

Providing Institution:



CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH
Language Assessment
Part of the University of Cambridge

You are going to read an extract from a magazine article. Six paragraphs have been removed from the extract. Choose from the paragraphs **A – G** the one which fits each gap (**1 – 6**). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet**.

GOING FREELANCE

Have you got what it takes for self-employment? asks Godfrey Golzen.

Freelancing, by definition, involves offering your skills to a variety of clients. You are claiming some specialist expertise, be it in management consultancy, journalism, graphic design or vehicle repair. But whatever it is, in order to make that claim, you must either have done the job before, or be trained in it in some convincingly applied way.

1

Your credentials would be less impressive if you tried to set up as a management consultant, having had no experience other than a business studies qualification, or if you tried to become a journalist on the basis of an English degree. The first thing you will have to do as a freelancer, therefore, is to see that your level of expertise is appropriate to the area where you want to apply it as a freelancer.

In many cases, freelancers are ex-employees and they generally begin by working for their ex-employers. A common situation, for instance, is that a company closes down a functional area like in-house PR or building maintenance and asks the people who were doing it before to take it on as freelancers.

2

As a freelancer, each approach to a new client is rather like applying for another job and, as with a job application, establishing your credibility by showing that you can do what the job entails is an essential first step. One way to do that is to demonstrate that you are already busy, and a list of existing clients – particularly if they are well-known ones – validates that claim. Some freelancers do this informally.

3

In other branches of freelancing, formal evidence of work done needs to be produced. Some kind of brochure with the names of your clients and what you did for them is a good investment as soon as you have worked for a sufficient number of companies.

Working as a freelancer is in many ways different from working as an employee. Consider, for example, this fundamental difference between the two situations. If you are permanently based in the next office or at least in the same building as the person or department to whom you are reporting, it is easy to check back and clarify aspects of the job as you go along. As a freelancer though, you are on your own and in many cases the client is paying you to get on with the job without bothering him or her.

4

That's the kind of mistake that comes from inexperience. If you have done similar work for an organisation before, you probably know what is expected. But in the case of a first-time assignment it's all uncharted territory. Picking up how to go about doing such work has to be learned and the best way of doing so is with people who already know you and vice versa.

5

How ready your existing contacts are to put freelance assignments your way is an invaluable clue as to how marketable your skills are. To some extent you should know from your own experience what the demand is for freelancers in your chosen sphere.

6

The question of your own ability is one that has to be faced in considering your chances. Freelancing is not an easy option for those who cannot hold down a job on grounds of competence. You have to be good at what you do to freelance successfully because the client will turn to someone else if you are not.

- A** For instance, a cameraman said recently, ‘I never admit I haven’t got much on. The way I put it is that I’ve got a spare week or so between assignments and I mention a couple of things coming up, even if they’re not definite at that time. But if I went in and said “I’m a bit short of work at the moment – anything doing?” they’d assume I was going off a bit and wouldn’t offer me anything.’
- B** In these circumstances, you will at least be tolerant of each other’s mistakes and not ask for the temperamentally or functionally impossible. For instance, if the person you are reporting to is careless about checking subordinates’ work, that places an extra burden on you to be correspondingly careful.
- C** For this reason, clients think of a freelancer as a one-person set-up which cannot handle more complex assignments. You may have to demonstrate that you yourself can call on other freelancers to deal with problems that you are personally less experienced in handling.
- D** This means that the freelancers can offer the same service to a variety of clients without incurring the overheads that become attached to corporate activities. Quite often, a function that is uneconomic for a firm to sustain, either for that reason or because it is not fully used, becomes very profitable to freelancers.
- E** For instance, if you are a technical illustrator, you ought to be aware of whether there are enough technical publishers who employ outsiders rather than in-house staff and, if so, what the rates of pay are. If the demand is strong or rising, how successful you are likely to be depends on your own skill and speed.
- F** So if you have been commissioned as a freelance copywriter, for instance, the person who commissioned you does not want to have to deal with last-minute queries about whether he or she wants a reply coupon to go with the ad. These are the sort of questions that should have been raised at the briefing session.
- G** It is possible to become a freelance designer, for instance, on the basis of having done a degree course because such courses are generally practically oriented. Or you could become a translator having taken a language degree.

Answer key: 1-G, 2-D, 3-A, 4-F, 5-B, 6-E.