

JOB INTERVIEW.- Culture and People.

Spaniards on the whole have long working hours - so why aren't they more productive?

Tired of longer and longer days, two years ago the all-female **workforce** at the Spanish division of luxury goods **retailer** Louis Vuitton decided to **stand up to** their bosses by dictating new working hours. The day would begin at 7 am, and finish at 3 pm; there would be one hour for lunch, and no meetings in the afternoons. The head of human resources thought about it, and agreed to give the idea a try. As a result, two years later, the 500 women have increased their productivity by 20 percent, while **absenteeism** has fallen by a third. Most importantly, they have achieved a **balance** between their work and family **commitments** that is very uncommon in Spain.



The **achievement** of the Louis Vuitton workforce was cited repeatedly at a symposium held in Madrid last week to address the **widespread** problem in Spain of **overlong** working days. Around 100 experts took part in the event, many through video. And all agreed, from ministers and priests, to academics, bank employees, footballers, cooks, executives, soldiers, and architects, that Spaniards are poor **time managers**, and that the country's working day is, on average, two hours longer than the rest of the European Union.

A few speakers mentioned the relationship between low productivity levels and what is often seen abroad as the "Spanish siesta work **ethic**": people arrive late to work, are constantly **nipping out** for a coffee, take long lunches, have a couple of beers and a snack after work with colleagues, and too many business lunches and dinners.

Is such an approach acceptable any more? Or should Spaniards finish work at 5 pm, like they do in so many other countries?

Many speakers criticized what they called "chair-warmers" - employees who work late but who do very little. Spain, along with Greece and Portugal, has the longest working hours, but is among the EU's least productive nations.

Adapted from http://www.barcelonareporter.com/index.php?comments/siesta_work_culture_in_spain_needs_changing/

Original article from <http://www.elpais.com/misc/herald/herald.pdf> (3,1 MB)



Now it's your turn

Decide if the following are true or false.

The people who work at Louis Vuitton increased their productivity thanks to their new working hours.

- True.
 False.

The level of absenteeism at Louis Vuitton is still unacceptable.

- True.
 False.

Spaniards work many hours and are therefore more productive than workers in other countries.

- True.
 False.

Spanish workers like spending time out of the office.

- True.
 False.



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[Aviso Legal](#)

1.- Stress at work.

Stress is a part of every student's daily life. There might be many factors involved, like leaving home or [commuting](#) daily, managing finances, living with flatmates.

Stress at work is a major [issue](#) nowadays. Whether you work in an office, a factory, or a school, you might be affected by stress. Some stress is good because it motivates us. Too much stress can seriously affect your physical and mental [well-being](#).



You should know

We are going to listen to a radio programme about stress at work.

[Stress at work.](#)

Now you can read the programme script.

[Stress at work Script.](#) (0.02 MB)

Think about it

Give your opinion in the forum:

- ✔ Have you ever been stressed (at work, at school)?
- ✔ Do you have any tips to reduce our stress levels?
- ✔ Do you think the ideas in the text below are useful?

[How to help reduce stress at work.](#)

A step ahead

Did you know that there are many idioms connected with work? If you want to learn some of them, visit the following website.

[Work idioms.](#)

2.- 9 to 5.

Quotation

"Because I am a woman, I must make unusual efforts to succeed. If I fail, no one will say, "She doesn't have what it takes." They will say, "Women don't have what it takes." **Clare Boothe Luce**

"9 to 5" is a song written and originally performed by Dolly Parton for the 1980 comedy film of the same title, starring Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin, and Parton in her film debut. The song and film owe their titles to an organization founded in 1973 with the [aim](#) of eliminating discrimination in the workplace and improving working conditions for women.



Think about it

Read part of the song "9 to 5" and give your opinion in the forum:

"Working nine to five
what a way to make living.
Barely getting by
it's all taking and no giving."

- ✔ What does the above verse mean?
- ✔ What do you think the song is about?

A step ahead

You may want to visit the **9 to 5 Organization website**.

[9 to 5 National Association of Working Women.](#)



Now it's your turn

Now watch the video and read the lyrics.



[Text summary](#)

Submit

Appendix.- Licenses of resources.

Licenses of Resources used in Culture and people

Resource (1)	Resource information (1)	Resource (2)	Resource i
	<p>By: Brian Haberer. License: CC by-nc-sa. From: http://www.flickr.com/photos/weirdo513/2653450115/</p>		<p>By: bottled_void. License: CC by-nc-sa. From: http://www.flickr.com/photos/</p>
	<p>By: Adria Richards. License: CC by-sa. From: http://www.flickr.com/photos/adriarichards/4484843843/</p>		