Reading Practice

# The meaning of volunteering

**A**

Volunteering, as some people consider mistakenly is a plethora of people from all walk of life as well as activities, but data from the other side of the world suggest otherwise. For example, a survey on who participated in volunteering by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the United Kingdom (UK) showed that people in higher income households are more likely than others to volunteer. In England and Wales, 57% of adults with gross annual household incomes of £75.000 or more, have volunteered formally In the 12 months prior to the survey date. They were almost twice more likely to have done so than those living in households with as annual income under £10.000.

**B**

As well as having high household incomes, volunteers also tend to have higher academic qualifications, be in higher socio-economic groups and be in employment. Among people with a degree or postgraduate qualification, 79 per cent had volunteered informally and 57 per cent had volunteered formally in the previous 12 months. For people with no qualifications the corresponding proportions were 52 per cent and 23 per cent at all. However, voluntary work is certainly not the exclusive preserve of the rich. Does the answer not lie perhaps in the fact that the rich tend to have money to allow them the time to be become involved in voluntary work compared to less well-off people?

**C**

A breakdown in the year 2000 of the range of volunteering activities taken from The Australia Bureau of Statistics gives an idea of the scale of activities in which people are typically involved. Eleven sectors are given ranging from Community and Welfare, which accounted for just over a quarter of the total hours volunteered in Australia, to Law/ justice/ politics with 1.2 percent at the other and of the scale. Other fields included sport/ recreation, religious activities and education, following at 21/1 per cent, 16.9 and 14.3 per cent of the total hours. The data here also seem to point to a cohort of volunteers with expertise and experience.

**D**

The knock-on effect of volunteering on the lives of individuals can be profound. Voluntary work helps foster independence and imparts the ability to deal with different situations, often simultaneously, thus teaching people how to work their way through different systems. It therefore brings people into touch with the real world; and, hence, equips them for the future.

**E**

Initially, young adults in their late teens might not seem to have the expertise or knowledge to impart to others that say a teacher or agriculturalist or nurse would have, but they do have many skills that can help others. And in the absence of any particular talent, their energy and enthusiasm can be harnessed for the benefit of their fellow human beings, and ultimately themselves. From all this, the gain to any community no matter how many volunteers are involved is immeasurable.

**F**

Employers will generally look favorably on people who have shown an ability to work as part of a team. It demonstrates a willingness to learn and an independent spirit, which would be desirable qualities in any employee. So to satisfy employers' demands for experience when applying for work, volunteering can act as a means of gaining experience that might otherwise elude would-be workers and can ultimately lead to paid employment and the desired field.

**G**

But what are the prerequisites for becoming a volunteer? One might immediately think of attributes like kindness, selflessness, strength of character, ability to deal with others, determination, adaptability and flexibility and a capacity to comprehend the ways of other people. While offering oneself selflessly, working as a volunteer makes further demands on the individual. It requires a strength of will, a sense of moral responsibility for one's fellow human beings, and an ability to fit into the ethos of an organization. But it also requires something which in no way detracts from valuable work done by volunteers and which may seem at first glance both contradictory and surprising: self interest.

**H**

Organizations involved in any voluntary work have to be realistic about this. If someone, whatever the age is going to volunteer and devote their time without money, they do need to receive something from it for themselves. People who are unemployed can use volunteer work as a stepping-stone to employment or as a means of finding out whether they really like the field the plan to enter or as a way to help them find themselves.

**I**

It is tempting to use some form of community work as an alternative to national service or as punishment for petty criminals by making the latter for example clean up parks, wash away graffiti, work with victims of their own or other people. Thus may be acceptable, but it does not constitute volunteer work, two cardinal rules of which are the willingness to volunteer without coercion and working unpaid. .

## Questions 1-6

*Reading Passage 3 has nine paragraphs **A -I***

*Which paragraph contains the following information?*

*Write the letter, **A-I**, in boxes **1-6** on your Answer Sheet*

**1**..... a description of what does not satisfy the criteria for volunteer work

**2**..... the impact of voluntary work on the development of individuals

**3**..... the requirement for both selflessness and self-interest in volunteers

**4**..... various areas in which people volunteer

**5**..... the benefit of voluntary work for the young

**6**..... a mistaken view of volunteering

## Questions 7-10

*Choose the correct letter **A, B, C or D.***

*Write the correct letter in boxes **7-10** on your answer sheet.*

**7** The ONS survey was done to find out

A why people undertook volunteering.

B how many people participated in volunteering.

C how many rich people did volunteer work.

D which people were involved in volunteering.

**8** The ONS survey found that people with university qualification were

A as likely to volunteer as those with no qualifications.

B more likely to volunteer than those with no qualifications.

C less likely to volunteer than those with no qualifications.

D the only group likely to do formal volunteer work.

**9** It is suggested that rich people volunteer as a result of having

A clearer goals.

B fewer children.

C more spare time.

D greater guilt.

**10** Volunteer work benefits people by teaching them how to

A function in system.

B communicate clearly.

C deal with failure.

D overcome shyness.

## Questions 11-13

*Complete each sentence with the correct ending, **A-F** below.*

*Write the correct letter, **A-F**, in boxes **11-13** on your Answer Sheet.*

**11** One of the requirements of being a volunteer is being able to **11**.....

**12** Volunteering can be used as a way for the unemployed to **12**.....

**13** Employers in general tend to **13**.....

**A** consider workers with volunteer work experience an asset.

**B** gain a very well paid job.

**C** gain access to a job in a field of interest.

**D** benefit most from volunteer work.

**E** understand how people behave.

**F** want much younger workers.

**Solution:**

**1.** I
**2.** D
**3.** G
**4.** C
**5.** E
**6.** A
**7.** D
**8.** B
**9.** C
**10.** A
**11.** E
**12.** C
**13.** A