

READING COMPREHENSION

B1 | Adults / Teens | Reading + Vocabulary | 30-40 minutes

Topic: Workplace | Skills: Reading, Vocabulary, Speaking

Read the text carefully. Then answer the questions on Page 2.

Learning to Say No

When I started volunteering at a local film club, I agreed to almost every request. I designed posters, sold tickets and stayed late to clean the room. I wanted the other volunteers to know they could **depend on** me. Whenever someone thanked me, I felt that accepting another job was the right thing to do.

After two months, I was missing meals and finishing college work after midnight. I still enjoyed films, but I began to dislike club evenings. One Thursday, I forgot to print the tickets. The organiser was surprised because I had never missed a task before.

I expected her to be angry when I explained how much I was doing. Instead, she asked why I had not told her earlier. She had **assumed** I enjoyed the extra jobs because I always said yes. Other volunteers had not offered to help because they thought everything was already arranged.

We made a list of the weekly tasks. I chose the posters and one ticket **shift** a month. The remaining jobs were shared among three people. At first, I felt guilty leaving while others cleaned up. Gradually, I saw that the club did not collapse when I went home.

I still want to be **reliable**. Now I try to make promises I can keep. Saying no to an extra task sometimes protects the work I have already agreed to do.

Key vocabulary

depend on - trust someone to help or do what they have promised

assumed - believed something was true without checking

shift - a period when someone is scheduled to work

reliable - able to be trusted to do what is expected

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

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Answer in complete sentences. Use the text to help you.

1. Why did the narrator initially accept so many jobs?

2. What signs showed that the workload was too heavy?

3. Why had the organiser not realised there was a problem?

4. Which duties did the narrator keep?

5. How did the narrator feel when first leaving before the cleaning was finished?

6. How did the narrator's idea of reliability change?

Discuss with a partner

- Why can it be difficult to refuse a request?
- How could you politely say that you have too much to do?

ANSWER KEY

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Suggested full-sentence answers. Accept equivalent answers with the same meaning.

1. Why did the narrator initially accept so many jobs?

The narrator wanted the other volunteers to know they could depend on them.

2. What signs showed that the workload was too heavy?

The narrator was missing meals, working after midnight and beginning to dislike club evenings.

3. Why had the organiser not realised there was a problem?

The organiser assumed the narrator enjoyed the extra jobs because the narrator always agreed to them.

4. Which duties did the narrator keep?

The narrator kept designing posters and doing one ticket shift a month.

5. How did the narrator feel when first leaving before the cleaning was finished?

The narrator felt guilty when first leaving before the cleaning was finished.

6. How did the narrator's idea of reliability change?

The narrator learned that being reliable means making manageable promises rather than accepting every request.

Teaching notes

Read once for the main idea, then reread for evidence. Compare answers before discussing the two open questions.

Language and reading focus: Past narrative; reporting assumptions and explaining reasons.

Text: Original fiction. Discussion questions have no fixed answers.