

Talk a Lot

Getting a Job

Multi-Purpose Text

A Life of Leisure (Original Text)

Line

1 November staggered on, and Dennis, let go from yet another short-lived position,
2 privately resolved to henceforth live a life of leisure. "I'm *through* with the working life!"
3 he declared to himself one Monday, shovelling an enormous bowlful of Cheerios into
4 his gob. "If you're at a loose end today, could you water the plants, please?" asked
5 his mum, heading off to an early meeting. "Er, right?" replied Dennis. "And would you
6 mind raking up the leaves in the back garden, lad?" enquired his dad, also gearing up
7 for a busy day. "The sink upstairs is still blocked," reminded Maggie, disappearing off
8 to college. "Alright!" growled Dennis, plugging in his Xbox, "I'll do it in a minute..."
9 Hours passed, and though the moon rose and set twice, Dennis completely forgot
10 about his duties. A crisis meeting was called, at which Dennis inadvertently revealed
11 his master plan to never work again. "OK, but you'll have to help out around the
12 house," said his mum, angrily. "We'll draw up a list of chores for you," said his dad.
13 "I'll do 'em all tomorrow," promised Dennis, somewhat underestimating the regular
14 nature of such work. The next day, Dennis got stuck into the Hoovering, dusting, and
15 ironing (trousers excepted) – as well as all of the other jobs he'd neglected. He was
16 exhausted, but felt a warm glow when he remembered that he wouldn't have to work
17 again. An hour later, he returned to earth with a bump, when his mum explained
18 firmly that household tasks – including ironing trousers – would become an *everyday*
19 part of his life, if he didn't try to find a job. This unpleasant news was the wake-up call
20 that he needed – and nobody was surprised when, the next day, Dennis hit the
21 Jobcentre hard, and landed a temporary job packing tinsel.
(299 words)



A Life of Leisure (Text with 20 Differences)

November staggered on, and Dennis, **1. led (let)** go from yet another short-lived position, privately resolved to henceforth live a life of leisure. "I'm **2. two (through)** with the working **3. lice (life)!**" he declared to himself one Monday, shovelling an enormous bowlful of Cheerios into his gob. "If you're at a **4. lose (loose)** end today, could you water the plants, please?" asked his mum, heading off to an early meeting. "Er, right?" replied Dennis. "And would you **5. my (mind)** raking up the leaves in the back **6. guarded (garden)**, lad?" enquired his dad, also gearing up for a busy **7. dale (day)**. "The sink upstairs is still blocked," reminded Maggie, disappearing off to college. "Alright!" growled Dennis, **8. lugging (plugging)** in his Xbox, "I'll do it in a minute..." **9. Our (Hours)** passed, and though the moon rose and set twice, Dennis completely forgot about his duties. A crisis meeting **10. were (was)** called, at which Dennis inadvertently revealed his master plan to never work again. "OK, but you'll have to help out around the **11. how (house)**," said his mum, angrily. "We'll draw up a list of **12. chalk (chores)** for you," said his dad. "I'll do 'em all tomorrow," promised Dennis, somewhat underestimating the regular nature of such **13. word (work)**. The next day, Dennis got **14. stud (stuck)** into the Hoovering, dusting, and ironing (trousers excepted) – as well as all of the other jobs he'd neglected. He was exhausted, but felt a warm **15. globe (glow)** when he remembered that he wouldn't have to work again. An hour later, he returned to earth with a bump, when his mum explained **16. early (firmly)** that household tasks – including ironing trousers – would become an *everyday* **17. par (part)** of his life, if he didn't try to find a job. This unpleasant **18. new (news)** was the wake-up call that he needed – and nobody was surprised when, the next day, Dennis **19. hid (hit)** the Jobcentre hard, and landed a temporary job **20. padding (packing)** tinsel.

Talk a Lot

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Multi-Purpose Text

A Life of Leisure (Guess the Function Words)



November staggered on, and Dennis, let go of his another short-lived position, privately resolved to henceforth live a life of leisure. "I *through* with working life!" he declared to himself one Monday, shovelling an enormous bowlful of Cheerios in his job. "I've got a loose end today, could you water the plants, please?" asked his mum, heading off to an early meeting. "Er, right?" replied Dennis. "Are you mind raking up the leaves in the back garden, lad?" enquired his dad, as gearing up for a busy day.



"The sink upstairs is still blocked," reminded Maggie, disappearing out of college. "Alright!" growled Dennis, plugging in his Xbox, "I'll do it in a minute..." Hours passed, and the moon rose and set twice, Dennis completely forgot about his duties. A crisis meeting was called, and Dennis inadvertently revealed his master plan to never work again.



"OK, but you've got to help out around the house," said his mum, angrily. "We'll draw up a list of chores for you," said his dad. "I'll do 'em all tomorrow," promised Dennis, somewhat underestimating the regular nature of such work. The next day, Dennis got stuck into the Hoovering, dusting, and ironing (trousers excepted) – and was aware of all the jobs he'd neglected. He was exhausted, but felt a warm glow when he remembered that he wouldn't have to work again.



An hour later, he returned to earth with a bump, when his mum explained firmly that household tasks – including ironing trousers – would become an everyday part of his life, if he didn't try to find a job. The unpleasant news was his wake-up call that he needed – and nobody was surprised when, the next day, Dennis hit the Jobcentre hard, and landed a temporary job packing tinsel.

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Multi-Purpose Text

A Life of Leisure (What's the Question?)

1. To an early meeting.
2. Because he had been fired from yet another short-term job.
3. His dad did.
4. On Wednesday.
5. His intention to never work again.
6. No, he revealed it inadvertently.
7. Yes, he felt exhausted.
8. That the sink upstairs was still blocked.
9. A busy day.
10. In November.
11. An enormous bowlful of Cheerios.
12. His mum.
13. Because he thought that when he'd finished he wouldn't have to do any more housework in the future.
14. No, he didn't.
15. Because they knew that he hated doing housework and would rather find a job.
16. He played on his Xbox.
17. Dennis's mum did.
18. Maggie was a student.
19. To college.
20. She was angry.
21. Trousers.
22. To live a life of leisure from that point on.
23. To the Jobcentre.
24. Because his mum told him that he'd have to do household chores every day if he didn't look for a job.
25. Because he had to find a job.
26. On Thursday.
27. That they would prepare a list of duties for Dennis.
28. A temporary job packing tinsel.
29. Answers will vary.
30. Answers will vary, but probably no more than four or five weeks, because tinsel is a seasonal product which is usually only sold at Christmas.

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A Life of Leisure (True, False, or Unknown?)

1. Rob had to drive a long way on Monday.
2. The sink downstairs was blocked.
3. Dennis found a permanent job packing tinsel.
4. The crisis meeting on Wednesday lasted for two hours.
5. The story took place three weeks before Christmas.
6. Maggie had to go to college.
7. Maggie was annoyed about her idle brother.
8. Dennis ate a lot of Cheerios for breakfast.
9. Dennis's mum was pleased that he didn't want to find a job.
10. Dennis was fed up because he kept being sacked from short-term jobs.
11. At the family meeting Dennis accidentally let the cat out of the bag about his plans.
12. Dennis hated watering the plants, because there were so many of them at home.
13. Dennis felt energised after completing the housework.
14. Dennis's mum was at her wit's end with him.
15. Dennis preferred playing on his Xbox to doing the household chores.
16. Three people asked Dennis to help out.
17. Dennis often spent four or five hours playing the same computer game.
18. Maggie couldn't be bothered to go to college.
19. Dennis's dad promised to draw up a list of rules.
20. On Thursday Dennis did all of the ironing.
21. Dennis worked hard at home on Thursday.
22. Dennis went to the Jobcentre on Sunday.
23. Dennis managed to unblock the sink upstairs on Thursday.
24. Dennis completely forgot that he'd been asked to do some chores on Monday.
25. Dennis was first in the queue at the Jobcentre on Friday morning.
26. Cheerios was Dennis's favourite cereal.
27. Dennis tidied up the garden on Tuesday.
28. Dennis was sacked for misconduct from his latest job.
29. Dennis hovered on Thursday morning, and did all of the other jobs in the afternoon.
30. The story ended happily because Dennis found a job.

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Multi-Purpose Text

Glossary of New Words

Here are some words and phrases from the text that may be unfamiliar. You could either pre-teach them, or encourage students to find translations in a bilingual dictionary. Stressed syllables are underlined.

Line:	Unfamiliar English:	Definition / Explanation / Translation:
title	a <u>life</u> of <u>leisure</u>	
1	November <u>staggered</u> on	
2	to <u>resolve</u>	
2	<u>henceforth</u>	
2	to be <u>through</u> with sth	
3	to <u>shovel</u>	
3	<u>Cheerios</u>	
4	<u>gob</u>	
4-7	[<u>three requests</u>]	
4	to be at a <u>loose end</u>	
4	to <u>water</u> the <u>plants</u>	
6	to <u>gear up</u> for sth	
8	to <u>growl</u>	
8	<u>Xbox</u>	
9	the <u>moon rose</u> and <u>set twice</u>	
10	a <u>crisis meeting</u>	
10	inadvertently	
11	his <u>master plan</u>	
12	<u>chores</u>	
13	'em	
13	to <u>underestimate</u>	
14	to <u>get stuck into</u> sth	
14	to <u>hoover</u>	
16	to <u>feel</u> a <u>warm glow</u>	
17	he <u>returned</u> to <u>earth</u> with a <u>bump</u>	
19	a <u>wake-up call</u>	
20	to <u>hit</u> [<u>a place</u>]	
21	to <u>land</u> a <u>job</u>	
21	<u>tinsel</u>	

(adv) adverb
 (contr) contraction
 esp. especially
 (euph) euphemism
 (exagg) exaggeration

(id) idiom
 (met) metaphor
 (n) noun
 (phr) phrase
 (phr v) phrasal verb

(pol) polite form
 (sl) slang
 (sth) something
 (v) verb

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Glossary of New Words

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Line: title	Unfamiliar English:	Definition / Explanation:
	a <u>life</u> of <u>leisure</u>	(euph) this phrase is a euphemism for being unemployed. We sometimes talk about unemployed people "leading a life of leisure" – i.e. they can do what they want all day
1	<u>November</u> <u>staggered</u> on	(met) if you took the metaphor of a year as a person, November would be an old man, because the year is "old", i.e. nearly finished. In the UK, November is often a difficult month to get through, partly because of the cold weather, so this sentence provides the sense that the year is ending disagreeably
2	to <u>resolve</u>	(v) to decide; to make a strong promise to yourself to do (or not to do) sth
2	<u>henceforth</u>	(adv) from this moment on
2	to be <u>through</u> with sth	(id) to stop doing sth, often because it makes you feel angry
3	to <u>shovel</u>	(v) to put a lot of sth somewhere, i.e. he is eating large spoonfuls of cereal
3	<u>Cheerios</u>	(n) a popular brand of breakfast cereal in the UK
4	<u>gob</u>	(sl) mouth
4-7	[<u>three requests</u>]	(pol) notice how Dennis's mum, dad, and sister all ask him politely at first to help with the housework. His mum uses: "could you... please?", his dad uses "would you mind...?" while Maggie uses an indirect question: "The sink upstairs is still blocked" and a "reminding" tone of voice
4	to be at a <u>loose end</u>	(id) to have nothing to do; to be wondering what to do with your time
4	to <u>water</u> the <u>plants</u>	(phr) to put water on house plants (indoors or outdoors) on a regular basis
6	to <u>gear up</u> for sth	(phr v) to prepare yourself for sth, esp. a challenging activity
8	to <u>growl</u>	(v) this verb is usually associated with angry animals, e.g. a dog or a bear. In this context it shows that Dennis is beginning to get angry because of the unusual number of requests
8	<u>Xbox</u>	(n) a popular games console, produced by Microsoft
9	the <u>moon rose</u> and <u>set twice</u>	(phr) i.e. two days passed
10	a <u>crisis meeting</u>	(exagg) this phrase is usually used to describe a meeting at a time of emergency, e.g. at work, or in politics, so in this context it is an exaggeration, used ironically (there isn't a crisis!) to create a funny atmosphere in the story
10	<u>inadvertently</u>	(adv) accidentally; by mistake
11	his <u>master plan</u>	(exagg) a <i>master plan</i> is something that we might associate with an evil villain in a sci-fi or adventure film, so in this context it is an exaggeration, as above
12	<u>chores</u>	(n) repetitive, boring household jobs; the same meaning as <i>duties</i> or <i>tasks</i>
13	'em	(contr) Dennis uses the contraction 'em instead of <i>them</i> , because it is easier to say "do 'em" quickly than "do them"
13	to <u>underestimate</u>	(v) to misjudge; to miscalculate
14	to <u>get stuck into</u> sth	(phr v) to do sth with enthusiasm, esp. work
14	to <u>hoover</u>	(v) to clean the floor using a vacuum cleaner
16	to <u>feel</u> a <u>warm glow</u>	(id) to feel satisfied and a sense of pride in your achievement(s)
17	he <u>returned</u> to <u>earth</u> with a <u>bump</u>	(id) he saw the reality of the situation, rather than what he had wrongly imagined. Also: "to come back down to earth with a bump or bang"
19	a <u>wake-up call</u>	(id) the realisation that something has to change. This idiom comes from the idea of an alarm clock waking you up at a certain time. Dennis had to wake-up from his dream of lying around at home all day playing computer games, rather than doing chores or going to work to make money
20	to <u>hit</u> [a place]	(id) to go somewhere with a very strong resolve to do sth; i.e. "Dennis hit the Jobcentre hard..." means that he went there with the strong intention of finding a job. Other forms: hit the shops (intention to spend money), hit the town (intention to drink and party), and hit the beach (intention to have fun)
21	to <u>land</u> a <u>job</u>	(id) to get a job
21	<u>tinsel</u>	(n) long, colourful metallic decorations that people hang up in their homes at Christmas time – particularly around Christmas trees

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(contr) contraction
esp. especially
(euph) euphemism
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(id) idiom
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Extension 1:

Ask students to count the number of characters in the text (there are four named characters), then to create a role play or dialogue, using a few of the characters. Or, students could work on their own and create a monologue using one character from the text (or a bystander), where they recall what happened from their point of view.

Extension 2:

Students continue the story – either as a role play or a monologue – and explore what happened next... Or, they could imagine a prequel – what were the characters doing... a) one week, b) one day, or c) one hour before the story begins?

Answers:

A Life of Leisure (Guess the Function Words)

See Original Text for answer.

A Life of Leisure (What's the Question?)

Answers will vary. Suggested answers:

1. Where was Dennis's mum going at the start of the story?
2. Why was Dennis feeling down at the beginning of the story?
3. Who asked Dennis to rake up the leaves in the back garden?
4. When was the crisis meeting held?
5. What did Dennis reveal at the crisis meeting?
6. Did Dennis mean to tell his family about his master plan?
7. Did Dennis feel tired after doing the housework?
8. What did Maggie remind Dennis?
9. What kind of day did Dennis's dad have in front of him?
10. When does the story take place?
11. What did Dennis eat for breakfast?
12. Who asked Dennis to water the plants?
13. Why did Dennis feel a warm glow after doing the housework?
14. Did Dennis enjoy helping out around the home?
15. Why was nobody in the family surprised that Dennis started looking for work again?
16. What did Dennis do instead of the chores?
17. Who had to go to an early meeting?
18. Who was a student in the story?
19. Where was Maggie going at the beginning of the story?
20. How did Dennis's mum feel about his revelation?
21. Which article of clothing did Dennis avoid ironing?
22. What did Dennis resolve at the beginning of the story?
23. Where did Dennis go on Friday?
24. Why did Dennis come back to earth with a bump?
25. Why did Dennis go to the Jobcentre?
26. On which day did Dennis do the housework?
27. What did Dennis's dad suggest at the crisis meeting?
28. What kind of job did Dennis get at the end of the story?
29. Were Dennis's parents right to ask him to help out with the housework? Why? / Why not?
30. How long do you think Dennis's new job will last?

A Life of Leisure (True, False, or Unknown?)

(T = True, F = False, U = Unknown)

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--------|
| 1. U | 11. T | 21. T |
| 2. F | 12. U | 22. F |
| 3. F | 13. F | 23. T |
| 4. U | 14. U | 24. T |
| 5. F | 15. T | 25. U |
| 6. T | 16. T | 26. U |
| 7. U | 17. U | 27. F |
| 8. T | 18. F | 28. U |
| 9. F | 19. F | 29. U |
| 10. T | 20. F | 30. T* |

* or F, or U – depending on your feelings about Dennis and the job that he got!