

# WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

## A world without bosses - is it possible?

English Coaching Projects S.Coop was founded almost 13 years ago. One of our ideals was to create a workplace where there would be no bosses. Coach John reflects on the experience.



*"We share a lateral style organisation, where there is no director, boss or manager figure, where there are no closed spaces for particular uses, where all people are in one or more self-managed teams and which, in short, is a people-based organisation, focused on the customer and efficiency, which actively coexists with society."*

Koldo Saratxaga was an intellectual inspiration for the founders of English Coaching Projects.

The origin of boss is the Dutch word *baas*, meaning *master*. The first known use was in 1653.

### Here are 10 common complaints about bosses:

1. Micromanages me
2. Doesn't listen to me
3. Doesn't want to have their opinions and ideas challenged
4. Doesn't **follow through** on promises
5. Assigns deadlines without considering what's on my plate

6. Doesn't have time for me
7. Doesn't give helpful feedback about my performance
8. Is disorganised and reactive
9. Never thanks me for my work
10. Is a bastard!

Those are **gripes** we all may have about bosses, but is it possible to work and live without them?

George Orwell, in his book Homage to Catalonia, made the following observation:

*"Every shop and cafe had been collectivised; even the **bootblacks** had been collectivised and their boxes painted red and black. Waiters and shop-walkers looked you in the face and treated you as an equal. Servile and even ceremonial forms of speech had temporarily disappeared.*

*Many of the normal motives of civilised life - **snobbishness, money-grubbing**, fear of the boss, etc. - had ceased to exist. The ordinary class-division of society had disappeared to an extent that is almost unthinkable in the money-**tainted** air of England; there was no one there except the peasants and ourselves, and no one owned anyone else as his master."*

Words written during the **halcyon** days of the Spanish revolution, but a short-lived **glimpse** that workers can live without bosses and that another, better world is possible.



by ECP coach

**John Hird**

## Word list

**follow through:** to pursue (an aim) to a conclusion

**gripes:** : complaints

**bootblacks:** people who clean shoes

**snobbishness:** trying to act like those higher in social rank. A snob admires such people too much and looks down on others

**money-grubbing:** Someone who has money as their main interest and does anything possible to get a lot of it

**tainted:** having a trace of something bad, offensive, or harmful

**halcyon days:** joyful, happy, carefree times

**glimpse:** a very brief passing look, sight, or view

## Let's chat about that!

1. Give a summary of the text to your coach and/or classmates.
2. What do you know about Koldo Saratxaga? (Google him.)
3. Do you share the gripes about bosses? Do you have any more?
4. Is it possible to be a good boss? Explain how.
5. Can you imagine a world without bosses? What would it be like?
6. Have you read 'Homage to Catalonia' or anything else by Orwell?
7. Look at the learning strategies in learning to learn. Do you employ any? Which ones would be good for you?

## Learning to Learn: What good learners do

**Language teachers, or in the case of ECP, coaches, should be a guide on the language learning journey.**

Here are 13 strategies good language learners employ:

1. Find their own way
2. Organise information about language
3. Are creative and experiment with language
4. Make their own opportunities, and find strategies for getting practice in using the language inside and outside the classroom
5. Learn to live with uncertainty and develop strategies for making sense of the target language without wanting to understand every word
6. Use mnemonics (rhymes, word associations, etc) to recall what has been learned
7. Make errors work
8. Use linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of their language, in mastering a second language
9. Let the context (extra-linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world) help them in comprehension
10. Learn to make intelligent guesses
11. Learn chunks of language as wholes and formalised routines to help them perform "beyond their competence"
12. Learn production techniques (e.g. techniques for keeping a conversation going)
13. Learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary their language according to the formality of the situation.

– John Hird, from *Learning Strategies - Master in Teaching English as a Foreign Language* 2002 (Citing Rubin and Thompson 1983, and Nunan 1991).