#95 Jobs & Occupations

Dream jobs, day jobs, and everything in between

LEVEL 4 | FREE TALK

PALLO!

ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1 **What's the most unusual job you've ever heard of?**

2 **If you could try any job for just one day, which one would you pick?**

FREE TALK

purple bold = good to know · **highlight** = key expressions

1 As kids, many of us dreamed of being astronauts, doctors, or pop stars. Today, plenty of children have **set their sights on** becoming YouTubers, a job that barely existed a generation ago. **What was your childhood dream job, and what do you make of the jobs kids dream of today?**

2 Some people judge a job by its salary and title, while others care more about flexible hours, friendly coworkers, or a free lunch. A job that **looks good on paper** doesn't always make people happy. **What makes a job a great one in your eyes, and which perk would win you over instantly?**

3 In Korean offices, after-work team dinners were once considered the glue that held a team together, and skipping one could **raise eyebrows**. Some say close bonds make a team stronger, while others prefer a friendly but polite distance from coworkers. **Which view is closer to yours, and what makes someone great to work with?**

4 In Korea, a post at a major company or in the civil service was long seen as **a job for life**, and many parents still hope their children will land one. Yet today, **job-hopping** and changing careers in midlife are far more common. **What's behind this shift, and is it a change for the better?**

5 With AI quickly automating tasks that once required years of training, people are divided: some fear their roles will become obsolete, while others welcome having the busywork **taken off their plates**. **How do you see technology changing your line of work, and what human skill will always remain irreplaceable?**

KEY EXPRESSIONS

Slip a couple of these into your answers.

set one's sights on
aim to achieve something

look good on paper
seem good in theory, not always in practice

raise eyebrows
cause surprise or mild disapproval

a job for life
a secure job you can keep until you retire

job-hopping
changing jobs often

take something off one's plate
relieve someone of a task or responsibility

SAY IT BETTER

The professional line isn't a direct replacement; it's the same idea in a semi-formal business style.

EVERYDAY		PROFESSIONAL
As a kid, I dreamed of being a pilot.	→	I **harbored early ambitions of** becoming a pilot. *Nuance: Handy in interviews when asked about your background.*
A good team matters more than pay.	→	I **place more weight on** a good team than on pay.
I like to keep work and life separate.	→	I **compartmentalize** my work and personal life.
Few people keep one job forever now.	→	Lifetime employment is **on the wane**. *Nuance: Suits reports and meetings; sounds stiff in casual chat.*
AI handles the boring parts of my job now.	→	AI now **streamlines** the routine aspects of my role. *Nuance: Natural in meetings or reviews about how work gets done.*

DEBATE: WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Stay in a safe job, or take the leap?

1 WARM UP · No sides yet. Share your own story first.

1. Think of a big risk you once took, at work or anywhere else. **Would you take it again?**
2. Do you know anyone who left a steady job to chase a dream? **How did it turn out?**

2 SITUATION · Read aloud, one sentence each.

In South Korea, the promise of job security is drawing young people back to the civil service: in 2026, **108,718** people applied for just **3,802** entry-level national government jobs. Analysts link the rebound to companies hiring fewer entry-level workers as they adopt AI. In the US, many workers have been **job hugging**, clinging to their jobs for fear of not finding another. And switching no longer pays as it once did: job switchers' pay growth shrank from about **18%** in 2022 to **8%** in early 2026, compared with **5%** for those who stayed. Yet others are taking the leap: Americans filed **1.56 million** business applications from November 2025 to January 2026, the most for any three-month stretch since at least 2004. One software engineer gave up a **$250,000** salary (about 331 million won) to open a matcha cafe in New York, saying she wanted to give "200%" to something. Those who favor taking the leap say corporate jobs are less secure than they used to be, so striking out on their own may be less risky than it looks. Critics note that roughly a quarter of new US businesses close within their first year. **Stay in a safe job, or take the leap?**

3 TWO SIDES · Everyone picks one. No need for equal sides!

A STAY PUT

votes ☐

"Job security buys peace of mind."

A stable job pays the bills and leaves energy for life outside work. With hiring slow and so many new businesses failing, it's wiser to play it safe and pursue a dream on the side.

B TAKE THE LEAP

votes ☐

"No job is truly safe anymore."

Stay too long and you may stagnate, kept in place by golden handcuffs. With savings and a solid plan, quitting to build something of your own is a calculated risk worth taking.

Everyone speaks once before anyone speaks twice · Answer the last person **first**, then add your point.

4 FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS · Ask one that could make the other side rethink.

ASK SIDE A

- If AI can cut your role anyway, how safe is a "safe" job, really?
- Is a good salary worth it if you feel stuck for decades?
- If you never try, how will you know what you could have built?

ASK SIDE B

- If a quarter of new businesses close in year one, is quitting truly "calculated"?
- Who pays the rent while the new business earns nothing?
- Why not test the idea on weekends before giving up your salary?

USEFUL LINE "I see where you're coming from, but…" *I see where you're coming from, but the rent doesn't pay itself.*

5 FINAL ROUND · Don't skip this part!

FINAL POSITION	"In the end, I'd **stay put / take the leap**, because…" Did anyone switch sides? Why?	**BEST POINT**	"As the other side **rightly said**…" Name the best point you heard today.

KEY EXPRESSIONS

play it safe avoid taking risks	**job security** confidence your job won't disappear	**stagnate** stop growing or developing
golden handcuffs pay and benefits you'd lose by leaving	**strike out on one's own** start working independently	**a calculated risk** a risk taken after careful thought

Data: The Herald Business (Jul 6, 2026), CNBC (Aug 18, 2025), Fortune (Oct 7, 2026), CNBC Make It (Mar 27, 2026).

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