

Exercise 4

Read the magazine article about a woman called Emma Campbell who makes pottery for a living, and then answer the questions.

A life in pottery

*I recently had the pleasure of speaking to Emma Campbell,
a pottery maker based in the south of England.*

Emma Campbell first got into pottery when she took up evening classes while living and working in London. She had done a degree in fine art at university; however, after finishing her studies, her first job was in the marketing department of a London business. Although she didn't have much responsibility, she found it quite stressful. She had intended to work there only temporarily, but ended up staying for nearly ten years. During this time, her skills in pottery making grew, as did her passion for it, and she eventually left marketing to become a full-time pottery maker. While she admits that she was never suited to marketing, she realises that what she learned about branding, photography and digital marketing has actually been crucial to her pottery business.

Emma describes her pottery as 'functional ceramics', which is pottery that has a use and is part of everyday life. Emma says her style is developing all the time. She never stops trying out new techniques and using new materials, and enjoys any 'happy accidents' that occur, even if they aren't what she intended. However, attempting to recreate these and remember exactly what she did differently is something that Emma says is a challenge. It does mean, however, that every piece she makes has its own particular character.

When asked what it's like to work as a full-time pottery maker, Emma says she feels lucky to earn a living from something she loves doing. She enjoys the freedom of being self-employed, although confesses that she probably works more hours now than she ever did in her office job. That's something she says friends and family don't all appreciate. Emma feels they view pottery as more of a hobby than a career, particularly as she works from a shed in her garden. She says people often pop in for a coffee or to ask for favours, expecting her to always be available, which can be really frustrating.

More and more people are taking up pottery at the moment, and I asked Emma what her thoughts were on this. She firmly believes it's a reaction against the fast-paced world of technology in modern society. There is something wonderful about working directly with a natural material that really calms people and makes them happy. Making pottery can't be rushed – it takes time. Not getting instant results like those we've come to expect from the internet and social media, for example, is something that many of us struggle with. Emma doesn't deny that computers and digital technology play an incredible role in helping with creativity, but she strongly believes that taking part in crafts is essential for personal growth and development.

Of course I had to ask Emma about the popular TV competition 'The Great Pottery Challenge'. She told me she'd avoided watching the show at first. She'd expected the focus to be on the competitors and their personal stories and relationships with each other rather than the pottery. After her friend finally persuaded her to watch an episode, Emma realised she'd misjudged the programme. She became a fan and actually applied for a place on the show. She was selected for an interview at the TV studio but didn't make the final selection. Despite some initial disappointment, she said it was a bit of a relief as she'd been so nervous about being in front of the cameras. However, she said the whole experience gave her the boost of confidence she needed to start teaching pottery.

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Question 10

What does Emma say about her first job?

A It was supposed to be a long-term position.

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B It was an important role in the company.

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C It taught her some useful skills.

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