* **Read the following newspaper article and find the answers to the questions be-low:**

1. What were the TWO reasons why Virgin Atlantic was considering redundancies?

2. What were the TWO things Richard Branson invited his staff to do?

3. How many people volunteered to take unpaid leave?

4. How did the long break affect the staff’s attitude to their work?

5. Why is the scheme attractive to new recruits?

6. Is the scheme going to become permanent?

**Branson’s new route to more jobs by Celia Weston**

For many young people lucky enough to get a job after leaving school or college, the big-gest shock of the transition to work is how few holidays they get. Having spent their aca-demic years working an eight or nine-month year, it can be depressing to realize that for the rest of their working lives they will be able to take only four weeks off a year. Many would jump at the chance to take three months off - and that’s exactly what happened at Virgin Atlantic, the airline run by Richard Branson. He believes the new initiative could help to reduce unemployment.

Faced last autumn with the recession and with its failure to acquire more flight slots out of Heathrow airport, the company was having to consider redundancies. Mr. Branson wrote to staff saying that cutting back on jobs was “something I have never wanted to do.” In-stead, he invited employees to take up to six months unpaid leave and to participate in a job-sharing scheme.

The immediate crisis passed but the idea of a shorter working year took off. When the company

later asked for 300 volunteers to take three months unpaid leave, 450 put their names for-ward. Mr. Branson said: “To be fair and share it around, in some cases we said that people could only take six weeks.” Most of the volunteers were cabin crew but other staff, including secretaries and pilots, took advantage of the offer as well. “And when they came back from their break ... they definitely seemed to enjoy work more,” he said.

The company tends to recruit and train its own staff from scratch. As Mr. Branson said: “If you’ve been at college or on the dole, working for only nine months still makes you a lot better off financially than you were before.” He believes there is a broader social benefit to be achieved. “If you are only taking on people for nine months, that will enable others who would otherwise have no work or be living on the dole to have a chance too.” And he goes further. “I think this should be the basis of a pattern across the whole European Union for the first few years of working life.” A shorter working year was not only applicable to young people. “If older women and men with children can afford it because one partner’s working 12 months and the other nine, I think a lot of people would like to earn slightly less and be able to spend more time with their children,” Mr. Branson said.

This year the scheme is on offer again, although not over the busy summer period. “All the people who took time off last year would like to do so again,” Mr. Branson said. But its realization depended on whether the company could recruit enough people to allow 400-500 existing staff to take three months off. The company was considering whether the arrangement should become a permanent feature, Mr. Branson said. “For new people being taken on in most departments, we’re thinking about making nine-month working a standard contract.”

 **Discuss these questions:**

1. What are your views on Richard Branson’s scheme? Would you like to participate in such a scheme?

2. Would such a scheme succeed in the firm you work/have worked for? Why not?

3. Why do you think so many of Virgin’s cabin crew took advantage of the scheme?

4. Could this kind of scheme only succeed with a youthful staff who have few family responsibilities?

5. How could you persuade people who have considerable working experience and are used to earning a certain wage that they should take a pay cut?

6. What do you think of the following: a four-day week, a nine-day fortnight, seasonal work, job sharing

***QUESTIONS***

 **Do you know how to apply for a job? Insert the following words in the gaps in the text below:**

applicant, application, application form, apply, candidate, curriculum vitae or CV (GB) or resume (US), employment agencies, interview, job description, job vacancies, references, short-listed

Many people looking for work read the (1) …………………….. advertised in newspapers by companies and (2) …………………. . To reply to an advertisement is to (3) ……………… for a job. (You become a (4) ………………… or an (5) …………………………). You write an (6) ……………………, or fill in the company’s (7) ……………………, and send it, along with your (8) …………………….. and a covering letter. You often have to give the names of two people who are prepared to write (9) ………………….for you. If your qualifications and abilities match the (10) …………………., you might be (11) ……………………, i.e. selected to attend an (12) ……………………… .

 **When employees ‘give notice’, i.e. inform their employer that they will be leaving the company, in what order should the company carry out the following steps?**

a. either hire a job agency (or for a senior post, a firm of head-hunters), or advertise the vacancy

b. establish whether there is an internal candidate who could be promoted (or moved side-ways) to the job

c. examine the job description for the post, to see whether it needs to be changed (or indeed, whether the post needs to be filled)

d. follow up the references of candidates who seem interesting

e. invite the short-listed candidates for an interview

f. make a final selection

g. receive applications, curricula vitae and covering letters, and make a preliminary selection (a short list)

h. try to discover why the person has resigned

i. write to all the other candidates to inform them that they have been unsuccessful

 **Have you ever looked for a job reading wants ads? Fill in each blank with a**

**word or phrase from the following list:**

-competitive, initiative, suit, kitchen staff, ability, outgoing, team, pension plan, clear, con-tact, experience, preference, required skills, willing, busy, office, hard work, potential customers, successful candidate, thorough training

- Our new 200-seat restaurant is opening in May and we are looking for waiters, waitresses and (1)……….

- If you are a friendly and (2)……….person who is not afraid of (3)………., we have the job and hours to (4)……….you.

- For more information, (5)……….Helen at (415) 331-2012.

- Secretary/Receptionist for a (6)………. (7)……… . Typing and shorthand between 80 and 120 wpm. We will give (8)……….to applicants who have experience using word processors and computers.

- We want a positive person who is (9)……….to work hard and can use their own (10)……….. You must be lively and have a good sense of humour and a (11)……….speaking voice. You will receive (12)……….to enable you to inform (13)……….of the benefits of advertising with us.

- The (14)……….will have had (15)……….in booking and banking procedures. The position calls for word-processing and secretarial (16)……….plus the (17)……….to work as part of a (18)………. A (19)……….salary is offered as well as a company (20)……….

**\*EXTRAS**

**The following link includes a series of videos about applying for a job, how to be successful at the interview and the recruitment procedure:**

https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/youre-hired

***ADDITIONAL SOURCES***

**PAST PERFECT**

https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/english-grammar-reference/past-perfect

https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/english-grammar-reference/past-tense