

## Reading skills training

**Task 1:** Read the following text in about 2 minutes (**skimming**). You can make notes, underline and highlight whatever you want. Then, tell your partner 1) what it is about and 2) what the tone of the article is.

# Boss ends conference call by reminding employees that, ultimately, nothing matters

From <https://www.thedailymash.co.uk/news/business/boss-ends-conference-call-by-reminding-employees-that-ultimately-nothing-matters-20150825101453>

A CHIEF executive has told his employees not to **sweat** the small stuff as the universe is indifferent to quarterly sales figures.

Tom Booker hosted the weekly conference call with his senior sales team, **singling out** the outstanding performers and **pointing out** areas of improvement as normal.

Sales associate, Eleanor Shaw, said: "Then he reminded us that the figures are meaningless as we will all be dust one day.

"I think it was a rare case of him **speaking his mind** without thinking. Last time he did that was at the Christmas party when he told Colin that he really didn't mind that he's gay."

Booker said: "I really meant all of it.

"I do what I do in order to buy nice food and have a roof that doesn't **leak**. I've **wound up** in charge but have no idea how, But I do know that none of it is worth thinking about as it's not going to prevent me from succumbing to my own mortality."

He added: "I would hang a sign above the door saying 'everything you do in here is irrelevant to the universe' but I don't want to demotivate people."

Booker revealed the company has posted record profits this quarter even though they are all going to die.

**Task 2:** Answer the following questions (**scanning**):

- a. Who is Tom Booker?
- b. What did he do in the weekly conference call?
- c. Why does Tom Booker say that he has and keeps his job?
- d. Why doesn't he hang a sign above his door?

**Task 3:** What do the words in bold mean? Can you infer their meaning from the context?

CLEAR WORDS	UNCLEAR BUT INFERRABLE WORDS	UNCLEAR AND NOT INFERRABLE

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### Boycott A Meeting Day Is A Revolutionary Idea

From <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelnoer/2011/01/07/boycott-a-meeting-day-is-a-revolutionary-idea/>

This is pure brilliance — the folks at 37Signals has declared Jan. 19th “Boycott a Meeting Day.” Why? Because meetings stop us from actually getting any work done.

In his inspired performance at TED Midwest, 37Signal’s co-founder Jason Fried argues passionately that work, particularly the creative sort, requires long periods of uninterrupted time. This is why so many people come in early or work over the weekend when they actually have something concrete to do. No one really works during peak office hours. The time between 9 and 5 is **chopped** into tiny, little 15 minute chunks of meetings, conference calls, presentations and other nonsense that **white collar types** have convinced themselves is “work.”

According to this web site, worker bees subject themselves to around 62 hours **worth** of meetings a month, events where they indulge in activities like daydreaming (91%), doing other work (73%) or sleeping (39%). I have attended meetings where every single soul present was simultaneously using their BlackBerries, including the poor **sucker** who was **droning on about**...something.

And that’s the big problem. Very rarely is anything accomplished in a meeting. They tend to be attended by way too many people, all of whom feel obligated to speak, even when they have nothing to say. They digress to fill the allocated time. At one particularly low-point in my professional career I had a colleague who called meetings in order to schedule other meetings. He has since been fired and no one really misses him.

So, workers of the world, **heed** 37Signal’s call and unite for Boycott a Meeting Day. You have only your chains to lose.

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