



Lesson overview

What this lesson covers and where it is going.

This lesson uses Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a framework for talking about human motivation in English. It is not a psychology course. The model is introduced clearly, then used as a tool for discussing familiar situations — work, money, relationships, ambition and personal goals.

The central question running through the lesson is: **“What motivates people to behave the way they do?”** The learner meets the model in a short video, follows one person's story in the reading, hears two people disagree about it in the listening, and is finally asked whether the model actually explains what people do.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, the learner will be able to:

1. Explain the five commonly presented levels in their own words, without relying on memorised terminology.
2. Apply the framework to real situations, identifying which needs may be influencing a decision and why.
3. Compare two people's motivations in the same situation and account for the difference.
4. Evaluate the usefulness and limitations of the model, supported by a concrete example it does not explain well.
5. Use gerunds, infinitives and purpose structures to explain what motivates people and why they choose what they choose.
6. Justify and qualify an opinion about motivation, and respond to an opposing viewpoint.

Lesson Flow and Timing

Section	Time
1 · Warm-Up	8–10 minutes
2 · Video Comprehension	10–12 minutes
3 · Pre-Reading Vocabulary	10–12 minutes
4 · Reading & Reading Activities	30–35 minutes (<i>main focus</i>)
5 · Listening	12–15 minutes
6 · Grammar	15–18 minutes
7 · Discussion & Application	15–18 minutes
8 · Homework & Crossword	separate from class time



Why Do We Do What We Do?

Understanding Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs—what motivates people, how priorities change, and where the models tops explaining things.

Level: Upper Intermediate (B2 CEFR)

Duration: 90–120 minutes · 1:1 General English

Skill Focus: Reading, Speaking, Listening, Vocabulary, Grammar

Grammar Focus: Gerunds, infinitives & purpose



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1

warm-up

Discuss these before we begin. (8–10 min)

1. What motivates you to work hard — and is it the same thing now as it was five years ago?
Follow-ups: *Can you give a specific example? · What changed?*
2. What do people actually need in order to feel comfortable in life? Try to go beyond the obvious answers.
Follow-ups: *Which of those could you manage without? · Which one would you miss first?*
3. Do people want the same things at twenty, at forty and at sixty? What tends to change?
Follow-ups: *Is the change gradual or sudden? · Do you know someone whose priorities changed quickly?*
4. Can money motivate someone without actually making them happy? How would that look?
Follow-ups: *Have you seen this? · Is money a need itself, or a way of meeting other needs?*
5. Two people are in exactly the same situation but want completely different things. How would you explain that?
Follow-ups: *What might be different about their backgrounds? · Could both of them be right?*



2

video comprehension**Watch the video before completing the exercises.** (10–12 min)▶ Watch here: youtube.com/watch?v=O-4ithG_07Q**SCAN
ME****A — True or False**

T/F	Statement
---	Maslow developed his theory after studying people he considered exemplary.
---	According to the video, a person can begin working on esteem before their safety needs are met.
---	The video says that once we feel completely part of a group, we start wanting to be different from the rest.
---	The video suggests that reaching the top level removes all pressure permanently, whatever happens afterwards.
---	The video advises leaders to help their team feel they belong before expecting them to excel.

B — Comprehension

- Main idea:** In one or two sentences, what does the video claim about human motivation?

- One level:** What does the video say happens at stage four, and what kinds of behaviour does it produce?

- Example:** Which examples does the video give of people driven by esteem?

- Relationship:** According to the video, what is the connection between one level being satisfied and the next one appearing?

- Application:** What practical advice does the video give to someone leading a team?



2 video comprehension

C – Interpreting the Pyramid

C – What Is the Shape Telling You?

Maslow's needs are almost always drawn as a pyramid, with physiological needs at the bottom and self-actualization at the top. Maslow himself did not draw this diagram – it was added later by others.

Look at the pyramid and answer: What do you think the position of each need is trying to show? Consider the order, the width of each section, and the fact that it is a solid shape.

 Then: is there anything about human motivation that a pyramid shape might *hide* or make harder to see?

3 pre-reading vocabulary

Read, repeat, and master these words before reading the article. (10–12 min)

 **A – Matching.** The definitions are shuffled, and **no row matches the word beside it** – there are no free answers. Write the correct letter in the Answer box.

#	Word	Answer	Def.	Definition
1	Motivation		A	the pleasant feeling you get when you achieve something
2	Compete		B	reaching your full potential and becoming who you are capable of being
3	A sense of belonging		C	a strong desire to achieve something important
4	Recognition		D	a period of serious difficulty, often financial
5	Insufficient		E	to explain the reason for something
6	Self-actualization		F	protection from danger, risk, or financial worry
7	Satisfaction		G	to offer yourself for a job, role, or opportunity
8	Ambition		H	the reason why someone behaves or acts in a particular way
9	Hardship		I	to try to be more successful than someone or something else
10	Account for		J	the feeling of being accepted as part of a group
11	Security		K	public praise or acknowledgement for what you have done
12	Put yourself forward		L	not enough for what is needed

**3 pre-reading vocabulary****B – Using the Words****B – Context Task**

Choose a suitable word or expression from the table for each sentence. Change the form where necessary.

1. She turned down a higher salary because job _____ mattered more to her than the money.
2. Nobody had volunteered, so he decided to _____ and lead the project himself.
3. After moving abroad, it took him nearly two years to develop _____.
4. One weekend of rest was _____ – he came back just as exhausted.
5. Her _____ had always been to run her own business before she turned forty.
6. The theory is useful, but it cannot _____ every decision people make.

 You will meet all twelve items again in the article, the listening, and the crossword – don't worry about memorising them now.





4

Reading**Why Do We Want What We Want?** (30–35 min — main focus)

 Read the whole article once without stopping. Don't worry about every word — follow what happens to Marek.

¶ 1 Marek had been in the city for six weeks when he realised he had stopped noticing what he ate.

¶ 2 It was not a diet. It was arithmetic. The room above the bakery cost more than he had budgeted for, the agency work paid less, and by Thursday each week he was counting coins on the kitchen counter and deciding whether bread or bus fare mattered more. He was twenty-four. He had moved for opportunity. What he found, at least at first, was a very narrow kind of attention.

¶ 3 Abraham Maslow would have recognised it. In 1943 the American psychologist proposed a theory of human motivation built on a simple observation: our needs compete with one another, and some of them shout louder than the rest. The pyramid most people picture when they hear his name came later, drawn by others to make the idea easy to teach. Maslow wrote about needs. He did not draw a staircase.

¶ 4 Things improved for Marek in an unremarkable way. The agency offered him a permanent contract, and within a year he had a small flat with a lock that worked and enough in his account that he stopped checking it before buying coffee. The relief was real, but it was also strange. With the arithmetic gone, something else moved into the space it had occupied. He had a flat, and nobody to tell about it.

¶ 5 He fixed that the way most people do — slowly, and slightly by accident. A colleague invited him to play five-a-side on Tuesdays. The football was not good, but the pub afterwards was, and by the following spring he had people who noticed when he did not turn up. He would not have used the phrase at the time, but what he had gained was a sense of belonging, and it changed what he wanted next.

¶ 6 Because being liked, it turned out, was not the same as being respected. By twenty-eight Marek was competent at a job he had learned on the way, and competence had started to feel insufficient. He wanted his name on something. He put himself forward for work he was not yet qualified to do, stayed late to make sure it was good, and felt a particular kind of satisfaction when a manager mentioned him by name in a meeting. He was chasing recognition, and he knew it, and he was not embarrassed about it.

¶ 7 What he did not expect was that it would stop being enough. At thirty-one, with the promotion secured, Marek began training the junior staff — unpaid, unglamorous, and the part of the week he looked forward to most. It was the first thing he had done that was not obviously for him. Maslow called this self-actualization: the point at which a person stops accumulating and starts becoming. It sounds grander than it usually looks. In Marek's case it looked like two hours on a Wednesday afternoon explaining a process to someone who did not yet understand it.





4 reading

Article, continued

¶ 8 Told this way, Marek's life fits the model neatly. It is worth asking how much of that neatness belongs to Marek and how much to the telling.

¶ 9 People do not move up through these needs like floors in a building. Marek did not finish with safety and then begin with belonging; he worried about money again at thirty-two when his contract was restructured, and the worry sat alongside everything else rather than replacing it. Several needs are usually active at once, competing for attention rather than queuing politely. What counts as important also varies more than the model suggests. In some families, obligation to relatives outranks personal ambition entirely, and a person who put their own development first would be regarded as selfish rather than self-actualized.

¶ 10 And then there is the detail that does not fit at all. During those first six weeks — the coin-counting weeks, before any of the rest of it — Marek spent two evenings a week teaching English to the baker's son, for nothing. He was tired, broke and insecure, and he did it anyway, and he has said since that it was the only part of that period he remembers fondly. By a strict reading of the hierarchy, he should not have had the capacity for it. The need he was meeting was somewhere near the top of the pyramid, and almost nothing underneath it had been satisfied.

¶ 11 This is not a small exception. People write, create, volunteer and care for others in the middle of real hardship, and they often do it precisely because everything else is difficult. A model that treats growth as a reward for stability cannot easily account for that.

¶ 12 Marek is thirty-four now. He still plays football on Tuesdays, badly. He still teaches the junior staff, and he still worries about money more than his salary would suggest he needs to. Ask him what motivates him and he gives a different answer depending on the week, which is probably the most honest answer available.

¶ 13 Maslow's hierarchy is a useful way to think about why people want what they want. It organises something that otherwise feels shapeless, and it explains a great deal of ordinary behaviour. What it cannot quite do is predict a particular person on a particular Tuesday — and Marek, counting coins and teaching a boy the past simple, was never going to fit inside a triangle.

A — Gist

1. What is the writer's overall message about Maslow's model?

2. Why do you think the writer chose to tell this through one person rather than explaining the five levels directly?





4

reading activities

B—Paragraph Purpose & C — Detailed Comprehension

B — What Is Each Paragraph Doing?

Choose from: *introduces an idea · gives an example · contrasts two situations · challenges an assumption · introduces a limitation · develops the writer's conclusion*

Paragraph	What it is doing	How do you know?
¶ 3		
¶ 8		
¶ 10		

C — Detailed Comprehension

1. What does the writer mean by saying Marek's problem "was not a diet — it was arithmetic"? (¶ 2)

2. What changed for Marek once he had a permanent contract, and what unexpected feeling followed? (¶ 4)

3. Why did being liked stop being enough for Marek? (¶ 6)

4. Compare what motivated Marek at twenty-eight with what motivated him at thirty-one. What is the main difference?

5. What does the writer mean by "a model that treats growth as a reward for stability"? (¶ 11)





4

reading activities

D—Which Need & E—The Writer's Position

D — Which Need Is Involved?

Which need seems most relevant in each situation? **Explain your choice.** One of these has more than one reasonable answer — say which, and why.

Need	Situation
-----	Marek decides between buying bread and paying for the bus.
-----	Marek stops checking his bank balance before buying coffee.
-----	Marek notices that people at football miss him when he doesn't turn up.
-----	Marek stays late so that a manager will mention his name in a meeting.
-----	Marek teaches the baker's son for free during his hardest weeks.

E — Does the Writer Agree?

For each statement, decide whether the writer **agrees**, **disagrees**, or **remains uncertain** — and find evidence in the article.

Position	Statement	Evidence (¶)
-----	Maslow's model helps explain a lot of ordinary behaviour.	
-----	People must satisfy lower needs before they can pursue higher ones.	
-----	Marek's story is a completely accurate illustration of the hierarchy.	





4

reading activities

F—Inference & G—Evaluate the Model

F — Reading Between the Lines

Each question needs you to connect ideas from more than one part of the article.

1. The writer says Marek “was not embarrassed” about wanting recognition (¶ 6). What does this suggest about the writer’s attitude towards ambition?

2. Marek still worries about money at thirty-four, despite his salary (¶ 12). What does this suggest about how needs work over time?

3. Why does the writer end with Marek “counting coins and teaching a boy the past simple” rather than with his promotion?

G — Evaluate the Model

Give reasons for each answer.

1. What is one genuine **strength** of Maslow’s model?

2. What is one clear **limitation**?

3. What kind of situation might the model fail to explain well? Use the article, or an example of your own.





4

reading activities**H – Vocabulary in Context****H – Work Out the Meaning**

Find each expression in the article. Using only the surrounding sentences, work out what it means here. Don't use a dictionary.

Expression (paragraph)**What does it mean here?**

**a very narrow kind of
attention (¶ 2)**

**competing for attention rather
than queuing politely (¶ 9)**

**outranks personal ambition
(¶ 9)**

**cannot easily account for that
(¶ 11)**

**stops accumulating and
starts becoming (¶ 7)**

Then: which words in the sentence around it helped you decide?





4

reading activities**I—Where the Video and the Article Disagree**

 You have now seen two accounts of the same idea. They do not say the same thing.

Two Accounts, One Model

Source	What it claims
The video	A person can only reach self-actualization once every lower need — food, safety, belonging, esteem — has been satisfied.
The article	People do not move through the levels in a fixed order, several needs can be active at once, and Marek pursued a higher need during his most insecure period.

1. Where *exactly* do the two sources disagree? Try to state the difference in one sentence.

2. Why might the video present the idea in a simpler, more certain way? Think about who it is made for.

3. Which account do you find more convincing, and why?

4. Can you think of a real example — from your own life, work, or someone you know — that supports one version over the other?

Neither source is simply “wrong.” The question is what each one is trying to do.





5

listening**Two friends, two very different jobs.** (12–15 min)

Audio: Nadia recently took a job with a much higher salary. Ben took one that pays around thirty percent less. They are catching up.

A — General Comprehension

1. How does Nadia describe the work itself in her new job?

2. What happened to Nadia last year, and how has it affected what she wants now?

3. What does Ben say he gets from his job that Nadia does not?

4. What does Nadia point out about Ben's own situation that he had not considered?

5. What does Nadia admit she would do if the money were the same?

B — Who Thinks What?

Write **Nadia**, **Ben**, or **both**.

Who?	Viewpoint
_____	Financial security frees up mental space you didn't know was occupied.
_____	People treat security as the end of the story when it isn't.
_____	What you can afford to prioritise depends on where you are starting from.
_____	Admits to telling themselves a flattering story about their own choice.
_____	Accepts that both of them are getting something out of their decision.



5

listening**C—Reasoning & D — Personal Response****C — Why Do They Argue That?**

1. Why does Nadia say she “couldn’t afford to find out yet”? What is her underlying reasoning?

2. Why does Ben think security can become “an excuse”? Do you find that a fair point?

3. Why does Nadia argue that Ben is not motivated purely by independence? What is she suggesting about his real motivation?

D — Personal Response

Which speaker’s reasoning do you understand better — Nadia’s or Ben’s? Explain why, and give one example from your own life or from someone you know.



Notice that both speakers change position slightly during the conversation. Where does each of them concede something?





6

grammar — gerunds, infinitives & purpose

Explaining what people want, avoid, and are working towards. (15–18 min)

1 — Notice

- a. Marek **decided to** move to the city for better opportunities.
- b. He **avoided spending** money on anything that wasn't essential.
- c. She **chose to** take the lower salary **in order to** have more freedom.
- d. Some people are **motivated by winning**; others just **enjoy working** with good colleagues.
- e. He stayed late **so that** his manager would notice the work.
- f. She's **interested in changing** career, and she **hopes to** start next year.

2 — Guided Discovery

Sort the bold structures above into three groups.

Followed by infinitive (to + verb)	Followed by gerund (-ing)	Expresses purpose (why)

Then: which structure would you use to answer the question “Why did she do it?”

3 — How It Works

Pattern	Common verbs	Example
verb + to + verb	want, hope, decide, choose, plan, refuse	He <i>hopes to</i> earn more.
verb + -ing	avoid, enjoy, consider, suggest, keep, miss	She <i>considered changing</i> jobs.
preposition + -ing	interested in, motivated by, good at, think about	He's <i>motivated by helping</i> others.
purpose	to · in order to · so that	She moved <i>so that</i> she could study.

 **to** and **in order to** are followed by a verb. **so that** is followed by a full clause with a subject: *so that she could study*.



6

grammar — practice**4—Controlled Practice & 5—Choice Task****4 — Controlled Practice**

Put the verb in brackets into the correct form.

1. Marek decided ___ (move) to the city when he was twenty-four.
2. She avoids ___ (take) risks with money because security matters to her.
3. He's considering ___ (apply) for the promotion, but he hasn't decided yet.
4. They moved abroad in order ___ (give) their children better opportunities.
5. I'm not really interested in ___ (earn) more — I'd rather have the time.
6. He works late so that his manager ___ (notice) the effort.
7. Most people are motivated by ___ (feel) that their work matters.
8. She hopes ___ (start) her own business before she turns forty.

5 — Choice Task

Choose the better option, then explain why it fits the situation.

1. He turned down the offer (to have / so that he could have) more time with his family.
2. She keeps (to postpone / postponing) the decision because she's afraid of choosing wrong.
3. They saved for three years (in order to / so that) buy a flat.
4. I'd consider (to move / moving) abroad if the right job came up.
5. He's good at (to explain / explaining) difficult ideas simply.





6

grammar — production**6—Transformation · 7—Personal Application · 8 — Speaking****6 — Transformation**

Rewrite each sentence using the structure in brackets, keeping the meaning.

- 1.) He took a second job because he wanted to pay off his debts. (in order to)

2. She studies at night because she wants a better position. (so that)

3. They moved closer to the city centre because they wanted a shorter commute. (to)

4. Marek stayed late because he wanted his work to be noticed. (so that)

7 — Personal Application

Complete these about yourself. Full sentences, not single words.

1. I would like to...

2. I avoid...

3. I am motivated by...

4. I would consider...

5. I am working towards...

8 — Speaking Extension

Explain one personal goal to your teacher, and say what need or motivation sits behind it. Use at least three of the structures from this section, and try to say *why* that goal matters to you rather than only *what* it is.



7 discussion

Developed answers, with reasons and examples. (15–18 min)

1. Think of a decision you made mainly for security. Looking back, was it the right call?
Follow-ups: *What did you give up? · Would you decide the same way now?*
2. Is money a need in itself, or just a way of meeting other needs? What makes you say that?
Follow-ups: *Which needs can money not meet? · Does that change with income?*
3. Can someone feel genuinely successful without receiving any recognition from others?
Follow-ups: *Do you know anyone like that? · Is recognition a need or a want?*
4. Can ambition become unhealthy? Where would you draw the line?
Follow-ups: *What would the warning signs be? · Is it different at different ages?*
5. Does culture influence what people consider important? Compare what you have seen in different places or generations.
Follow-ups: *Does Maslow's order hold everywhere? · What might be ordered differently?*

 **Useful language:** "To some extent..." · "That may be true in some situations, but..." · "I would argue that..." · "It depends on..."
 · "One exception might be..."

7 application

Two People, One Job & Final Synthesis Challenge

Two People, One Job

Two people are offered exactly the same job.

Person A accepts it because it offers a high salary and financial security.

Person B turns it down because they want more freedom and time for their own interests.

1. What might motivate Person A? And Person B?

2. Which needs might be influencing each decision?

3. Could *both* people be making a rational choice? Explain.

4. How far does Maslow's model help explain this situation — and what does it fail to explain?

Final Synthesis Challenge

"People cannot focus on personal growth until all their basic needs have been satisfied."

Work through all five steps: **1** Agree or disagree. · **2** Give your reasons. · **3** Give a concrete example. · **4** Consider the opposing viewpoint fairly. · **5** Give a qualified final opinion.

**homework****Complete before the next lesson · approx. 20–30 minutes.****Part 1 — Vocabulary in Use**

Choose 6 of the 12 target items. Write an original sentence for each, about motivation, work, relationships, goals, priorities or everyday decisions. At least 2 sentences must use a collocation from the lesson (for example *a sense of belonging*, *put yourself forward*, *account for*).

Part 2 — Grammar in Context

Complete each sentence with the correct form:

- She refused ___ (accept) the offer, even though the salary was higher.
- He enjoys ___ (train) new staff more than he expected to.
- They saved for two years in order ___ (buy) their first flat.
- I'm thinking about ___ (change) career, but I haven't decided.
- He took the evening shift so that he ___ (can) study during the day.
- Most people are motivated by ___ (feel) useful, not just by money.
- She's planning ___ (move) closer to her family next year.
- He avoids ___ (talk) about money with his colleagues.

Then write **3 original sentences** about a personal goal and the motivation behind it.

Part 3 — Main Communication Task: "What Really Motivates Me?"

Choose one important decision you have made, or might make — changing jobs, moving, learning a skill, starting a business, improving a relationship, or choosing between security and freedom.

Record a **2–3 minute voice message** (or write **250–300 words**) answering:

- What is the decision?
- What needs or motivations are involved, and which matters most?
- What other factors influence it?
- Does Maslow's model help explain your decision?
- What does the model fail to explain?

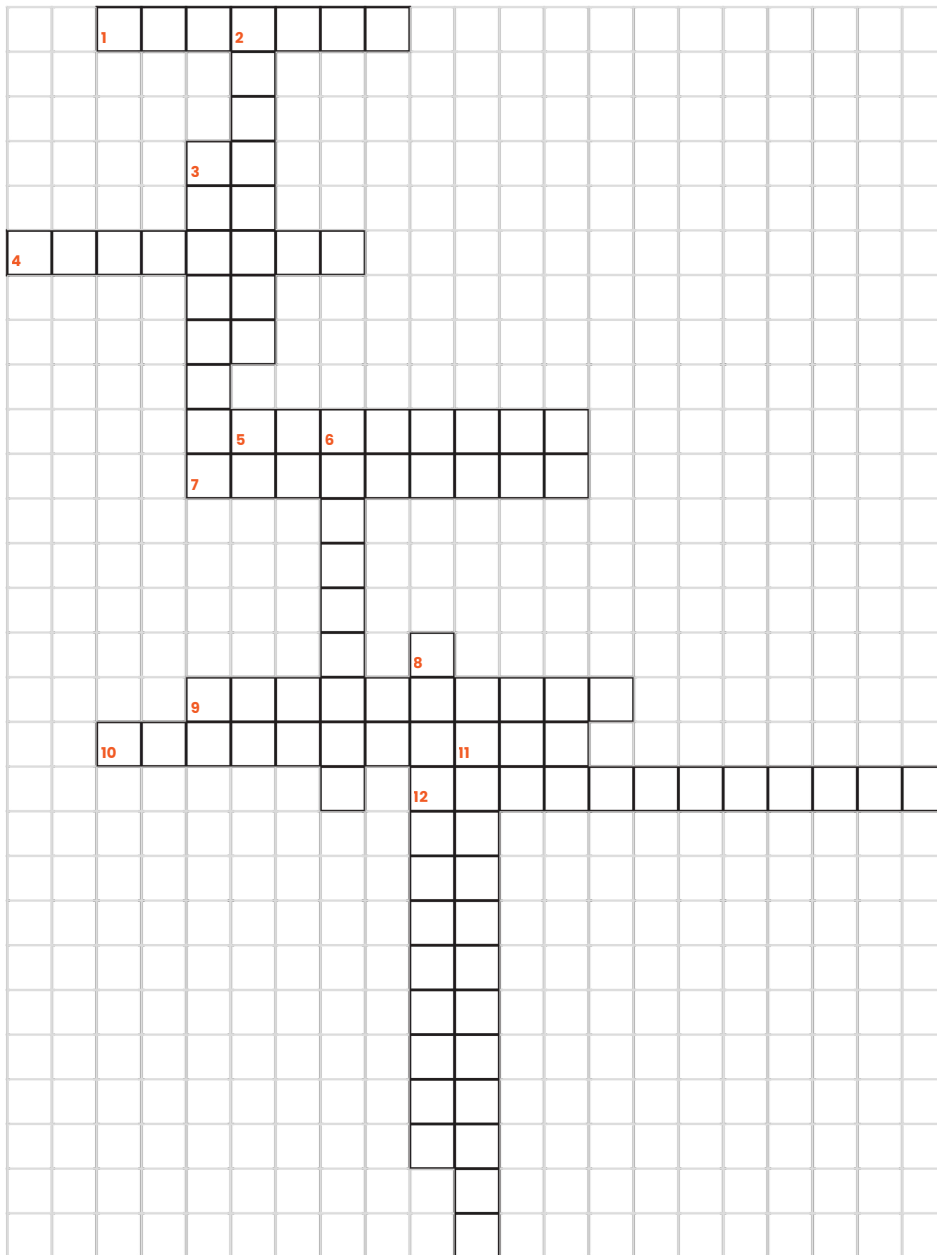
Language targets: at least 5 target vocabulary items · at least 4 gerund/infinitive or purpose structures · at least 2 opinion or qualification expressions.



8

crossword

A solo activity—complete independently after the lesson.

**ACROSS**

- 1. Contend(7)
- 4. Safety (8)
- 5. Aspiration (8)
- 7. Capability (9)
- 9. Drive (10)
- 10. Acknowledgement (11)
- 12. Inadequate (12)

DOWN

- 2. Precedence (8)
- 3. Adversity (8)
- 6. Acceptance (9)
- 8. Contentment (12)
- 11. Autonomy (12)



Video Reference

This lesson's video section is based on a short animated explainer of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, narrated by a single presenter. As this is copyrighted content, we are not able to reproduce the full script here. Please watch the original at the link below before completing Section 2.

youtube.com/watch?v=O-4ithG_07Q

What's covered: The video explains Maslow's 1943 theory that five stages of human needs motivate our behaviour, developed after Maslow studied people he regarded as exemplary, including Albert Einstein and Eleanor Roosevelt.

It works upward through the levels. Physiological needs come first — breathing, eating, drinking, sleeping. Once those are met, safety follows: earning money, building resources, finding shelter from danger. At stage three comes love and belonging, the desire to be close to family and friends and part of a group. The video notes a twist here: as soon as we feel fully part of a group, we begin wanting to stand out from it. Stage four is esteem — self-confidence and the respect of others — where motivation to perform and compete is at its highest, and where students, athletes and inventors excel.

Only when all four lower levels are satisfied, the video states, can a person reach stage five: self-actualization, where they can relax, create, accept things as they are, and give back. It adds that this state lasts only while nothing below is disturbed.

It closes with practical advice for leaders: make sure people are fed, then help them feel safe, then help them belong — and only then will they be ready to stand out and excel.

Note for the teacher: the video's strictly sequential claim is what Reading Activity I asks the learner to compare against the article. This disagreement is intentional.





Listening Script

Ben: So how's the new place? You've been there, what, three months?

Nadia: Four. It's fine. It's good, actually — the money's a lot better than I expected.

Ben: But?

Nadia: Why does there have to be a but?

Ben: Because you said "it's fine" first, and then you said the money.

Nadia: [laughs] All right. The work itself is quite repetitive. I spend a lot of the day doing things I already know how to do. But honestly, after last year, I'll take repetitive.

Ben: That's fair. You had a rough time.

Nadia: I had eight months of not knowing if I'd have a contract in September. You forget how much space that takes up in your head until it's gone. Now I can plan things. I booked a holiday in March without checking anything first, and that felt amazing.

Ben: See, I don't doubt any of that. I just think people talk about security as if it's the end of the story, and it isn't.

Nadia: Meaning what?

Ben: Meaning I took a job that pays about thirty percent less than yours, and I'm not sitting here feeling like I made a mistake.

Nadia: You're not going to tell me money doesn't matter, are you?

Ben: No. Money absolutely matters. I'm saying it stopped being the thing that decided it for me. I get to choose what I work on. If I have an idea on a Tuesday I can just try it, and nobody has to approve it.

Nadia: That does sound good. I'd be lying if I said it didn't.

Ben: And you could have had something like that. You had two offers.

Nadia: I did, and I thought about it for about a week. But I think you're underestimating how different it feels depending on where you're starting from. You've got savings. Your rent is low. If your job disappeared tomorrow you'd be annoyed, not frightened.

Ben: ...That's probably true.

Nadia: It's not that freedom matters less to me. It's that I couldn't afford to find out yet.

Ben: Okay, that's a better argument than the one I was expecting.

Nadia: Thank you.

Ben: But can I push back slightly? I know people who've been financially comfortable for fifteen years and still haven't done anything they actually wanted to do. At some point the security thing becomes an excuse.

Nadia: Sure. But that's a different problem, isn't it? That's someone who got what they wanted and didn't move on. That's not an argument against wanting it in the first place.

Ben: Hm. Maybe.

Nadia: And I'd say the same thing back to you, actually. You talk about freedom like it's obviously the higher goal. But you're also getting something out of doing work people admire. That's not pure independence.

Ben: [laughs] That's uncomfortably accurate.

Nadia: I'm not criticising. I just don't think either of us is doing the noble version and the other one's doing the practical version. We're both getting something.

Ben: No, that's fair. I think I'd been telling myself a slightly flattering story about it.

Nadia: We all do.

Ben: So would you take my job? If the money were the same.

Nadia: In a heartbeat. Ask me again in two years and I might not need the money to be the same.

Ben: That's the real answer, isn't it. It's not what you want. It's when you can afford to want it.



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