

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

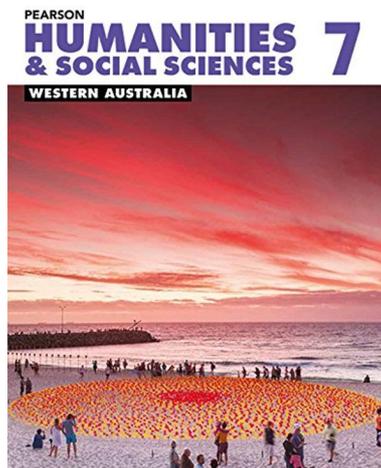
Copyright Regulations 1969

WARNING

This material has been reproduced and communicated to you by or on behalf of Methodist Ladies' College under Part VB of the Copyright Act 1968 (the Act).

The material in this communication may be subject to copyright under the Act. Any further reproduction or communication of this material by you may be the subject of copyright protection under the Act.

Do not remove this notice.



Atkinson, A., Byrne, P., Hamann, J., Hamper, D., Kleeman, G., Melissas, S., ... Wilson, K. (2017). *Humanities and social sciences, 7, Western Australia*. Melbourne: Pearson.

Why people work

What work offers

In Australia, there are over 12 million people who either have a job or are actively looking for work. While people choose to work for many different reasons, usually they are motivated by a combination of these factors:

- earning an income
- gaining access to a higher standard of living
- contributing to self-esteem
- contributing to happiness.

Earning an income

In exchange for working, employees receive money and sometimes other benefits, for example, the use of a company car. This is called the employee's **income**. Income is often the most obvious benefit of work: in each pay period the employee receives their pay and can then use the money as they wish. While accumulating money can be an end in itself, for many workers the appeal of earning an income lies in being able to use that income to purchase goods and services that raise the worker's standard of living.

Higher material standard of living

A person's **standard of living** is the level of wealth and comfort they can achieve. Being able to afford a greater number, variety or quality of goods and services makes a direct contribution to the individual's living standards. As income rises, the worker might decide to spend some of their money on improving their home, going on holiday or buying higher-quality foods.

Contributing to self-esteem

For many people working life offers a sense of purpose and of contributing to a common cause. These individuals are often described as having a vocation, or a strong sense that they are particularly well suited to serving others through a particular occupation. This can be experienced in any industry—just as a nurse may feel they are supporting others who are in poor health, a chef may feel they are providing enjoyment to their customers by creating dishes that are both delicious and beautifully presented.

Contributing to happiness

For many people, their work is a source of genuine happiness. They enjoy what they do, and this



Source 4.1.1 For many people, working in a pleasant environment with people they like can be a source of considerable satisfaction.



Source 4.1.2 Earning an income allows people to purchase goods and services. For some people, work may be a way to allow them to afford a holiday overseas.

enjoyment brings far greater rewards than simply providing an income. This may arise from the nature of their work; for example, a teacher might enjoy helping students to learn and understand concepts, while a journalist might enjoy the process of researching, writing and presenting a news story.

The nature of the work environment can also contribute to workers' enjoyment. If they have positive, supportive relationships with their colleagues and a pleasant physical environment to work in, workers are likely to feel that they are making a positive contribution beyond simply earning an income. The social element of work can give great satisfaction, allowing employees to meet new people and create new social and professional opportunities.

Work can provide meaningful challenges. The process of solving these challenges can be enjoyable in itself, so the employee can feel that their work is fun and interesting. Having a sense of responsibility can contribute to this, giving the worker some degree of ownership of the solutions and products that emerge from their efforts.

Changes over time

Even with the most exciting job there can still be days that are routine, and over time a person's

reasons for working may change. For example, a job that once provided great satisfaction and happiness may cease to offer a challenge, and instead be seen as just a way to make money until a new opportunity arises. Moving from one job to another may provide new challenges and renew the employee's interest in the work they do.

ACTIVITIES

Remembering and understanding

- 1 How many people in Australia either have a job or are actively looking for work?
- 2 List the four factors that combine to motivate people to choose to work.
- 3 Define the term 'standard of living'.
- 4 State two factors that may contribute to a person's happiness at work.

Applying and analysing

- 5 Survey two people who work, to determine what contributes to their happiness at work.

Evaluating and creating

- 6 Evaluate your own strengths to determine what work would contribute to your self-esteem and happiness.