

Write a speech for your classmates persuading them to agree with your views on the following topic: **'Every teenager should be required to have a part-time job.'**

Good morning, tired, weary, and exhausted friends. As I look around the room today, I can see how the pressure is taking its toll on all of you! Your once fresh, keen faces have been transformed by the weight of responsibility you all face. And what has caused this transformation, I hear you ask me? Well, it the straw that breaks the camel's back ... a part-time job. Let me have your attention for a few minutes to explain why I believe you should not have a part-time job, and why its probably the most important decision you will make this year.

Let's begin by considering the reality of our situations: we are about to sit our GCSE exams. These are, arguably, the most important exams of our lives. They will shape, support and facilitate our futures. They are the beating heart of our lives, the navigation system giving us direction and the key to unlocking our success. So, let me ask you, why, oh why on earth would we risk something so important for a couple of extra pounds in our pockets? Is it worth skipping homework to stock shelves? Is it worth missing revision classes to sweep floors? And is it worth missing out on your target grades to wait on tables? I think you already know the answer! No, it is absolutely not worth it!

Have you ever considered the burden placed on young people who have jobs? They are being confronted by adult situations and adult responsibilities that they may not be ready for yet. My best friend Sarah works in a local takeaway shop. She works on Saturday nights as it is the only night she has free time, and the pay is pretty good considering she is only 15. But here is the big issue: she has to deal with some ... well, tricky customers! The takeaway is beside a pub, so there can be rowdy customers and she is only 15! I genuinely worry that the job is too risky for her and that she should prioritise herself rather than have to work late into the night in a potentially risky environment. According to research completed by the Department for Jobs and Benefits, a staggering 85% of students who also work experience danger levels of stress on a day-to-day basis. So come on, is this really the right experience for young people?

Another major factor we need to consider is protecting our youth, our free time and our carefree existence for as long as possible. Part-time jobs may seem new, fun and exciting, but let me tell you this, Year 11, it will not be long before we are chained to our full-time jobs, tied to our payslips and enslaved to our alarm clocks. Did you know that at present, people of working age have to work until they are 68 before they can receive their state pension? That's most of 50 years of work! Did you hear that? ... 50 years! Friends, you have decades of work ahead of you but these school years are a gift. Be a kid! Have fun! Go outside with your friends. Kick a football. Have a sleepover. But don't sell out. Don't give up your youth for some extra pocket money.

In many ways, I can understand the temptation to get a part-time job. After all, socialising can be expensive. Did you know that a trip to the cinema and a bag of popcorn is now so expensive that there is little change left from a ten-pound note? And did you know that getting a 'Five Guys' and a bus ticket into Belfast is going to cost you £20! I know that's a lot. I'm not pretending that life is easy or cheap. But those activities are one-off treats. You don't need to dress like a wealthy celebrity or spend money like a millionaire. My advice is to live a simple, carefree life and enjoy the simple, carefree pleasures around you. Swap the cinema trip for a walk and a chat with a friend. Swap the 'Five Guys' for a slice of toast and a cuppa tea at home while you catch up on all the news. Don't give in to the pressure to earn more money to spend more money. There is plenty of time for that when you are older. For now, do what the band Supergrass described when they sang: *We are young, we run green, keep our teeth nice and clean, see our friends, see the sights, feel alright.*

Year 11, if I haven't been crystal clear yet, let me tell you one more time! I strongly believe that young people our age should work hard at school and play hard in their free time, but they should avoid getting part-time jobs until they are older. Your youth should be fun, carefree and relaxed, not stressful, busy and enslaved to earning an income.