

ISE III

Sample Independent listening task – Football salaries

Examiner rubric

You're going to hear a talk about highly paid jobs. You will hear the talk twice. The first time, just listen. Then I'll ask you to tell me generally what the speaker is talking about. Are you ready?

The task will play once.

Can you tell me in one or two sentences what the speaker was talking about?

Give the candidate some blank notepaper.

Now listen to the talk again. This time make some notes as you listen, if you want to. Then I'll ask you to tell me what arguments the speaker puts forward about high salaries and what solutions are offered. Are you ready?

The task will play once.

Now tell me what arguments the speaker puts forward about high salaries and what solutions are offered. You have one minute to talk.

Audio script

When you see another footballer getting signed for a top club for a record amount of money or you hear about the millions of dollars a famous actor grosses in one year, it begs the question: Why is there such an imbalance when it comes to salaries? And it's not just the celebrity professions that coin in the cash. Of the top 10 richest people in the world, all of them are business magnates. In fact, the average top company director salary is said to be 120 times the average earnings of their employees when you include the generous bonus-related packages. Sport stars do have relatively short careers and yes, movie stars sometimes have a hard time under the media spotlight when their private lives are invaded and dissected for all to see. You can even argue that salaries are proportionate to the workload and/or training involved.

Doctors, for instance, undertake five to six years of initial study before specialising in an area. And directors of companies are well-known for being workaholics and never really switching off from the job. And yet it doesn't seem fair that other demanding professions do not benefit from the same high rates of pay. Take nurses. They work on the front line in hospitals and are required to do shift work. Chefs also do very tough, energy-draining jobs and have to contend with a hot, stressful work environment. In fact, many of the lower paid jobs are stressful and involve long hours of hard work. So, why the difference?

An alternative theory to explain this relates to the economic laws of supply and demand whereby a commodity automatically becomes more valuable when it is in short supply. So, although anyone, in theory, can be a football player, and there are many good football players, only a tiny proportion will have that little something extra. And it is this rare talent that makes a person a valuable commodity and in a position to demand a high salary. If this is the case, then surely the question should be not so much 'Why does this happen?' as 'What can be done?'. For a start, there could be a cap on the maximum amount a person can earn to reduce the gap over time between the very-well-paid and the not-so-well-paid. Increasing tax thresholds for high earners and decreasing them for lower incomes is another option. A more radical solution would be to automatically deduct a fixed percentage of high earnings for charities that help those worse off.

Answers

Main point/gist: There is an imbalance in salaries in certain jobs. The speaker wonders what can be done about this and offers some solutions (any broadly similar formulation is acceptable).

Arguments for (high salaries justified)	Arguments against (high salaries not justified)	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Short careers (sportsmen/women) ▶ Media scrutiny (celebrities) ▶ Training/educational demands/long hours (doctors/directors) ▶ Premium paid for rare talent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Some low paying jobs also high pressured/require specific training/education (nurse) ▶ Some people on low salaries also work unsociable hours/shift work and long hours (nurse/chef) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cap salaries ▶ Increase/decrease tax according to salary ▶ Automatically give to charity when income reaches certain level