
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Multiple careers



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English – the programme where we bring you an interesting topic and six items of vocabulary. I'm Neil. Today we're talking about jobs.

Dan

And I'm Dan. And specifically, we're looking at the trend for having more than one job...

Neil

Yes. On that note – Dan, were you ever asked this question as a kid? “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Do you remember your answer?

Dan

I wanted to be a ninja turtle. And you?

Neil

That doesn't surprise me. I think I wanted to be a professional footballer. I wanted to play for England. Well, for many people, that question gets harder the older they become! It's one reason why more and more people have what we call **portfolio** careers these days – so they can do a bit of everything.

Dan

A **portfolio**, as a noun, means 'a case for carrying large pictures' – or it can mean the collection of pictures themselves. But we also use it as an adjective to describe groups of certain things – in this case, careers.

Neil

Indeed, we could say someone who is a part-time teacher and a part-time musician has a **portfolio** career.

Dan

Sounds like a good combination. First, let's do today's question – it's job-related. Many surnames in English originally come from professions. The surname Baker, for example, was originally given to people who worked as... bakers! What about the surname Bond, as in double-oh-seven, James Bond? Who had this surname? Was it:

- a) Farmers
- b) Spies
- c) Guards

Neil

It can't be spies, can it? So I'm going to guess guards. C.

Dan

Great, well let's find out at the end of the programme.

Neil

Now, the **portfolio** career. Emily Wapnick is the Canadian author of a book called How to Be Everything: A Guide for Those Who (Still) Don't Know What They Want to Be When They Grow Up.

Dan

Which specific example of a **portfolio** career does she mention?

INSERT

Emily Wapnick, Author

More and more people are doing multiple things and multiple jobs and it's not just to **make ends meet**. A lot of people are choosing this kind of lifestyle. They've got, you know, three different businesses that are just thriving. Or they're a **serial entrepreneur**. Or they've got a career in two different areas. There's a guy I mention who is a psychotherapist and a luthier – he makes violins – and he's very successful in both.

Neil

Emily is clearly a fan of this kind of working. She says she knows a man who's both a psychotherapist and a luthier – someone who makes violins.

Dan

She says this trend is more than just about working to **make ends meet** – in other words, working to make enough money to live. And she used another interesting expression – a **serial entrepreneur** – what's that exactly?

Neil

Well, an **entrepreneur** is someone who starts and runs businesses – and the use of **serial** here as an adjective describes someone who does the same thing again and again. Though we should say, the adjective is more often used for criminal activity – such as a **serial** killer or **serial** murderer.

Dan

Not the kind of **portfolio** career I had in mind. A **serial entrepreneur**, on the other hand, starts and runs business after business.

Neil

Another thing, because Emily believes the world of work is changing fast – it's sensible to be able to do more than one thing. In other words, it's wise to **add another string to your bow**.

Dan

A great phrase, which really just means 'to learn new skills you can use in the future'. I'd like to learn Japanese – that would **add another string to my bow**.

Neil

So desu, ne? But choosing a **portfolio** career is not for everyone, of course. It often simply comes down to money.

Dan

Here's Charles Handy, writer and philosopher, and the man who popularised the term **portfolio** career in the first place.

INSERT

Charles Handy, Writer

80% of the people in **corporate** jobs hate them, or are dissatisfied with them. Whereas if you're doing your own thing, 80% of them really like the freedom and the entrepreneurial spirit, even if they're not making an awful lot of money. It's a balancing job really, you're free but you're poor. Or you're slaved but you're richer.

Neil

Sounds like a difficult choice – be poor or be a slave. What would you choose, Dan?

Dan

I'd rather be poor and free, thank you very much.

Neil

Well, let's explain a term he used – a **corporate** job. What does **corporate** mean?

Dan

Quite literally, it's the adjective from the term corporation - a **corporate** job is a job at a big corporation, company or organisation – usually well paid, and with certain benefits.

Neil

Could we say James Bond has a **corporate** career?

Dan

Yes, I guess so! And thank you for reminding me to answer today's question: which profession does the surname Bond come from?

Neil

And I said the Bonds were guards.

Dan

I'm afraid you were wrong. Bonds were originally peasant farmers who were bound to work for a particular lord. This word goes back over 1,000 years... The spying game came much later!

Neil

Indeed! Let's spy today's words once more. We had **portfolio** – which can be used in different ways. There's a **portfolio** career, as well as the original meaning of a **portfolio** of art. Any others?

Dan

Yes, people talk about a **portfolio** of investments – if you invest in several companies at once to reduce the risk.

Neil

Talking of money, we had to **make ends meet**. People often work a number of different part-time jobs to **make ends meet** – to make enough money to live on.

Dan

Though having a lot of part-time jobs is not the same as being a **serial entrepreneur**. **Serial** means doing something repeatedly, usually a crime!

Neil

And an **entrepreneur** is someone who starts and runs businesses.

Dan

I'd love to start a business... First, I need to learn a new skill - **add another string to my bow** and learn yoga. Then maybe one day I'll run a yoga business.

Neil

Not for me though, I prefer the **corporate** life – a secure job in a big corporation!

Dan

OK, but then you can come to my yoga classes after work!

Neil

Alright.

Dan

And that's the end of today's 6 Minute English. Please join us again soon.

Neil

And we are on social media of course. Make sure to visit our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube pages.

Both
Bye!