



# BOOMERANG EMPLOYEES



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:  
19S9-I1LB-7Q6U

1

## Warm up

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. What do you think a 'boomerang employee' is?
2. What do you think the benefits are to being a boomerang employee?
3. What do you think the problems could be for boomerang employees?

2

## Finding vocabulary

Part A: Find words in the article on page three which have the same meaning as the following definitions.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (n, para. A): people who used to be part of a school or university
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (v, para. B): be irritated by what someone does or says
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (n, para. B): the act of moving from one company to another to advance more quickly up the career ladder
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (n, para. B): the act of taking away someone's job because there's not enough work for them to do
5. \_\_\_\_\_ (adj., para. B): being the opposite of what is expected or most people would do
6. \_\_\_\_\_ (n, para. C): a sudden increase
7. \_\_\_\_\_ (v, para. D): take training in order to learn things that will increase chances of promotion
8. \_\_\_\_\_ (n, para. E): a lack of goodwill and friendliness between two or more people

**Part B: Complete the following questions with the correct word from Part A.**

1. What training could you do if you wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ in your work?
2. Is \_\_\_\_\_ common in your country, or do people usually stay with the same company for as long as they can? Why?
3. What behaviour by other people makes you \_\_\_\_\_? Why?
4. What situations in the past have caused \_\_\_\_\_ between employees at your company? What happened?
5. Have you ever done anything in your career that was \_\_\_\_\_? Or do you usually try to be more predictable?
6. Are you still in touch with any of the \_\_\_\_\_ from your school or university? Why/Why not?

Now in pairs, answer the above questions.

**3****Skimming for gist**

Match the following extracts to gaps 1 - 6 in the article on page three. You will not need all of the extracts.

- a. The 36% decrease in production meant that companies needed to start looking to ex-employees to fill positions.
- b. Boomerang employees can greatly benefit from the time away.
- c. The speed of return has also gone up, with US workers going back to a company after an average of 21.8 months in 2010 compared to 17.3 months in 2021.
- d. Unexpected, but brilliant.
- e. Equally, returnees may well be treated differently by colleagues and management alike with far more expected of them, far sooner.
- f. Well, maybe not.
- g. Back then, workers tended to be more loyal to a company and those who left would have been seen as breaking the bond.
- h. In 2010, this stood at just 2%.



## Going back?

### The increase in boomerang employees

- A. You've quit your job. You're thinking about what you will need to move out of the office and looking at the happily expanding list of tasks you no longer have to do. You're **living the life of Riley** where nothing is expected of you in this job and nothing is yet expected of you in the next one. That's the last time you will work for this company, right? \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup>. The numbers of former employees who are returning to their previous companies have seen a huge boost since the pandemic. It's a move positively encouraged by some companies, some of whom have set up 'alumni' networks to keep in contact with leavers and **pave the way for** their return.
- B. In the middle of the previous century, most hiring managers would have bristled at this idea. \_\_\_\_\_<sup>2</sup> Job hopping was regarded with suspicion and allowing former employees to return would have been seen as rewarding this behaviour. Policies which banned rehiring were used in some companies, such was the strength of feeling about it. However, in the 1980s, recessions hit, forcing layoffs which made working for several different companies to progress in your career far more normalised. With hiring managers also now moving on to other companies, refusing to hire someone on the basis that they'd previously worked at your company seemed like a counterintuitive move.
- C. Data shows that the trend towards rehiring has increased over recent years, but the instability in the job market caused by recent world events created a surge. Analysis of 32 million LinkedIn profiles showed 4.3% of people taking jobs in 2021 in the US were rehires. \_\_\_\_\_<sup>3</sup> A similar study in the UK identified 5% of employees returning to former companies. \_\_\_\_\_<sup>4</sup> A UK recruiting firm did a study in 2022 and found 29% of business managers saying ex-workers had asked to return.
- D. \_\_\_\_\_<sup>5</sup> Often, they are able to return to a more senior role, having upskilled during their break. Coming back to a company with knowledge of how it operates, its processes, strengths and shortcomings gives returnees a significant advantage over new employees, making them attractive for hiring managers. They can **hit the ground running**, even applying the experience they've had from a competitor to improve the operation.
- E. It's **not** necessarily **all sweetness and light though**. If a former employee returns to a higher position, it may well create friction with colleagues who they previously worked alongside who have remained in the same role. Jealousy at the return of a **prodigal son** or daughter could well overshadow working relationships. \_\_\_\_\_<sup>6</sup> They may well find that while they were away, they were viewing their memories of the company they left behind **through rose-tinted spectacles**. Problems that existed before are unlikely to have gone away, and sometimes boomerangs end up leaving for the same reason, twice.

Source: BBC

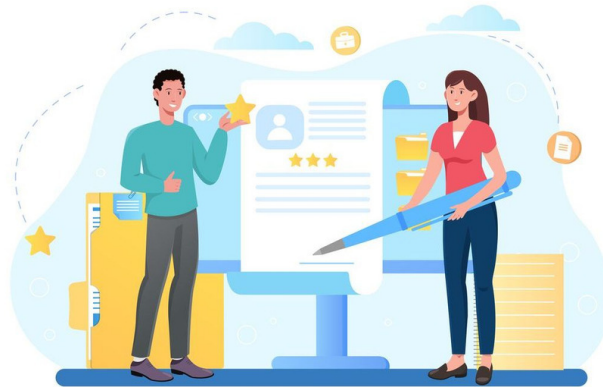




## 4 Reading comprehension: part 1

Decide which paragraphs A - E the following ideas can be found in.

1. An employee returning to a company where they were previously employed can settle in faster than a new employee. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Changes taking place globally which altered attitudes towards employment. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The pleasure found in the period of time between handing in your notice and starting a new job. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Reasons for the potential increase in pressure for boomerang employees. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Statistics indicating a change in behaviour in the job market. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Reasons why a boomerang employee may be attractive for a company. \_\_\_\_\_



## 5 Reading comprehension: part 2

Complete the following sentences with endings a - e.

1. Certain organisations are facilitating ...
2. Around 70 years ago, the loyalty of employees was prized ...
3. The rate of increase in employees returning ...
4. Understanding the way in which their old company operates can give boomerang employees ...
5. Ex-colleagues may not always view ...
  - a. a distinct advantage over new hires.
  - b. to former companies had more than doubled in the last decade.
  - c. to such an extent that those who left were banned from returning by some companies.
  - d. the return of ex-employees by setting up networks enabling them to stay in touch.
  - e. the return of a boomerang employee so positively, particularly if they are promoted.



## 6 Listening for gist



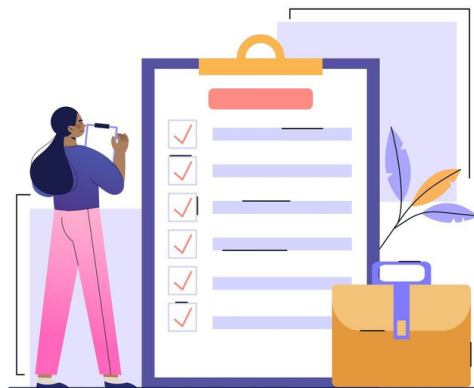
Listen to a podcast about Boomerang employees and decide if the following information is given (G) or not given (NG).

1. The name of the podcast. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The industry Shelley works in. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Shelley's job title. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The name of a manager that Shelley liked. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The location of the company where Shelley worked. \_\_\_\_\_
6. The name of a manager that Shelley found more challenging. \_\_\_\_\_

## 7 Listening comprehension

Listen again and answer the following questions.

1. What three things did Shelley like about her first job?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the difference between Shelley's first and second manager?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What does Shelley mention she likes about her second job?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What does Shelley mean when she uses the phrase 'cut and paste'?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Where does Shelley now sit?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What does Shelley mean when she says 'I've tried to walk the line between the organisation of my old job, and the fun and creativity that Tina brought to it.'?  
\_\_\_\_\_





## 8 Talking point

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. Do you think it's important to have loyalty to an employer? Why/Why not?
2. Have you worked for any companies previously that you'd be happy to return to? If so, why? If not, why not?
3. What is the shortest amount of time you think you should spend in a company? What is the longest? Why?
4. How would you feel if a colleague who you worked with at the same level as you left and then returned less than two years later to a higher position?
5. What difficulties can there be when someone who was your coworker becomes your manager? How would you feel if you were the new manager or the co-worker?

## 9 Extended activity/Homework: Idioms

Read the following comments and complete them with the idioms highlighted in bold in the article.

1. I'm stuck here working in this job that I hate and my brother just took off to Spain with his girlfriend. They're living on a beach and \_\_\_\_\_. It will be interesting to see what he does when the money runs out though.
2. I've been on holiday for ten days now and I'm really going to have to \_\_\_\_\_ when I go into work tomorrow if I want to stay on track with the project.
3. I think it's really easy to look back at the past through \_\_\_\_\_, but you've got to remember that there were an awful lot of problems with the world then too.
4. She's not always been popular as a CEO, but she's really \_\_\_\_\_ a lot more women to get into management.
5. A lot of my friends are jealous of all the travelling I do for work, but it's \_\_\_\_\_. It can be very tiring and I often spend weeks living out of a suitcase.
6. Here's come the \_\_\_\_\_. You know he was almost fired from his other job? But they've welcomed him back here with no questions asked. It's amazing!

Now in pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. Do you think you are guilty of seeing anything through **rose-tinted spectacles**?
2. Which famous person in your country has **paved the way for** others to be able to be successful?
3. Do you find it easy to **hit the ground running** when you return to work after a break? Why/Why not?
4. What would you be doing if you were **living the life of Riley**?