English B2+ Worksheet

Reading · Grammar · Vocabulary · Case Study

Part 1 — Reading

The Silent Cost of the Corner Office

When Clara Simmons was promoted to Chief Operations Officer at the age of thirty-four, everyone called her a high-flying executive who had finally acquired the managerial skills the company needed. Her new duty was to oversee a department of forty subordinates, and for the first few months she seemed unstoppable. She employed a strict time-schedule, arrived before sunrise, and left long after the office lights had descended into darkness.

Friends noticed something was wrong long before Clara did. She worked long hours that the job did not strictly require, as if she believed exhaustion itself were proof of value. Colleagues who had known her for years said her natural resilience seemed to be wearing thin; the endurance that had once made her extraordinary was now being tested daily, and not always successfully.

Nobody could point to the exact moment the trouble began. It seemed to lurk somewhere beneath the surface, hidden behind spreadsheets and quarterly targets, until it could no longer be ignored. One Tuesday morning, Clara simply could not get out of bed. Her doctor used a phrase she had never applied to herself: burnout. The diagnosis wrecked the image she had built of herself as endurant and unbreakable.

“I felt miserable,” she admitted later, “and I couldn’t understand why, because on paper my life looked perfect.” She described the sensation as something that seemed to drain her, quietly, day after day, until the job had managed to suck the energy out of every part of her life outside the office.

Clara’s story is far from unique. Psychologists say the very managerial skills that companies value most — constant availability, tireless commitment, an instinct to solve every problem personally — are often the ones that put employees most at risk.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Executives who are promoted quickly, before they have learned to protect their own limits, are especially vulnerable.

Six months after her diagnosis, Clara returned to work with a very different time-schedule. She still leads her department, but she has learned that true resilience is not about how much a person can endure — it is about knowing when to stop.

Comprehension questions

1. Why was Clara considered a “high-flying executive” when she was promoted?

2. What did Clara’s new duty involve?

3. How did colleagues describe the change in Clara’s resilience over time?

4. What happened one Tuesday morning, and what word did the doctor use?

5. According to psychologists, why can strong managerial skills sometimes be risky?

6. What did Clara change about her time-schedule after she returned to work?

Part 2 — Grammar: Perfect Continuous tenses

Complete the sentences with the correct Perfect Continuous form (Present, Past or Future) of the verb in brackets.

1. By the time Clara finally saw a doctor, she _____ (work) sixty-hour weeks for almost two years.

2. “You look exhausted — what _____ you _____ (do) all morning?”

3. By next December, Clara _____ (lead) her department for exactly one year since her return.

4. He _____ (not / sleep) properly for weeks before his manager finally noticed.

5. I _____ (think) about changing jobs recently — the pressure is becoming too much.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

6. By the time the project finally launched, the whole team _____ (work) around the clock for three months.

7. She was pale and shaking; she clearly _____ (cry).

8. By 6 p.m. today, I _____ (sit) in this office for eleven hours straight.

Part 3 — Vocabulary: Word formation

Complete the table with the missing forms of each word.

Verb	Noun	Adjective
promote	_____	promotional
diversify	diversity	_____
endanger	_____	endangered
disappear	_____	—
equip	_____	—

Part 4 — Vocabulary: Match the terms

Match each term (1–6) with its correct definition (a–f).

1. to descend

2. to span

3. naval officer

4. to dredge something up

5. scuba technology

6. scuba diving

a. the sport or activity of swimming underwater using a self-contained breathing apparatus

b. to pull something up from the bottom of a body of water, often something old or forgotten

LIVEWORKSHEETS

c. equipment that allows a person to breathe and move underwater independently

d. to move downward from a higher to a lower level

e. an officer who serves in a country's navy

f. to extend across a distance, area, or period of time

Part 5 — Case study: tenses in context

Read the case study and complete the gaps with the correct form of the verb in brackets. Think carefully about which tense fits the context (Past Simple, Present Perfect, Past Perfect, Perfect Continuous, or a conditional form).

A Diver's Warning

Maria _____ (dive) professionally for fifteen years when she noticed something strange near the old wreck. She _____ (already / explore) that part of the reef twice before, but this time the water _____ (look) different — darker, and strangely quiet.

She _____ (descend) slowly, testing her equipment, when she suddenly spotted a shape she did not recognise. If she _____ (not / check) her oxygen levels first, she might have ignored the warning signs completely.

By the time she reached the surface, she _____ (think) about the discovery for almost an hour. "If I _____ (not / dive) that day," she said later, "we would never have found the wreck at all."

Marine researchers who study old shipwrecks say she _____ (make) one of the most important discoveries of the decade.

LIVEWORKSHEETS