

YOUNG WORKERS

Across entry-level positions at many top-tier global financial institutions and consulting firms, there are no illusions of nine-to-five schedules or summer holidays with phones left back at the hotel room. From the start, junior employees are aware that they're entering a trial-by-fire – and it's up to them to survive the flames.

However, just because these entry-level workers have some sense of what they're going to be up against, it doesn't always mean they're adequately prepared, or that their expectations match their eventual reality.

In March, 13 first-year Goldman Sachs analysts – the group lowest on the corporate totem pole – put together a [‘survey’ on their working conditions](#) at the esteemed, multi-national bank, in a document seen by the BBC. The survey, mocked up on Goldman Sachs's official pitchbook template, detailed the group's more than 95-hour workweeks, precarious mental and physical health, deteriorating personal relationships and conditions one respondent called “inhumane”.

The contents of the survey were, in some ways, shocking. But, in others, some of the results weren't wholly unexpected. For many name-brand jobs, this is how things can operate for those at the most junior levels – and have for a long time.

The prevailing narrative: that's just the price you pay for a longer-term reward of power and prestige in big-name, big pay-check institutions. But for young people just jumping into the workforce, is the toil worth the epic reward, even if it may come with some worrying side effects? Some say maybe so.

Bill Keenan joined Deutsche Bank, a major international investment bank in New York City. He did have a sense that he'd be heading into a difficult situation. “You know what you're getting into, and like most jobs, if you want to reap rewards you're probably going to have to jump through hoops and do some stuff that's painful along the way.”

Keenan says he pulled many anxious late nights feeling “crushed”, and some of his experiences do chime with the current points cited in the Goldman Sachs survey. (“There were a lot of sweaty shirts, crying and not knowing what I was doing.”). However, he caveats that the conditions outlined by the 13 analysts who put together the notes aren't necessarily representative of every experience – it's a small sample size.

Yes, says Keenan, the environment was hard. No, he adds, “I was never abused. I would never use that word”.

Regardless, Keenan believes there's opportunity to take the stress off younger workers; he says the long hours and the feeling that “your life is over for six months” if you get staffed on a project isn't necessary. He suggests part of ameliorating conditions may be better time management on the part of those higher up the chain: condensing project timelines, for instance, since there's actually a lot of “sitting in your cube”, waiting for your email to ping. Another element boils down to respect. “I certainly think that being more in touch with the human side of these people [will help]... You get more out of people if you treat them better.”

“I don't think there's a silver bullet to this,” continues Keenan.

It's not necessarily a coincidence that this group of Goldman Sachs analysts chose the current moment in which to speak up, bucking the grin-and-bear-it culture.

There are a mix of factors at play: the ubiquity of social media, where the survey initially appeared; the rise of a generation more [conscious of workplace toxicity and mental health](#); and a general sentiment of activism for equity.

Unfortunately, it may not be that simple. Despite an environment that may be riper for status-quo disruption than ever, change driven by this most junior tier of the workforce may not be on the horizon anytime soon – or, perhaps, even realistic to expect.

And it's likely that some young workers will continue to willingly put themselves into these environments because they want the validation Keenan craved – the ability to say, *I got out alive*. Of course, the career

springboard and promise of increasingly voluminous compensation in an upwardly mobile environment doesn't hurt, either. If you survive the rig of passage, the pot of gold on the other side is, indeed, substantial.

But, knowing what he knows now, and having ended up somewhere he's happy to be, would Keenan have taken the same path? "I would," he says. "I think I would do it again."

PART 1

TEXT ANALYSIS (Max. 4 points)

Answer the following questions

1.
 - a. Identify the main idea from the text and justify it using **your own words** in the space provided. **(0.5)**
 - b. Briefly explain the author's communicative intention in the text. **(0.5)**
2. Identify the **text type(s)**. Support your ideas by providing **one example** for each one of them in the text. **(0.5)**
3. Identify the **language function(s)** in the text. Support your ideas by providing examples from the text of each function. **(0.5)**
4. Analyse the **language register(s)** in the text. Justify your answer providing examples from the text. **(0.5)**
5. Explain the following statements: **(1.5)**
 - a. *"I don't think there's a silver bullet to this," continues Keenan.*
 - b. *"You're probably going to have to jump through hoops and do some stuff that's painful along the way."*
 - c. *"Bucking the grin-and-bear-it culture."*

PART 2
PRACTICAL ENGLISH USAGE (Max. 6 points)

1. Provide the phonetic transcription of the following words using Received Pronunciation (RP) or General American (GA): (1 point: 0.1x10)

| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| a) outwards | f) massacre |
| b) mushroom | g) eventually |
| c) heroism | h) knowledgeable |
| d) exposure | i) strengthen |
| e) indecisive | j) spontaneity |

2. Write the following words in the correct column according to their stress pattern (standard pronunciation): (0.5 points 0.05x10)

administrative - university - almighty - isolation - trailblazing- animosity -manslaughter -
demographic - ideological - appointment - idealism

| | | | | | |
|-----|-----|------|-------|------|-------|
| 0oo | o0o | o0oo | o0ooo | oo0o | oo0oo |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

3. Provide a homophone for each word below: (0.5 points: 0.1x5)

| | | |
|---------|-----------|---------|
| a) roar | c) barred | e) idol |
| b) hair | d) slay | |

4. Complete the sentences with a word derived from the ones given. (0.5 points 0.1x5)

- 1) He stormed into her office, full of _____ indignation. **RIGHT**
- 2) In many tales, dominant characters are _____ by apparently weaker ones. **WIT**
- 3) He was embarrassed when he dropped the _____ of boxes he'd been carrying right in the middle of the street. **ARM**
- 4) None could _____ her, she had powerful arguments. **SAY**
- 5) They decided to form a _____ political group with their own leader and policies. **BREAK**

5. Find the ONE word that fits all three sentences in the following exercises and provide a ONE word synonym for the highlighted expressions. (1.5 points: 0.15x10)

1.

A lot of waste is **being** () **into** the sea.
He is being () as the next prime minister.
The table (), and all our drinks fell on the floor.

1.a The word that fits all gaps is _____

1.b Write a one-word synonym for the highlighted expression: _____

2.

When it () **the market**, everyone wanted a PlayStation.
Demand for transatlantic flights has been () by fears of terrorist attacks.
I just knew you and Haley would () it off—you two have so much in common.

2.a The word that fits all gaps is _____

2.b Write a one-word synonym for the highlighted expression: _____

3.

This beautiful coastline is very () **on the eye**, don't you think?
Go () on your little brother, will you? He didn't mean to break the window.
Robbie is always looking for a chance to make some () money.

3.a The word that fits all gaps is _____

3.b Write a one-word synonym for the highlighted expression: _____

4.

Right now, it's a case of () or swim, as we've reached the point of no return.
He couldn't wait to () **his teeth into** the steak.
Paul and Mark agreed to () their differences and be friends.

4.a The word that fits all gaps is _____

4.b Write a one-word synonym for the highlighted expression: _____

5.

We will () no effort to find out who did this.
Could you () **me** £20?
() a thought for me tomorrow, when you're lying on a beach, because I'll still be here in the office!

5.a The word that fits all gaps is _____

5.b Write a one-word synonym for the highlighted expression: _____

6. Rewrite the following sentences using the word in parenthesis so the second sentence has the same meaning as the first one. This word must not be changed. (1 points: 0.20x5)

1. Teachers are very upset about the new educational law (**arms**)
- Teachers are The new educational law
2. My mum can't keep secrets, so don't tell her anything about the surprise party! (**beans**)
- I'm planning a surprise party but please don't tell my mum, she always
3. Patients claim that the effects of the vaccine lasts for three hours (**off**)
- Patients claim that the effect of three hours.
4. It was only when the office phones me that I found out about the meeting (**find**)
- Not until the office about the meeting.
5. Don't you think we should decorate the living room soon? (**up**)
- Isn't it about time the living room?

7. Read the text below and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word in each gap. (1 point: 0.1x10)

Academic Corruption

A highly qualified and respected (until now) academic was recently caught interfering with exam marks. But **1** _____ was no teacher giving a little boost to his students' results. **2** _____ was it the head of a school trying to save his job by bolstering the school's reputation. Bad **3** _____ these acts would be, the truth of the matter is considerably more sinister. For the results had actually **4** _____ marked down, and the perpetrator of this crime was the head of the examination board. The reason? This was a new exam and the board had miscalculated the level. Not only that, but they had totally underestimated the capacity of students to do their job properly. Although they had **5** _____ say in the introduction of the new exam, students and teachers across the country rushed to prepare for it. When the results came out, their efforts had clearly **6** _____ off. Rather too clearly, in fact. Hence the cloak-and-dagger approach of the board. Too many students had passed, the board looked ridiculous, and something had to be done about it. So, **7** _____ cover of darkness, an unknown number of students had their grades reduced. In a few furtive minutes, thousands of students were robbed **8** _____ their chance to go to university. This is an extreme abuse of power and a betrayal of trust. How can we be expected to instil values into school children - to teach them that cheating is wrong - when the very people who should be **9** _____ a good example, the academics who are entrusted with our children's future, behave like common criminals and **10** _____ away with it?