

Night Owls

'Night owls' are people who are naturally more awake and active at night and tend to go to bed late. Research has found that night owls face higher rates of poor health, including having a 10 percent higher risk of dying younger than 'early birds' or people who get up early and feel more energetic first thing in the day. Night owls often suffer from long-term lack of sleep and this can increase the chance of diabetes, heart disease and obesity. Not having enough sleep even for just one night can make us moody; when it happens every single night for an extended period, depression can develop.



Associate professor Kristen Knutson at Northwestern University said: "This is a public health issue that cannot be ignored. We need to recognise that people have different body clocks which regulate the time we feel sleepy and wakeful throughout the day. Some people naturally wake up early while others feel more awake at night. All of this comes down to a combination of genes and the person's environment."

Employers can benefit from adjusting start times to suit individual employees' needs. Another study found that when companies let night owls start work later in the day or allowed them to work from home, there was an estimated US\$277m gain in productivity. It argues that people who are more awake at night should be allowed to start and finish work later. Not everyone is suited to get up for an 8am start.

Your group is doing a project on sleeping patterns and you are meeting to discuss this. You may want to talk about:

- the advantages of being a night owl
- the advantages of getting up early
- whether companies should have flexible working hours for people with different sleeping patterns
- anything else you think is important

PART B Individual Response

The examiner will ask you one or more questions based on Part A. You will have up to 1 minute to respond.

VOCABULARY - Level up your language

These 10 expressions will lift your speaking to Level 4 and above. Each one replaces a simple (Level 3) phrase that you would normally use.

STEP 1 Match each expression with its meaning. Write the letter (A-J) on the line.

1. sleep deprivation _____	A. the fixed hours in the middle of the day when every employee must be at work
2. sleep-deprived (adj) _____	B. not getting enough sleep, especially over a long period of time
3. to burn the midnight oil _____	C. to sleep longer in order to make up for the sleep you have lost
4. to catch up on sleep _____	D. your natural body clock - the times of day when you feel most awake
5. to take a toll on your health _____	E. to stay up late to study or work
6. to impair your concentration _____	F. so tired from lack of sleep that you cannot think clearly
7. daytime drowsiness _____	G. a system that lets employees choose, within limits, when to start and finish work
8. chronotype _____	H. to slowly damage your health over time
9. flexible working hours (flextime) _____	I. feeling sleepy during the day, even after you have woken up
10. core hours _____	J. to make it harder for you to think or focus (formal)

STEP 2 Now look at the upgrade. Instead of the Level 3 phrase, use the Level 4+ expression:

Level 3 - what we usually say	Level 4+ - use this instead	Use it for
"not getting enough sleep"	sleep deprivation	A
"very tired"	sleep-deprived (adj)	A
"stay up late to study"	to burn the midnight oil	A
"sleep more at the weekend"	to catch up on sleep	A
"be bad for your health"	to take a toll on your health	A
"make it hard to focus"	to impair your concentration	A
"feel sleepy in class"	daytime drowsiness	A
"the time your body likes to sleep"	chronotype	A
"choose your own working hours"	flexible working hours (flextime)	C
"the hours when everyone must be at work"	core hours	C

Use it for: A = any health / sleep-cost answer, including Part B · C = the flexible-working-hours bullet and Part B Q1

Challenge: use at least three of these expressions in your Part A discussion.

NOTE CARD

the advantages of being a night owl:	the advantages of getting up early:
whether companies should have flexible working hours for people with different sleeping patterns:	anything else you think is important: