

BBC Learning English

6 Minute English

Retirement

NB: This is not an accurate word-for-word transcript



Dan: Hello and welcome to this week's 6 Minute English. I'm Dan Walker Smith and today Kate and I are talking about **retirement**.

Kate: Hello Dan. Yes, well **retirement** is the time of your life when you stop working completely. And here in the UK this is usually in your 60s. You're no longer earning a regular income from employment, so you collect a **pension**; this is a sum of money paid by the state or a private company instead of your salary.

Dan: So this week's question for you Kate is: What percentage of the UK's population is over retirement age; that's over 65 for a man and over 60 for a woman? Is it:

- a) 12.5%
- b) 18.5%
- c) 22.5%

Kate: I'm afraid I've got absolutely no idea. But I have heard that our population is an aging population, so I'm going to go for b, 18.5%.

Dan: OK, well we'll see if you're right at the end of the programme

Kate: Now in the UK men have to stop working when they're 65. And women retire at the age of 60. It's what we call a **compulsory** retirement age.

Dan: **Compulsory** means that you're forced to do something or that you don't have a choice, so a **compulsory** retirement age is the age at which you stop working.

Kate: But with people living longer, there's increasing discussion over whether it's right to have a **compulsory** retirement age.

Dan: Now here's the British journalist John Humphrys talking about how retirement is changing as the population gets older. Listen out for the word **compulsory**, and also the terms '**kick our heels**' and '**hang around**'. Can you explain what these means Kate?

Kate: Sure, well to **kick your heels** means to wait impatiently. So if you have to wait a long time for someone, you might say that you **kick your heels** while you do it. And to **hang around** means to spend time somewhere, usually without much purpose.

Let's have a listen to the first extract: what does the Equality and Human Rights Commission say we should do about compulsory retirement?

Extract 1

Now we retire, kick our heels for years, maybe just hang around, and then we die. It's very different from how it was, and now the government body, the Equality and Human Rights Commission has said it's got to change. The notion of compulsory retirement should be scrapped.

Dan: OK, so because we're living longer, retired people have to **kick their heels** for a lot longer. And the commission is suggesting that a fixed age for retirement should be **scrapped**.

Kate: To **scrap** means to get rid of or cancel something. So if the commission wants to **scrap** compulsory retirement, it wants to abandon the idea of forcing people to stop work when they reach 60 or 65. Sounds like a good idea to me.

Dan: Here's Andrea Murray from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. She says there are strong economic reasons to let people continue working after the traditional retirement age. So how much money does she say would be generated for the British economy by letting people work longer?

Extract 2

There would be a big boost to the economy; if we extended people's working lives by 18 months they calculate would add £15 billion in to the economy.

Kate: Well she said that letting people work for 18 months longer could generate up to £15 billion. And she describes this as a big '**boost**' to the economy. A **boost** means to make something bigger or increase it. So, if she's right, £15 billion of extra money would certainly be a **boost** to the economy.

Dan: Here's Andrea Murray again, talking about the health benefits of working longer. What does she say is the main health advantage of retiring later?

Extract 3

At the moment people tend to drop off into retirement at 65, and we know that they have greater job satisfaction and better health if they continue working and continue being engaged.

Kate: OK, so she said that you have more **job satisfaction** if you continue working. **Job satisfaction** is the phrase we use to describe how happy or content you are with your job. So if your work gives you a purpose, then retiring early could mean you have too much free time and you don't have enough to do.

So going back to job satisfaction Dan, do you think you have job satisfaction?

Dan: I'd say so. I'm pretty happy with my life as it is.

Kate: But think about in a few years' time and you're hitting 60/65, do you think you'd like to carry on working?

Dan: I'd like to have the option to carry on working. I think that maybe I wouldn't want to work every day, but I'd like to have the chance to come in every now and again, and if I wanted to work, just to earn some money or keep myself busy, that's what I could do.

Kate: Yup, that sounds like a very nice arrangement. But of course there are people who look forward to retirement their entire working lives. They look forward to a time when they can relax, play sport, and read books, and not have to get up every morning and go to work. I can kind of understand that, can't you?

Dan: If you've worked hard, then you probably deserve it.

OK, we're almost out of time, so let's go over some of the vocabulary we've come across today:

retirement

compulsory

pension

to kick your heels

to hang around

scrapped

a boost

job satisfaction

Dan: And of course there's just time for today's question. I asked you Kate what percentage of the UK's population is over retirement age?

Kate: And I think I went for the middle one, b, 18.5%.

Dan: And you are right with 18.5%.

Kate: Yay! I'm always right these days.

Dan: You are. You're always right these days.

It's quite incredible though; we're getting a lot older as a population. Apparently the number of people aged 65 and over in the UK is expected to rise by 60% in the next 25 years.

And also, the number of people over 85 is predicted to double in 20 years and treble – get three times as big – in the next 30.

Kate: Oh my goodness. That's quite worrying really. How are we going to look after all these old people?

Dan: Well that's what people are trying to decide at the moment.

Kate: Yes, it's a difficult problem that's facing people all over the world, I think.

Dan: Well maybe that's something we can discuss in another programme.

But for now, thanks very much for listening from all of us here at BBC Learning English, and goodbye!

Kate: Goodbye!