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ARE AFTER-SCHOOL JOBS HELPFUL OR HARMFUL FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS?

Word Generation - Unit 2.23

Focus Words

resumé | responsibility | acquire | perceive | sustain



WEEKLY PASSAGE

Jason's day is full of teachers, classes, and assignments. He also has an after school job. Jason works hard to earn money and keep up with his studies. But in the past few weeks he has been working too many hours and not doing his homework or passing his tests.

When Jason first started looking for a job he was very excited. He put together a **resumé** to help him **acquire** his position. He thought having a job would teach him about **responsibility** as well as help him earn some extra cash.

Many students, like Jason, think that having a part-time job is a good thing. They get a chance to make new friends with their co-workers. Their bosses and co-workers **perceive** them as responsible adults. They start to learn the value of money and to save up for the things they want, like clothes, video games, or even a car. Some even help out with their family's needs. These are all benefits of having an after school job.

Then there are those who think students should not be working while they are in school. Jason could not **sustain** his good grades because of work. Some people claim that students who work do not do as well in school

because they don't have as much time to study or do assignments. These students are also tired more often and do not pay as much attention in class.

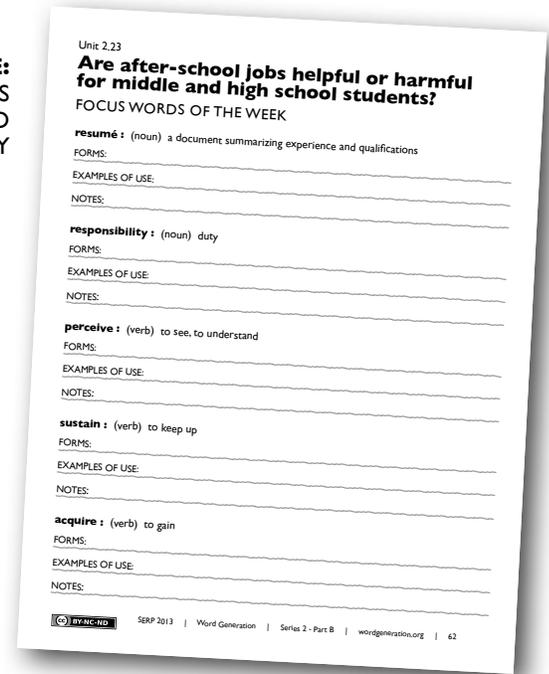
What do you think about this? Are after school jobs helpful or harmful to middle and high school students?

TEACHER

Reading Comprehension/Discussion Questions:

- ▶ Do you think students should have after school jobs?
- ▶ Why do some people think it's good if a student has a job?
- ▶ Why do some people think it's not a good idea?

PLEASE NOTE:
THE STUDENT VERSION OF THIS
PAGE IS FORMATTED
DIFFERENTLY



Unit 2.23

WORD CHART FOR TEACHERS

This chart is not in the student book. It is a resource for teachers to support students in the use of the focus words each week. Students are provided one page in each unit immediately following the weekly passage with a basic definition printed and space for taking notes.

Word	Meaning	Forms			Related Words
		Inflectional	Basic Word Classes	Prefixes/Suffixes	
resumé	(n.) - document summarizing experience and qualifications	resumés	resume (v.)		
responsibility	(n.) - duty	responsibilities	respond (v.)	irresponsible responsible responsive	correspond
perceive	(v.) - to see, to understand	perceives perceived perceiving		perception perceivable misperceive percept	conceive
sustain	(v.) - to keep up	sustains sustained sustaining		sustainable sustainability unsustainable	maintain
acquire	(v.) - to gain	acquires acquired acquiring		acquisition acquirable	



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PROBLEM OF THE WEEK

Many students **perceive** an after school job as a **responsibility** that will help them build their **resumé**, **acquire** new skills, and earn money. But new responsibilities affect the amount of time students have for other things. Can students **sustain** their dedication to schoolwork and take on a job after school at the same time?

Option 1: According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, students who have an after-school job spend an average of 42 fewer minutes per day on schoolwork than students who don't work. If the school year is 180 days, how many more hours per year would the average non-working student spend on schoolwork than the average student with an after school job?

- A) 7,560 hours
- B) 300 hours
- C) 244 hours
- D) 126 hours

Option 2: According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, students who have an after-school job spend an average of 42 fewer minutes per day on schoolwork than students who don't work. If we let m = the number of minutes the average non-working student spends on schoolwork each day, write an algebraic expression that shows the number of minutes the average student with an after-school job spends on schoolwork in a 5-day week.

Answer: $5(m - 42)$

Discussion Question: According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, working students spend 42 fewer minutes on schoolwork, 42 fewer minutes on fun activities, and 36 fewer minutes on sleep each day. Do you **perceive** any of these facts as a problem? Whose **responsibility** is it to make sure that kids **sustain** focus on their schoolwork and **acquire** healthy habits like getting enough sleep?



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THINKING SCIENTIFICALLY

The students in Ms. Kahn's class are talking about after-school jobs.

"I do some babysitting occasionally during the week, and almost every weekend," says Kareema, "but I don't know how I would cope with a regular job every weekday. By the time I finish soccer practice, it's almost dinner time, and then I've got to get my homework done before maybe watching a little TV and going to bed. Where is there time to work a regular job?"

"I enjoy my job," says Sergio. "I get my homework done right after school, then after dinner I go work for three hours at my aunt's video rental store. It feels good to help her out, and it's fun to talk with the customers about movies, even though I end up not having as much time as I used to for watching movies myself. Anyway, it's great to earn some spending money for the weekends."

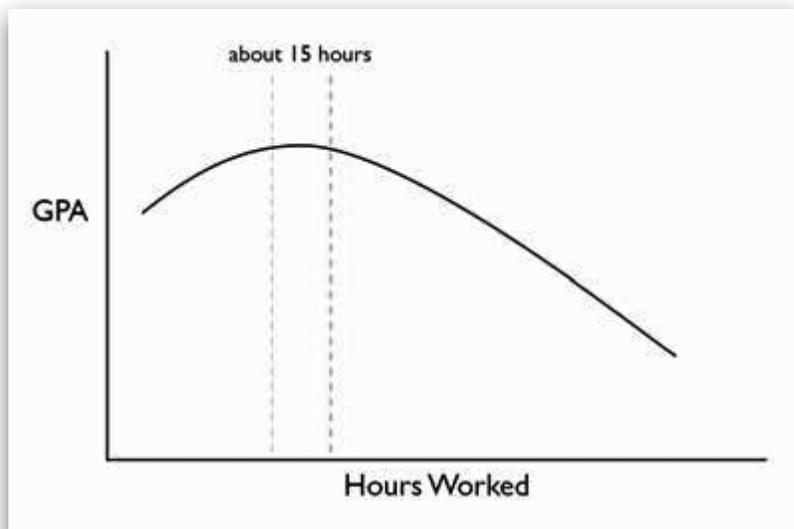
"Money is important," says Viet Ly. "But I worry about how my older brother's job affects him. He's 17, and he works an eight-hour shift after school three days a week, plus another eight hours on Saturday. He's saving most of his wages for college, but ever since he turned 16 and started his job, he's had a hard time keeping his grades up. He just seems rushed and tired all the time."

Sergio nods. "Yeah, I think I'd have a hard time keeping up with school if I spent that much time on the job," he says. "I guess it's like Goldilocks and the Three Bears: I don't want too much work or too little work. I like it just right."

"But how much is just right?" says Viet Ly.

"Good question," says Ms. Kahn. "Let's see if we can find any research data on after-school jobs and academic performance."

→ After doing an online search, Ms. Kahn's students find the following graph summarizing the results of some research on the relationship between after-school employment and grade point averages for middle-school and high-school students.



Inverted U graph adapted from David Stern and Derek Briggs, "Does Paid Employment Help or Hinder in Secondary School? Insights from US High School Students." *Journal of Education and Work*. Vol. 14, No. 3, 2001. 355-372.

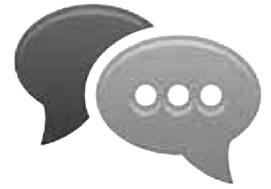
This graph is generalized, not exact, since it is not marked off in numerical units for grade point average or hours worked. It shows an "inverted U" relationship between average GPA and hours worked, peaking at around 15 hours of work.

What general idea is the graph trying to communicate?

According to the research this graph summarizes, having about 15 hours of after-school employment is associated with the best average grades. Having no work, or especially too much work, is associated with lower grades.

Assuming this graph is a fair representation for the studies it summarizes, what do you think might cause this "inverted U" relationship between hours worked and average GPA for students?

Having work might make some students feel more confident and responsible, and/or might make them learn to organize their time better, while having too much work may overwhelm them. Or perhaps the association isn't entirely causal—maybe students who already get good grades also tend to choose to work moderate hours.



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DEBATING THE ISSUE

Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A Students should not have after school jobs. School is their job.

B Students should have jobs. It teaches them responsibility.

C Students should be able to work as long as their grades do not go down.

D All students should have to work so that none of them are disadvantaged.

E _____

TEACHER
Whatever the debate format, ask students to use academically productive talk when arguing their positions. In particular, students should provide reasons and evidence to back up their assertions. It may be helpful to read these sample positions to illustrate some possibilities, but students should be encouraged to take their own positions about the issue at hand.

Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

GO!

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

I believe that...

I agree with you, but...

You make a good point, but have you considered...

Can you show me evidence in the text that...



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WRITE ABOUT IT

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples.
Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

Focus Words

resumé | responsibility | acquire | perceive | sustain

TEACHER

Ask students to write a response in which they argue a position on the weekly topic.

Put the writing prompt on the overhead projector (or the board) so that everyone can see it. Remind students to refer to the word lists in their Word Generation books as needed.