs/small groups and write down your top 5 tips for a better work-life balance and share them with the class.

1. *Don't check work emails after dinner.*
 2. *Take short breaks every hour.*
 3. *Spend time outdoors without your phone.*
 4. *Exercise regularly.*
 5. *Say "no" when you're too tired.*
- Which tip was the most popular in the class?
 - Did any group have an unusual or funny tip?
 - Which tip do you personally want to try?



2. Match the words to their meanings. You will also hear these words in the video later.

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|-----------------|---|--|
| a. Interruption | 5 | 1. Very important, must be done quickly |
| b. Boundary | 6 | 2. Something that makes you lose concentration |
| c. Urgent | 1 | 3. Talking to reach an agreement, often about time or conditions |
| d. Negotiate | 3 | 4. Extreme tiredness and stress from too much work |
| e. Burnout | 4 | 5. When something stops your focus or activity |
| f. Distraction | 2 | 6. A limit you set to protect your time or energy |



3. Fill in the blanks with the correct vocabulary from exercise 2.

1. Many students say their phone is their biggest *distraction* when they try to do homework.
2. Some people don't have clear *boundaries* between work and free time — they answer emails even at midnight.
3. Not every message from your boss/teacher is really *urgent* but people often feel they must reply immediately.
4. A good skill in life is to *negotiate* more time when you feel the deadline is impossible.
5. Doctors say more and more young people suffer from *burnout* because of stress at school or work.
6. In one study, families said that a phone call during dinner was the most annoying *interruption*.



4. In pairs/small groups, discuss these questions about the sentences in Exercise 3.

- Which of these sentences feels most true for you?
- Do you think phones are the biggest distraction, or is something else worse?
- Have you ever had to negotiate for more time? Was it successful?
- Why do you think stress from school and work is leading to more burnout today? Is that the only reason, or are there other causes too?

Work-life Balance Quiz

1. You are having dinner with your family/friends when your phone buzzes with a message from your teacher/boss.
 - a) I answer immediately.
 - b) I check quickly but reply later.
 - c) I ignore it until after dinner.

2. How often do you study or work late at night instead of sleeping?
 - a) Almost every night.
 - b) Sometimes.
 - c) Rarely or never.

3. Which of these is your biggest distraction when working or studying?
 - a) My phone or social media.
 - b) Friends/family/colleagues.
 - c) I do not usually get distracted, but sometimes I forget to take breaks.

4. When you are very tired, someone asks you for help. What do you do?
 - a) Say yes, even if I feel exhausted.
 - b) Say yes, but limit the time.
 - c) Say no politely because I need rest.

5. How often do you take real breaks with no phone and no work?
 - a) Almost never.
 - b) Sometimes.
 - c) Every day.

6. You get three big tasks for the same day. How do you react?
 - a) I try to finish everything, even if I feel burnout coming.
 - b) Do the most urgent first and leave the rest for later.
 - c) Ask for more time or accept that I won't finish everything.

7. Which is most important for you?
 - a) Doing well in work or school, even if I feel stressed.
 - b) Doing both work and life, accepting some stress.
 - c) Protecting my health and relationships, even grades/work sometimes suffer.

8. How often do you do something just for fun, such as a hobby, sport, or time with friends?
 - a) Rarely because I do not have time.
 - b) A few times per week.
 - c) Almost every day, but sometimes I put fun before my responsibilities.

9. When you feel very stressed, what is your usual reaction?
 - a) Keep working without a break.
 - b) Take a short break but still check messages.
 - c) Take proper rest to recover, even if it delays work/study.

10. You have a group project at school/work. The tasks can be shared, but you think you will do them better than others. What do you do?
 - a) Do almost everything myself, even if it means extra stress.
 - b) Share some tasks but keep the important ones for me.
 - c) Delegate fairly and trust others to do their part.



5. Add up your points from all 10 questions. How to Score:

a = 1 point b = 2 points c = 3 points

10–16 points 🤔🔥 You may be heading toward burnout. You push yourself too hard and forget to rest. Try setting clearer boundaries and taking real breaks.

17–24 points 😊📏 You are doing quite well. You usually balance work or study with free time, but sometimes stress or distractions cause problems.

25–30 points 😎🌴 You value rest, fun, and relationships. Be careful not to relax too much or let enjoyment come before responsibility. Balance means work and rest together.



6. In pairs/small groups, discuss.

- Were you surprised by your result? Why or why not?
- Do you agree with what the quiz says about you?
- Which question in the quiz was hardest to answer honestly?
- If you could change one habit, what would it be?



7. Watch the TED Talk “3 Rules for Better Work-Life Balance.”¹ Take notes while you watch and be ready to answer the questions below.

- What example does the speaker give at the beginning about interruptions during free time? *She talks about getting a work call/text during family/personal time.*
- What did tourists remember less of when they had their phones out? *They remembered less of their experiences when they had phones out.*
- How many days of productivity do companies lose each year because of stress and burnout? *Companies lose about 40 days per year per worker (depending on video details — confirm when showing).*
- What personal life moment did the speaker interrupt by texting a client? *She texted a client during her child's event (e.g., school play or family dinner).*
- What two strategies does the speaker suggest for reclaiming rest and setting boundaries, and how should you communicate them? *Set boundaries (e.g., no emails after 7 p.m.) and take real breaks without devices. Communicate them clearly to colleagues/family.*
- Why does she say negotiating for more time is important, and how do colleagues usually react? *Important because deadlines are often flexible; colleagues usually understand when you ask politely.*



8. Homework: Write a short blog post or advice article called “How to Have a Better Work-Life Balance as a Student/Worker.” Include 3–4 tips.

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4c_xYLwOx-g