

Break Rules Vocabulary Text

Hello, welcome to the vocabulary lesson for “Break Rules.” Let’s begin.

First is the word obedience. Obedience means following the rules, right? The verb is obey. To obey means to follow rules; to do what you are told to do. So obedience is the noun. It’s the action; it’s the situation of following rules.

So he says “Obedience works fine, if you work in a factory.” So following the rules works fine, if you work in a factory. If you work in a factory you need to have obedience. You need to follow the rules because you have to do an exact little job, again, again, again, again. If you change it then it can destroy everything. So obedience, following the rules, doing what you’re told is good, if you work in a factory.

He says “Obedience works fine in a standardized factory.” Stan-dar-dized, standardized means organized. It means everything is the same. So standardized means everything is standard, everything is the same.

For example, we have standardized tests. A standardized test means a test that is always the same. It always is the same. It means if I take it or you take it or someone else takes it, it’s the same result, the same test. It measures the same thing. It’s always a very similar test or always exactly the same test, a standardized test.

Next he talks about collars. He talks about blue collars and white collars, blue-collar and white-collar. And this is in idiom in English and it describes a kind of work. It describes a kind of job. So we have blue-collar jobs and white-collar jobs. A blue-collar job is a factory job, okay, so blue collar means factory.

Why do we say blue collar? Well, it’s because in the past a lot of factory workers they wore blue uniforms, all right, so we say a blue-collar job. It’s a factory job. You’re using your hands, your using your body in the job, a blue-collar job.

Then we have white-collar jobs. White-collar jobs are office jobs. They’re intellectual jobs, mental jobs, you’re using your head, mostly, your mind. And, again, of course, it’s because, you know, most businesspeople who work in an office they have white shirts, right? They wear white shirts.

The collar – the part around the neck – is white, so a white-collar job is an office job or a business job. It's a job where you use your brain, mostly, not your hands. You're not building stuff, you're not in a factory, you're thinking. It's your brain that's most important, that's a white-collar job.

Okay, so he's talking about white-collar jobs. For a white-collar job you need to break the rules, it's the opposite of a blue-collar job. A blue-collar job, you must follow the rules because factories need everything to be the same.

But a white-collar job, usually the company wants you to do something new, something great, to make improvements, to do better and better and better, to be more productive, which is our next word, productive or productivity. Productivity is the noun, productive is the adjective. Productive means efficient. It means doing more work with less effort or less time, so doing more with less effort. That's productive.

So, for example, let's say you're building a car or building cars and we have two teams. One team builds five cars in one day. Another team builds 10 cars in one day. The second team is more productive, right? Same time, but they did more work, so that's productivity.

Productivity is the amount of work you do in a certain time or with a certain amount of effort. So more productivity means you do more in less time or with fewer people or with less effort. So more for less, that's productivity. And that's what most companies want for white-collar workers, they want more productivity. More results for less effort or less time.

Next he talks about examples of "clerks who have every keystroke measured." What he's saying is that in some white-collar jobs, in some offices, it's like a factory, right? They measure every keystroke. It means you're typing on your computer and the computer has keys, right? Keystroke means every time you hit a key on your computer.

He's exaggerating, but he's saying that some jobs, even office jobs, it's like a factory. The company is measuring everything you do. They're watching you all the time. He said "That's not really a white-collar job, that's just a factory job where you stay clean." It's just a factory job where you're in an office, but the mentality is still like a factory. They're watching you. They're measuring everything you do. You don't have freedom. You don't have creativity. You're not really using your brain.

White-collar jobs require you to use your brain, require you to be creative, require you to make decisions. So he's saying "These jobs they're just factory jobs in an office and you can get carpal tunnel syndrome" at that job. Carpal tunnel is a problem with your wrist, right, in your hand. It means you get pain, a lot of pain in your wrist and your hand because you're typing too much on a computer.

So people who just type, type, type on the computer a lot, sometimes they have this problem where they get terrible pain in their hands because they never rest, they're just typing, typing, typing all day, every day. So that pain is called carpal tunnel syndrome or just carpal tunnel. It's that pain it's that problem that people get from typing too much.

Our next word is petrified, petrified. He said "Most workers are petrified to break the rules." To be petrified means to be very scared, to be super scared. They're scared to break the rules. They're super scared, they are petrified, so to be petrified means to be very, very scared, to be very, very, very afraid. To be petrified, petrified, very afraid, very scared, petrified.

He said "Most workers are afraid to blow it." They're afraid to blow it. To blow it means to fail or make a big mistake. So if we're talking about the past you say "Man, I blew it! I really blew it." It means I really made a mistake. I made a big mistake. I made a big mistake, I blew it. So "to blow it", that phrase, that whole phrase means to make a mistake and really to make a big mistake.

So he says most workers are afraid to blow it. They're afraid to make a big mistake. Most people, in general, are afraid to blow it, they're afraid to make mistakes. So they're careful, so they follow the rules because they're afraid, because they're petrified.

He said "Most workers want to be given instructions. They don't want to invent instructions." And, of course, invent means to create something new. So to invent means to create something new, to make something that's totally new. So if you invent instructions you make new instructions, so he says that's what you need to do. Don't follow the old rules make new rules. Invent new ways of doing things. Invent, create something new, to invent. So, again, to invent is to create something new, to invent.

Next we have the word myth, myth. He said "We, we workers, we invented the myth. We created the myth that doing what your boss says is the best way to keep your job." A myth is a story that's not true. That's one meaning, it actually has several meanings. It has other meanings, also, but in this situation it means an untrue story. It's not real, it's a story or a belief that's not true, that's not real.

So he says "We believe that we should follow the rules. We should follow our boss to keep our job. We believe that that's the best way to keep a job, but it's a myth." It's an untrue story. It's an untrue idea. It's not true. It's not the best way to keep your job. It's not the best way to improve in your career. It's a myth, a myth. It's an untrue story, it is a myth. So, again, a myth is an untrue story or an untrue belief, a myth.

Our next word is reflex. He said “Nine times out of ten,” so 90% of the time, “a white-collar worker’s reflex is to ask ‘What do you think I should do?’” A reflex is an automatic reaction. It’s a fast, automatic reaction. No thinking about it, it’s automatic. It happens automatically. So it’s a reaction, right? Something happens and then you react, you do something. It’s a reaction that’s automatic, a reflex, a reflex.

So he’s saying most workers’ reflex is just to ask “What do you think? Tell me what to do.” That’s their natural reflex. It’s their first automatic reaction. So, for example, their boss says “Well, what should we do?” Most workers’ reflex, most of them will react and they’ll say “Ah, I don’t know. What do you think we should do?”

They ask the boss. That’s their reflex, it’s their first reaction. It’s their first action that they do automatically. They’re afraid to give their opinion. They’re afraid to just do something without asking. So that’s a reflex, an automatic reaction; your first automatic reaction, reflex.

And that’s all. That is all of our vocabulary for “Break Rules.”

Next is the mini-story. I will see you next time, bye-bye.