

Six and a half hours

Vocabulary and speaking

1 Match the halves of sentences to make expressions with *time*.

1 His journey to work <i>takes</i> ...	a) <i>the time</i> he gets home.
2 He is never late because ...	b) <i>time off</i> .
3 He always arrives at work <i>on</i> ...	c) <i>of time</i> .
4 He thinks commuting is <i>a waste</i> ...	d) <i>a long time</i> .
5 He always feels stressed by ...	e) <i>more time</i> with his family.
6 He would like to <i>spend</i> ...	f) <i>time</i> .
7 He gets a lot of ...	g) the journey is carefully <i>timed</i> .

Now think about your journey to work / school. Which of the sentences above are true for you?

2 Tadao Masuda lives in Japan and commutes to work by train. In pairs, read the sentences in Exercise 1a again. Do you think they are true (T) or false (F) for him?

Reading

3 Read the text and check your answers to Exercise 2.

4 Read the text again and answer the questions.

- How long does he spend travelling each day?
- How long is Tadao away from home each day?
- How does he feel about the time on the train?
- What special qualities does Tadao have?
- Do you think Tadao will enjoy his retirement? Why / Why not?

Grammar focus

- All the words in *italics* in the box are ways of expressing contrasting ideas. Write one example from the text for each of the words.
- Look at the position of the commas in the sentences. How do they affect pronunciation?

- A You arrive at work tired. *However*, it could be a lot worse.
B *Although* ...
C *Despite* ...
D *Despite not* ...
E *In spite of* ...

Now listen and repeat the sentences.

Practice

7 Rewrite the following sentences using the words in brackets. Make any necessary changes.

Example: My journey is long. I enjoy it. (although)
Although my journey is long, I enjoy it.

- I like work. I don't like commuting. (although)
- I don't really like my job. I need the money. (however)
- She works hard all week. She takes it easy on Sundays. (although)
- He is very busy. He manages to take some time off. (despite)
- I leave on time. I'm always late. (in spite of)
- He doesn't have an alarm clock. He always wakes up on time. (despite not)
- Vocabulary is not easy to remember. It is essential. (however)
- English verbs are easy. I have problems remembering the irregular ones. (in spite of)
- I want to learn English. I don't do any homework. (despite)
- I enjoy my English lessons. I'm often tired. (although)

Long-distance commuter

So you think you have a difficult journey to work; traffic, heat and other people. You fight through crowds, down tunnels, up escalators. And you arrive at work sweaty and tired. However, it could be a lot worse.

Consider Tadao Masuda who lives in Japan. His journey to work takes three and a quarter hours and then another three and a quarter back home again. He gets up at 4.00 a.m. Although he knows the journey time to the minute, he leaves nothing to chance. He sets off at 4.55, gets the train at 5.16 and always arrives at the office on time. He finally returns home at 8.50 in the evening. He knows his routine well – after all, he has done it for 30 years.



'I don't actually enjoy my commuting, but I definitely don't feel it is a waste of time. I use the time for my own thoughts. It is my private space. Despite many problems at work during the day, I've always forgotten them by the time I get home. It is my way of getting rid of stress.' Tadao is prepared to work hard. Despite not enjoying the journey, he does not complain about it.

Today at 65, he is considering a change. He would like to spend more time with his wife and family. In spite of staying with the same company all his life, he still only gets ten days off a year. However, will he be happy when he retires and ends his 30-year routine?



Get talking ...

8 Look again at the sentences in Exercise 7 and tick (✓) the ones that are true for you. If they are not true, think about what is and give examples.

In pairs, discuss your answers and compare your attitudes towards ...

- work / school
- being on time
- learning English

... and writing

9 Write a letter to your boss apologising for being late for an important meeting and explaining your reasons.

Language to go

- A: Are you usually on time?
B: Although I try to be on time, I'm often late.

