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## **Anger at \$86,000 train driver salaries**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1110/111004-train\\_drivers.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1110/111004-train_drivers.html)

### **Contents**

The Article	2
Warm ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

**4th October, 2011**

# THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train\\_drivers.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train_drivers.html)

The British public have expressed their anger over an announcement that drivers of London's underground trains will soon be on £50,000 (\$86,000) a year. Union bosses, however, were delighted their members have such a good offer from the railway bosses. A new four-year deal was struck between London Underground and the unions that will see all 18,500 Tube workers get a five per cent pay rise this year, which is double the national average. Rail bosses were accused of giving in to blackmail ahead of the London Olympics in 2012. Critics claim London Underground is willing to pay almost anything to avoid the threat of strikes and disruption. Rail unions said there was no need for strikes in the coming years.

Bob Crow, general secretary of the RMT rail union, told his members: "I doubt you will find a better offer than this anywhere else in the public sector." In addition to the increased salary, Tube workers will receive a minimum of 29 days holiday, free travel within London for themselves and one family member and discounts on travel within Britain and the Eurostar trains to Europe. Emma Boon of the Tax Payers' Alliance, said of the deal: "It's unacceptable that the threat of strike action during the Olympics is being so handsomely rewarded. This is insulting to commuters." Other Britons compared the salaries to those of other public sector workers. Police officers, nurses, soldiers and teachers are paid far less than subway train drivers.

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# WARM-UPS

**1. TRAIN DRIVERS:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about train drivers. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*public / underground trains / delighted / pay rise / national average / willing / strikes / members / public sector / minimum / discounts / unacceptable / rewarded / paid*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. SALARIES:** What should these people get a year and why? You have a budget of \$500,000. Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

	Salary (\$)	Why?
Train driver		
Nurse		
Soldier		
Police officer		
Teacher		
Investment banker		

**4. UNIONS:** Students A **strongly** believe unions are essential; Students B **strongly** believe they aren't. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. STRIKE:** Would you go on strike? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the biggest reason for going on strike at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- Poor pay
- Huge management bonuses
- Dangerous working conditions
- To defend the firing of a colleague
- To protest against government cuts
- To protest against job closures
- To support a national general strike
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**6. SALARY:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'salary'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train\\_drivers.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train_drivers.html)

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. All train drivers in the U.K. now get a \$86,000 a year salary.       | T / F |
| b. Train driver union bosses are unhappy with a 5% pay rise.             | T / F |
| c. The train drivers' pay rise is twice that of the average U.K. worker. | T / F |
| d. Unions say they will not go on strike in the near future.             | T / F |
| e. A union leader believed the pay offer was one of the best around.     | T / F |
| f. Train drivers get at least 29 days paid holiday a year.               | T / F |
| g. Train drivers also get free travel on Eurostar trains to Europe.      | T / F |
| h. U.K. soldiers and police officers are paid more than train drivers.   | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. expressed  | a. pleased      |
| 2. anger      | b. offensive    |
| 3. delighted  | c. interruption |
| 4. deal       | d. inside       |
| 5. disruption | e. voiced       |
| 6. offer      | f. outrage      |
| 7. within     | g. proposal     |
| 8. rewarded   | h. much         |
| 9. insulting  | i. agreement    |
| 10. far       | j. paid         |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                      |                            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. The British public have expressed | a. almost anything         |
| 2. delighted their members have      | b. on travel               |
| 3. A new four-year deal              | c. such a good offer       |
| 4. willing to pay                    | d. their anger             |
| 5. no need for strikes in            | e. action                  |
| 6. I doubt you will find a           | f. less                    |
| 7. In addition                       | g. the coming years        |
| 8. discounts                         | h. to the increased salary |
| 9. the threat of strike              | i. was struck              |
| 10. teachers are paid far            | j. better offer            |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train\\_drivers.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train_drivers.html)

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The British public have (1) \_\_\_\_\_ their anger over an announcement that drivers of London's underground trains will (2) \_\_\_\_\_ be on £50,000 (\$86,000) a year. Union bosses, however, were (3) \_\_\_\_\_ their members have such a good offer from the railway bosses. A new four-year deal was (4) \_\_\_\_\_ between London Underground and the unions that will see all 18,500 Tube workers get a five per cent pay rise this year, which is (5) \_\_\_\_\_ the national average. Rail bosses were accused of giving in to blackmail ahead of the London Olympics in 2012. Critics (6) \_\_\_\_\_ London Underground is willing to pay almost anything to avoid the (7) \_\_\_\_\_ of strikes and disruption. Rail unions said there was no need for strikes in the (8) \_\_\_\_\_ years.

*double*  
*delighted*  
*coming*  
*threat*  
*expressed*  
*soon*  
*claim*  
*struck*

Bob Crow, general secretary of the RMT rail union, told his members: "I (9) \_\_\_\_\_ you will find a better offer than this anywhere else in the public sector." In (10) \_\_\_\_\_ to the increased salary, Tube workers will receive a minimum of 29 days holiday, free travel (11) \_\_\_\_\_ London for themselves and one family member and (12) \_\_\_\_\_ on travel within Britain and the Eurostar trains to Europe. Emma Boon of the Tax Payers' Alliance, said of the (13) \_\_\_\_\_: "It's unacceptable that the threat of strike action during the Olympics is being so handsomely (14) \_\_\_\_\_. This is insulting to commuters." Other Britons compared the salaries to those of other public (15) \_\_\_\_\_ workers. Police officers, nurses, soldiers and teachers are paid (16) \_\_\_\_\_ less than subway train drivers.

*deal*  
*sector*  
*addition*  
*far*  
*doubt*  
*rewarded*  
*within*  
*discounts*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train\\_drivers.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train_drivers.html)

The British public have \_\_\_\_\_ an announcement that drivers of London's underground trains will soon be on £50,000 (\$86,000) a year. Union bosses, however, \_\_\_\_\_ have \_\_\_\_\_ the railway bosses. A new four-year deal was struck between London Underground and the unions that will see all 18,500 Tube workers \_\_\_\_\_ rise this year, which is double the national average. Rail bosses were accused of giving in to \_\_\_\_\_ London Olympics in 2012. Critics claim London Underground is willing to pay almost anything to avoid the threat of strikes and disruption. Rail unions said there \_\_\_\_\_ in the coming years.

Bob Crow, general secretary of the RMT rail union, told his members: "I \_\_\_\_\_ offer than this anywhere else in the public sector." In \_\_\_\_\_ salary, Tube workers will receive a minimum of 29 days holiday, free travel within London for themselves and one family \_\_\_\_\_ travel within Britain and the Eurostar trains to Europe. Emma Boon of the Tax Payers' Alliance, said of the deal: "It's \_\_\_\_\_ of strike action during the Olympics is being so handsomely rewarded. This is insulting to commuters." Other Britons \_\_\_\_\_ those of other public sector workers. Police officers, nurses, soldiers and teachers \_\_\_\_\_ subway train drivers.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train\\_drivers.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train_drivers.html)

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'pay' and 'rise'.

<b>pay</b>	<b>rise</b>
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- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• expressed</li><li>• soon</li><li>• 18,500</li><li>• double</li><li>• willing</li><li>• coming</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• doubt</li><li>• public</li><li>• within</li><li>• threat</li><li>• commuters</li><li>• teachers</li></ul>
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# STUDENT SALARIES SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train\\_drivers.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train_drivers.html)

Write five GOOD questions about salaries in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

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# SALARIES DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'salary'?
- c) What do you think of train drivers getting \$86,000 a year?
- d) What do you think of investment bankers earning 100 times more than train drivers?
- e) Why do you think the British public is angry that working class people can earn so much?
- f) Should the train drivers union have accepted a pay rise in line with other British workers?
- g) Do you think train drivers really have the power to blackmail bosses?
- h) Who earns their salary more, train drivers or top football players?
- i) Why does the media pick on train drivers when sports stars and actors get paid hundreds of times more (for doing jobs they love)?
- j) Should all companies pay their workers more and shareholders less?

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# SALARIES DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What's the lowest salary you'd work for and why?
- c) Do you like trade unions / labor unions?
- d) Where would salaries and working conditions be without unions?
- e) Is it right that bankers get multi-million-dollar bonuses?
- f) Is it right the average salary of a soccer player is 10 times higher than the salary of a president or prime minister?
- g) Do you think commuters are insulted by train drivers being well paid?
- h) Would you drive a train for \$86,000 a year?
- i) Should train drivers earn more than soldiers, teachers and nurses?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Emma Boon of the Tax Payers' Alliance?

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# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train\\_drivers.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train_drivers.html)

The British public have expressed their anger (1) \_\_\_\_ an announcement that drivers of London's underground trains will soon be (2) \_\_\_\_ £50,000 (\$86,000) a year. Union bosses, however, were delighted their members have such a good offer from the railway bosses. A new four-year deal was (3) \_\_\_\_ between London Underground and the unions that will see all 18,500 Tube workers get a five per cent pay rise this year, which is double the (4) \_\_\_\_ average. Rail bosses were accused of giving in to blackmail (5) \_\_\_\_ of the London Olympics in 2012. Critics claim London Underground is willing to pay almost anything to avoid the threat of strikes and disruption. Rail unions said there was no need for strikes in the (6) \_\_\_\_ years.

Bob Crow, general secretary of the RMT rail union, (7) \_\_\_\_ his members: "I doubt you will find a better offer than this anywhere else in the public sector." In addition to the increased salary, Tube workers will receive a (8) \_\_\_\_ of 29 days holiday, free travel within London for themselves and one family member and discounts on travel within Britain and the Eurostar trains to Europe. Emma Boon of the Tax Payers' Alliance, said of the deal: "It's unacceptable that the (9) \_\_\_\_ of strike action during the Olympics is being so (10) \_\_\_\_ rewarded. This is (11) \_\_\_\_ to commuters." Other Britons compared the salaries to those of other public sector workers. Police officers, nurses, soldiers and teachers are paid (12) \_\_\_\_ less than subway train drivers.

**Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.**

- |     |               |            |                 |              |
|-----|---------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1.  | (a) by        | (b) and    | (c) so          | (d) over     |
| 2.  | (a) a         | (b) pay    | (c) on          | (d) salary   |
| 3.  | (a) stricken  | (b) struck | (c) stuck       | (d) stocked  |
| 4.  | (a) national  | (b) nation | (c) nationality | (d) nations  |
| 5.  | (a) forward   | (b) before | (c) ahead       | (d) prepare  |
| 6.  | (a) arriving  | (b) going  | (c) departing   | (d) coming   |
| 7.  | (a) said      | (b) told   | (c) spoke       | (d) asked    |
| 8.  | (a) minimum   | (b) least  | (c) lower       | (d) bottom   |
| 9.  | (a) treat     | (b) threat | (c) thwart      | (d) throat   |
| 10. | (a) handsome  | (b) handed | (c) handsomely  | (d) handedly |
| 11. | (a) insulting | (b) insult | (c) insults     | (d) insulted |
| 12. | (a) for       | (b) of     | (c) from        | (d) far      |

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# WRITING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train\\_drivers.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111004-train_drivers.html)

Write about **salaries** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

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# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about salaries. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. SALARIES:** Make a poster about salaries. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. PUBLIC WORKERS:** Write a magazine article about public workers and the salary they should receive. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against it.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to a salary expert. Ask him/her three questions about train driver salaries. Give him/her three of your opinions on public sector pay. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. F      c. T      d. T      e. T      f. T      g. F      h. F

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. expressed  | a. voiced       |
| 2. anger      | b. outrage      |
| 3. delighted  | c. pleased      |
| 4. deal       | d. agreement    |
| 5. disruption | e. interruption |
| 6. offer      | f. proposal     |
| 7. within     | g. inside       |
| 8. rewarded   | h. paid         |
| 9. insulting  | i. offensive    |
| 10. far       | j. much         |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                      |                            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. The British public have expressed | a. their anger             |
| 2. delighted their members have      | b. such a good offer       |
| 3. A new four-year deal              | c. was struck              |
| 4. willing to pay                    | d. almost anything         |
| 5. no need for strikes in            | e. the coming years        |
| 6. I doubt you will find a           | f. better offer            |
| 7. In addition                       | g. to the increased salary |
| 8. discounts                         | h. on travel               |
| 9. the threat of strike              | i. action                  |
| 10. teachers are paid far            | j. less                    |

## GAP FILL:

### Anger at \$86,000 train driver salaries

The British public have (1) **expressed** their anger over an announcement that drivers of London's underground trains will (2) **soon** be on £50,000 (\$86,000) a year. Union bosses, however, were (3) **delighted** their members have such a good offer from the railway bosses. A new four-year deal was (4) **struck** between London Underground and the unions that will see all 18,500 Tube workers get a five per cent pay rise this year, which is (5) **double** the national average. Rail bosses were accused of giving in to blackmail ahead of the London Olympics in 2012. Critics (6) **claim** London Underground is willing to pay almost anything to avoid the (7) **threat** of strikes and disruption. Rail unions said there was no need for strikes in the (8) **coming** years.

Bob Crow, general secretary of the RMT rail union, told his members: "I (9) **doubt** you will find a better offer than this anywhere else in the public sector." In (10) **addition** to the increased salary, Tube workers will receive a minimum of 29 days holiday, free travel (11) **within** London for themselves and one family member and (12) **discounts** on travel within Britain and the Eurostar trains to Europe. Emma Boon of the Tax Payers' Alliance, said of the (13) **deal**: "It's unacceptable that the threat of strike action during the Olympics is being so handsomely (14) **rewarded**. This is insulting to commuters." Other Britons compared the salaries to those of other public (15) **sector** workers. Police officers, nurses, soldiers and teachers are paid (16) **far** less than subway train drivers.

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d    2 - c    3 - b    4 - a    5 - c    6 - d    7 - b    8 - a    9 - b    10 - c    11 - a    12 - d

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