

Of course I'm not stressed!

1. Look at the jobs below and discuss what might be stressful about each one. Then select the three most stressful from the list and justify your choices.

- surgeon
- stockbroker
- construction worker
- secondary school teacher
- simultaneous interpreter
- air traffic controller
- corporate executive
- sous chef

2. Sentence A has a similar meaning to Sentence B. Say what advantage there might be to using the idiom in bold in Sentence B.

- A. After months of working extra hours, Maria felt exhausted and stressed. She barely had time to sleep or eat.
- B. Maria was **burning the candle at both ends**.

3. In the sentences below, find parts that can be replaced with the idioms in the boxes. You may need to change the form of the verbs. In one example, more than one answer is possible.

be running on empty

crack under pressure

go through the motions

grind to a halt

hit breaking point

shoulder the burden

take a toll (on someone)

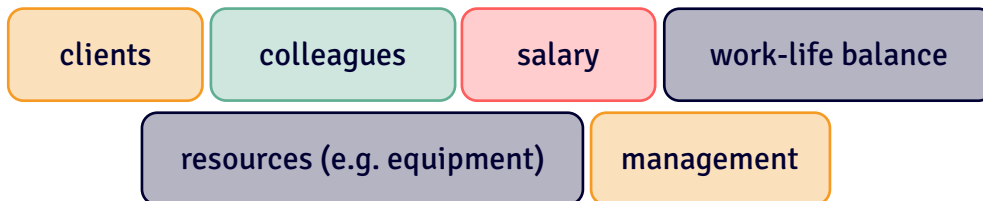
- A. After weeks of unwarranted criticism from his boss, Hamza finally reached his absolute limit and decided to hand in his resignation.
- B. Kenzo doesn't care about the project's success. He just does the bare minimum to look busy, without any passion or real intention.
- C. The constant criticism and long hours have had a serious negative effect on Rosa's mental and physical health.
- D. While giving the final presentation to some key clients, Alexia was so nervous that she couldn't handle the situation anymore. Her mind went blank and she forgot everything she had prepared.
- E. Leah believes she must always be responsible for the whole team's problems and never asks for any help or support.
- F. The team's work on the new product didn't just slow down; it stopped completely.
- G. After three weeks of back-to-back shifts, Mamadou has no energy left. He's so exhausted he can't even think clearly anymore.

4. Do the tasks below.

- A. Talk about the last time you were running on empty.
- B. Describe how someone might react if they hit breaking point.
- C. Name three things that can help when work is taking a toll on someone.
- D. Give three reasons why people might be going through the motions in their daily routines.
- E. Say who or what can prevent people from cracking under pressure at work.
- F. Suggest three situations where someone may have to shoulder the burden for others.
- G. Give three reasons why businesses might grind to a halt.



5. Look at the factors in the boxes and rank their impact on a call centre worker, from the most to the least negative.



6. You are going to watch a video about call centre employees. Read the title and think of three things employees in the video might say.

If Call Centre Employees Were Honest

7. Watch the [video](https://youtu.be/dMqGr4A_0E0) [https://youtu.be/dMqGr4A_0E0] and tick the things the employees imply in their statements.

- A. customers shout at them
- B. customers are patronizing
- C. customers talk too much
- D. customers repeat themselves
- E. customers ask to speak to a manager

8. Discuss the questions.

- What is sarcasm?
- Do you find sarcasm funny? Do you use it yourself? Why/Why not?
- Is sarcasm commonly used in your language and culture? If so, in what situations?
- How can sarcasm and other forms of humour be helpful to call centre workers or those in other stressful professions?
- The author Oscar Wilde famously said: *"Sarcasm is the lowest form of wit but the highest form of intelligence."* What did he mean? Do you agree? Why/Why not?

9. Look at the example and think about how you would say the words in bold depending on whether you are being sarcastic or not. Then, say the sentences below (A–F) in a normal tone and then a sarcastic tone.

EXAMPLE: Oh **fantastic!** That's **just** what I needed right now! **Thanks!**

- A. What a surprise!
- B. You're so helpful.
- C. No, I'm not stressed at all!
- D. I'm really looking forward to it.
- E. I can't wait to hear all about it.
- F. Wow! Have you got any more photos?

10. Work in pairs. Think of what might have caused the sarcastic responses in ex. 9 and act out short dialogues.

EXAMPLE: a: I accidentally deleted your files from the shared drive.

b: Oh **fantastic!** That's **just** what I needed right now. **Thanks!**