

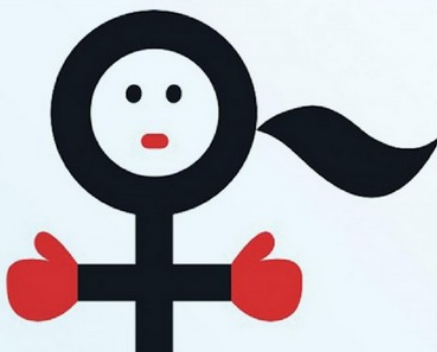
What I'm really thinking

A The female boxing coach

Apparently, I don't look like a boxer. I get told that a lot. I've lost count of the number of times people have exclaimed, 'What about your nose?' and 'What if you mess up your face?' They've **missed the point**: I'm not a model, so what does it matter if my nose isn't straight? And anyway, boxing means more to me than that: it's my structure and my sanity. Cheaper than therapy, that's what we say. Injuries are part of the game, but I've been lucky so far.

As the only girl in my gym, I'm aware that I'm a novelty. I've always been a tomboy, though, so it doesn't bother me to train with the blokes. Some men don't like to box with a woman, and that's **fair enough**. But mostly they get used to it.

When I'm not in the mood and consider giving up, I think about the children I help teach. There are a couple of young girls coming up who are really good and I want to be an example. Every time I **hold my own** in the ring, I challenge someone's expectations a little bit, and I'm proud of myself for that.



C The orchestral musician



I have done this for so long, my mind is free to wander while I play. The thrill of this being a fresh challenge **has long gone**. I just want to get to the end of the concert and go home. Travelling against commuter traffic is great, but it's also a reminder that most people are on their way to relax and I'm only just getting started.

We're not all friends. The person on my right had an affair with the person on my left, and the ex sits close by. People fraternize exclusively according to the instrument they play, especially on tour.

Late nights and out-of-town work mean I often get home after midnight, but I sleep only around six hours or I'll miss the family in the only half-hour we have together. I work most weekends and holidays, then have random weekdays off. The freelance pay structure and low fees **keep my nose to the grindstone**, with almost zero opportunities to develop broader interests or a social life outside.

B The night receptionist



People assume I get bored, but I enjoy the solitude. I like the hourly walks through the quiet corridors and listening to the patter of the rain on the windows while enjoying a cup of tea. I enjoy finishing a good book or watching the birds in the car park feeding on the muffins I put out yesterday.

The tiredness is the hardest. Sometimes I have a good routine and my sleep is not affected. Other times, I walk into doors, zombie-like, and occasionally I've been surprised to find that I've actually **made it** home. My husband tells me I should find a new job, and I have been applying for some since I began working here, but 'night receptionist' is not a good thing to put on a CV.

I'm good with people; I just don't like a lot of them. But though my job often perpetuates this dislike, I am compassionate towards those in need. I **never think twice** about letting someone in from the cold, or giving away a free room if it is a genuine cause. But if the intercom goes off at 2 a.m. and I see a couple who can hardly stand, I'll probably say the hotel is full, even when it isn't, especially if I've just made a tea.

Adapted from The Guardian

Read the articles and check your answers to a. Which person, A–C, ...?

- 1 ☐ enjoys their job the most **A**
- 2 ☐ enjoys their job the least **C**
- 3 ☐ doesn't have a good relationship with some of their colleagues **C**
- 4 ☐ trains others as part of their job **A**
- 5 ☐ struggles with the lack of sleep **B**
- 6 ☐ helps people in need **B**

Read the articles again. With a partner, say what you think the people mean by the following phrases or sentences.

- 1 ...it's my structure and my sanity.
- 2 ...I challenge someone's expectations a little bit...
- 3 ...'night receptionist' is not a good thing to put on a CV.
- 4 Travelling against commuter traffic is great...
- 5 ...have random weekdays off.
- 6 ...with almost zero opportunities to develop broader interests...

Look at the **highlighted** phrases in the articles and work out their meaning from the context. Then match them to definitions 1–7.

- 1 **made it** = managed to arrive
- 2 **missed the point** = not understood the most important fact
- 3 **never think twice** = do things spontaneously, without reflecting
- 4 **hold my own** = defend myself
- 5 **keep my nose to the grindstone** = continue working hard without respite
- 6 **has long gone** = ended a long time ago
- 7 **fair enough** = reasonable, acceptable