

Part 6

You are going to read an article about the work of a TV animator. Seven paragraphs have been removed from the extract. Choose from the paragraphs **A–H** the one which fits each gap (37–43). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use. Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet**.

An Animated Life

Adam Farish works in stop-motion animation – the technique of making TV cartoons by manipulating static models rather than using drawings or computers. It might sound a bit childish, but it isn't all child's play. 'I tell people what I do, and they go, "You can't do that. Get a proper job!"' A sheepish grin spreads across the face of Adam Farish, 36, who spends eight hours a day playing with dolls. 'It makes me laugh,' he shrugs. And, on cue, he laughs. It's an explosive, wheezy laugh, a brief eruption of permanently suppressed amusement. Even after three years as an animator, it seems as if he still can't believe his luck.

37

His company's big project at the moment is the new Rupert Bear series, *Follow the Magic*. Consequently, Farish has spent many months absorbed in Rupert's surreal existence. 'It is acting, but you're not using your own body to act with,' he explains. 'We come in and we have to pretend we're five-year-old toy bears rescuing elephants out of trees. It does something to your head after a while.'

38

This great mountain of work must all be performed to a minute level of detail, and with complete accuracy. If a character makes a large gesture, for instance, there must always be a slight recoil in the limb before they do it. This must be posed and photographed. Blinking, which a character must do all the time if it is to seem human, involves replacing an open eyelid with a half-closed eyelid and taking a picture, then replacing this with a three-quarter-closed eyelid and taking a picture, then switching to a fully closed one and taking a picture, then putting on the three-quarter one again ...

39

When you factor in all the work done by others in building and lighting the sets correctly and providing each character with their props and costumes, it is

easy to see why stop-motion animation has a reputation for being, well, slow. 'We've got a target of 13 seconds a day. Most other companies do three or four, but because we're doing series work and there's tight deadlines, we have to push it to 13 seconds – that is 325 frames in other words. It's quite strange,' he muses, 'because it's so ... ,' he searches for the right word, 'dull.'

40

So, as far as anyone can tell, the knack of getting it right is handed out at birth, and not to many people. Yet despite the rareness of the skill, the animator's job is seldom secure. Most work on short-term contracts (Farish's runs out in May), and, as with so many labour-intensive industries, other countries are taking an ever-increasing share of the business.

41

Farish grew up in Aldershot, an army town, with a father who believed firmly in discipline. This belief engendered the opposite in his son, who, despite being bright, barely attended school and managed to leave with a bad report and an attitude problem. 'I was a bit mouthy,' he says, 'generally my own fault.'

42

He survived on what work he could find, moving on from town to town once he'd outstayed his welcome. 'At times, I loved it,' he admits, 'that total freedom from responsibility. And then it starts getting a bit cold, and you think: "Help! How am I going to eat?"'

43

Now Farish makes £30,000 a year, at least until May, and has never been happier. Despite the insecurity, the boredom, and having to explain what he does all the time, he says he loves his job – especially when the dolls get something exciting to do.

- A** Because he's known worse, these threats to his livelihood bother Farish less than most. For six years he was homeless, on and off, and even food was not guaranteed. 'I've already hit the lowest you can go,' he says.
- B** But even this isn't the most laborious process. That honour goes to speech, as every lip and tongue movement for every sound has to be posed and photographed, and the result must synchronise perfectly with the recorded soundtrack. The character may be pointing and simultaneously doing a little dance. Writers, on the whole, are blithely unaware of the nightmare such actions will bring for the poor wretch who translates their imaginations into reality.
- C** Small, stocky and shaven-headed, Farish does not immediately make one think of children's television. He works in Manchester for Cosgrove Hall, a famous old animation shop responsible for classics such as *Danger Mouse* and *Count Duckula*. The building is a warren of black baize curtains, separating a series of untidy studios. The atmosphere is one of chaos held precariously at bay.
- D** Towards the end of even the longest day, however, comes the moment that animators live for: pressing 'play'. 'It's a dead object,' says Farish, 'and then all of a sudden it's moving around and talking, and jumping about.' It's as if he is describing some kind of magic spell. 'You can't see until you've done it, so it's all got to be in your head until you're finished, and when you press play – that's when you find out if it all works or not.'
- E** Having started as a plumber's apprentice in the early 1990s, he found himself without qualifications, and then suddenly without a job when economic recession hit. 'People stopped paying each other, and I was bottom of the chain.' He was left with just a sleeping-bag, a penknife and a change of clothes to depend on.
- F** In fact, Farish's dedication knows no bounds. He even creates short cartoons in his spare time for his own amusement. Stop-motion is too complex and expensive to do at home, so he is teaching himself computer-generated animation. 'It started off as a bit of light relief but it's gradually taking over home life as well.'
- G** But then, after a period studying production management at drama school, Farish enrolled on a web-design course. One day they had an animation lesson, and out of 20 students, Farish was the only one who could do it. On his teacher's recommendation, he gave up web design and took a degree in animation. 'I never chose to be an animator,' he says. 'It never occurred to me that you could do this for a job.'
- H** That would not, of course, be the reaction of a child, but while a child might put a more positive spin on this, no child could muster the prodigious levels of discipline and concentration required to see the job through. All the cartoons are filmed with stop-motion animation so Farish spends his days breaking down the behaviour of his characters into thousands of tiny steps, posing the puppets into each position, and taking a picture of the scene to make a frame of film.

Part 7

You are going to read an article about work-life balance. For questions 44–53, choose from the sections (A–D). The sections may be chosen more than once. Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet**.

Which section mentions the following?

involvement in decision-making leading to increased worker satisfaction

44

a term that was once used to refer to an inadequate work-life balance

45

a reduction in one business's expenditure caused by improved staff retention

46

a recognition among some employees of the necessity for longer working hours

47

changes in the world of work leading to competition between established and emerging companies

48

the statutory regulation of work-life balance ideas

49

certain staff benefits no longer being seen as adequate by potential employees

50

a change in how work-life balance developments are generated

51

a way of defining what work-life balance involves

52

a theory as to what people require out of life

53

Issues arising out of the continuing work-life balance debate in the UK

A

Here in the UK, the continuous pressure of work and the relentless pace of change is impacting on people. Hard. And some people have reached the point where they want their lives back or at least are questioning how they can balance their work obligations with their domestic responsibilities. This includes new recruits – employers also recognise that in the battle to attract talented people the tried and tested incentives of high salary, a medical plan and use of a company car will not pull in the high fliers any more. But what exactly does work-life balance cover? In the recent past, 'stress' was the word that best seemed to represent this general concern about too much work, too little life. Everyone understood it, since they experienced it at a personal level, but work-life balance has larger parameters. According to the Work Foundation, it is only achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is respected as the norm. So, for example, work-life balance also takes into account the contribution that people want to make to the world in which they live. It includes the recognition that people have to manage family life and it considers the impact that an excessive workload has on people's health.

B

We can point to the psychologist, Abraham Maslow, as the inspiration behind the work-life balance phenomenon. Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' model posits five ascending levels of need, each stage of which has to be satisfied in turn before the individual can move onwards and upwards. So, at the base of the triangular model, individuals first have to satisfy their physical survival needs, while at the apex of the triangle, is the 'self-actualised' individual whose priorities are personal growth and fulfilment. Maslow's work fused with a trend that also affected the concerns about work-life balance. Having a job for life, which had been part of the bedrock values of traditional companies, simply could not be sustained by the dynamic marketplace of the 1990s and beyond. The old certainties evaporated, and employers realised that the new imperative was to ensure their employees became as innovative as the young entrepreneurs who were creating exciting new businesses of their own.

C

The idea of a work-life balance has evolved over time. In the UK, there has been a long tradition of government-based initiatives that were its forerunners. However, with work-life balance as it exists today, the influence of some corporate role models has had the most impact. Consider Ben & Jerry's, the US ice-cream company. Since the 1980s, this firm has recognised that people wanted a different sort of work experience. It made a virtue out of donating 75 per cent of its pre-tax profits to philanthropy – an employee-led initiative. Engaging employees in such a way has helped both to improve motivation and drive innovation and productivity, making Ben & Jerry's into an extremely lucrative brand. A recent survey identified more than 100 varieties of similar work-life initiatives. However, it is clear that the most important variable in work-life balance is the nature of the job itself. People want jobs with autonomy, flexibility, meaning, managerial support as well as a chance for advancement.

D

So, do work-life balance policies work? In the UK there has been little doubt that they have had a positive impact. British Telecom, for instance, used work-life balance initiatives both to draw more women into the workforce and to address the significant problem of losing staff. As a result, a staggering 98 per cent of women returned after maternity leave, saving the organisation a tidy sum in recruitment and training. Work-life balance is already a catch-all term for many different new policy developments and the list is still growing. Many employees know from direct experience that the world of work is changing. In a 24/7 society, they recognise that their customers expect service round-the-clock. And they also know that they have to juggle their home responsibilities while stretching their schedules to meet customer expectations. Employers know this too. Indeed, there is a raft of legal provisions governing work-life balance being driven by the European Union. And what the individual employee wants and the employer is set to deliver need not be in opposition.