



NARCISSISM



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:
18ZG-7IA2-FIJ

1

Warm up

Read the following statements about narcissists. In pairs, discuss what each one means and if you can give any examples of that behaviour.

Narcissists ...

- seek flattery.
- are manipulative.
- lack empathy.
- have tunnel vision.
- are happy to benefit from risky and sometimes illegal behaviour.
- have innate self-belief.
- are extremely sensitive to criticism.
- are charming.





4

Focus on vocabulary

Part A: Match the vocabulary to their meanings.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. <u>esteem</u> (n) | a. part of something and difficult to separate from it |
| 2. <u>showboat</u> (v) | b. demonstrating that you do not regard yourself as more important than others |
| 3. pre- <u>eminence</u> (n) | c. the state of being more significant or successful than other people |
| 4. <u>endemic</u> (adj.) | d. the quality of being attractive to other people in an exciting way |
| 5. <u>humble</u> (adj.) | e. make something or someone out to be less important |
| 6. <u>belittle</u> (v) | f. a high level of approval and respect |
| 7. <u>hubris</u> (n) | g. act in a way that attempts to prove how good you are at something |
| 8. <u>allure</u> (n) | h. the fact of being overconfident and too self-assured of your own abilities |

Part B: Now write the vocabulary from Part A in the correct gaps in the following sentences. You may have to change the form of the word.

1. He completely _____ me in front of the rest of my team. It was humiliating.
2. As a manager, she's held in the highest _____ by her peers and everyone who works for her adores her.
3. It's not surprising that they are struggling, I think disorganisation is _____ in the department and I wouldn't be surprised if there's a change of management soon.
4. I think he was a victim of his own _____. He just wasn't as good as he thought he was.
5. A career in design, although it's not always well paid, holds a real _____ for me and I think I'm going to pursue it.
6. In his acceptance speech he was incredibly _____ and gave credit to the rest of the team for the success over his amazing work.
7. It was embarrassing for him. He was trying to _____ during the presentation, but then completely forgot what he was trying to say and wasn't able to answer questions.
8. I hate the way she acts at work. She's completely convinced of her own _____ and talks to everyone as though they are idiots.



Now in pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. Has anyone ever tried to **belittle** you or your work? How did you react?
2. In your opinion, which careers or companies other than your own hold an **allure** for you?
3. Who is the **humblest** person who you've worked with? How did they show this?
4. Who do you know who you think has real **hubris**? How do they show it?
5. Have you ever been guilty of trying to **showboat**? What happened?
6. Who do you hold in particularly high **esteem**? Why?

**5****Reading for gist (optional)**

Match the following titles to paragraphs A – D. You will not need all of the titles.

- The making of a star
- How to manipulate a narcissist
- The narcissistic CEO
- How to spot a narcissist
- Encouraging non-narcissistic behaviour
- The effects of a narcissist



It's not all about you

Narcissism and the workplace

- A. _____ The Greek myth tells of a hunter called Narcissus who saw his own image reflected in a pool of water and fell in love. It's from this tale that the term 'narcissism' was born, and narcissists are found everywhere, including in the workplace. Psychological research has shown that there is a high correlation between narcissism and high-risk, high-return strategies. A narcissistic CEO is more likely to describe their organisations as innovative, proactive, and entrepreneurial, and take greater risks in their business strategies. Firstly, narcissistic CEOs thrive on being the centre of attention, commanding respect and esteem. Therefore, they are more likely to implement approaches which put their personal control in the spotlight, allowing them to showboat. To add to this, narcissists are more likely to have convinced themselves of their pre-eminence, creating over-confidence in the results of their plans being successful. Lastly, their self-interest means they are much more focused on their own gains than those of their employees or stakeholders.
- B. _____ With these characteristics steering management at the most senior level, a culture of individualism is promoted throughout the company which lowers collaborative approaches and discourages personal integrity. Research shows that risky and rash decision-making stands a greater chance of become endemic in the workplace, reducing the ability of the company to endure. Managerial fraud and tax-avoidance which has caused some companies, such as Enron, to collapse entirely are also more possible. Yet the perks for CEOs, such as incredibly high salaries and stock options, are major draws for narcissistic personalities. Yet given the obvious drawbacks to their characters, it's worth asking, how do narcissists arrive at positions of power in the first place?
- C. _____ Narcissistic personalities, by their nature, tend towards self-promotion. While not a likeable quality, it often gets them noticed by management over their humbler colleagues, even when their actual achievements don't measure up. Studies have shown employees with a tendency towards narcissism progressed up the career ladder roughly 29% faster than their colleagues who are less likely to compete for attention. This was true regardless of whether the business was a family business or not. The family bond it seems, is not strong enough for narcissists to put family, rather than their own interests, first. There's also a connection between narcissistic tendencies and gender. Males display a far higher level of narcissism than females. The underlying sexism in workplaces around the world, even if it is not overt, means that ambition is often rewarded in men more than women. Yet when it comes to CEOs, due to the smaller percentage of females compared to males, there's not enough data to come to firm conclusions. Yet this factor in itself says something of note.
- D. _____ To their credit, narcissists can often be incredibly charming and, superficially at least, often make good leaders. The flip side, however, is that members of their team who flatter them tend to get their attention more, often leading to employees competing for their favour. Their lack of compassion can result in them being hurtful or disregarding the needs of others. Belittling colleagues and undermining their work are both tactics they are willing to employ, as well as piggybacking on the achievement of others to boost their own profile. Narcissists frequently come from families of a higher socio-economic status and may well be the products of a parenting style that constantly boosts a child's self-esteem to extreme levels. You don't have to look hard in public life to find examples of people who display these traits. Donald Trump, Madonna and Kanye West have all been noted for their tendency towards narcissism, yet it is those characteristics and their hubris that have undoubtedly sown the seeds of their success - as well as created difficulties for them. Their allure is unquestionable, but do you want to be working alongside them?

Sources: BBC and Sage Journals



6 Reading comprehension

Complete the following sentences with one, two, or three words from the article on page 5.

1. The word 'Narcissism' stems from a Greek myth about a hunter who _____ with his own reflection.
2. _____ in their abilities means that narcissists tend to be convinced of their abilities even when firm evidence of them is lacking.
3. Companies headed by a narcissistic CEO often have a less _____ culture, with people choosing their own gains over teamwork.
4. There have been high profile cases where narcissism has led to _____, resulting in some companies being broken up due to the crimes committed, such as tax-avoidance.
5. While their personalities are flawed, studies show that narcissists advance up _____ with greater speed than their colleagues.
6. Men are more likely to be narcissistic than women due to the _____ in offices globally which recognise ambition as a positive trait in men more than in women.
7. _____ of the charm displayed by many narcissists is that they will encourage flattery to the point of giving more focus to colleagues who do so, while ignoring those who don't.
8. Research shows that narcissists frequently come from a background with a _____ where they gain the impression they are better than poorer people.

7 Scanning for vocabulary

Quickly read the article on page 5 and find words or phrases which have the same meaning as the following.

1. _____ (n. para. A): connection
2. _____ (adj. para. A): starting new business, often with high risk
3. _____ (v. para. A): do well
4. _____ (v. para. B): guiding
5. _____ (v. para B): last for a long time
6. _____ (adj. para. C): openly without hiding
7. _____ (adv. para. D): appearing to be real or true without looking closely
8. _____ (phr. v. para. D): using pre-existing work as the basis for your own or to your own advantage



Now complete the following questions with the answers.

1. Do you think there is a _____ between how hard you work and how successful you are? Why/Why not?
2. Have you ever witnessed someone _____ someone else's success? What happened?
3. Do you think it is good to be _____ about your ambition? Or is it better to hide it? Why?
4. What characteristics does someone need these days to _____ in the world of business?
5. Do you think companies these days only _____ try to benefit the environment, or do you think they genuinely care? Why?
6. Do you need to be _____ to be successful in business? Why/ Why not?
7. What do you think is the best way a manager can _____ his team into good practices?
8. Under what type of management style are you personally most likely to _____?

Now in pairs, discuss the questions.

8**Talking point**

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. Do you know of anyone who you think may be a narcissist? What is it about them which makes you think this?
2. Do you think that it is a problem that narcissists can thrive in the world of business? Why/Why not?
3. What do you think can be done to reduce the possibility for narcissists to get into positions of power?
4. Do you think good leaders naturally have to be a little narcissistic? Why/ Why not?





9

Extended activity / Homework

Choose from one of the following activities.

1.

Write a speech to your company imagining that you are the CEO and you have narcissistic tendencies.

Consider the following questions:

- What information do you want to give the employees?
- How can you present this information in a way that shows you in a very positive way?
- How can you include your accomplishments?

2.

Read the essay question.

It is vital for modern day leaders to have an element of narcissism to their personalities. Only a narcissist could look at a company and believe themselves to be the best person to lead it. While you may not want to spend much time with a narcissist, companies can benefit a great deal from their mindset.

To what extent do you agree with the above statement?

For both questions, you should:

- Write at least 250 words.
- Check your spelling, grammar and vocabulary.



Transcripts

2. Listening for details

Helena: Saeed, you won't believe what he's done.

Saeed: What?

Helena: That presentation I spent weeks on using all the market research I've collected over the past few months, he's using it.

Saeed: Well, that's a good thing, isn't it? Wouldn't you want the CEO to be using your presentation?

Helena: Yes, but he used it and removed my name from the end so he could put his own in.

Saeed: Really?

Helena: Yes! He didn't even mention me, even when the team manager for sales said how much she enjoyed the presentation. He just said 'I'm glad you liked it.'

Saeed: He loves people telling him how well he is doing. And he's really in his element when everyone is looking at him, isn't he? I can see his appeal though. He's one of those people who, when he's talking to you, you feel as though you are all he is interested in.

Helena: Yes, like you're the centre of his world. I know what you mean. But wow, the arrogance of using my presentation and presenting it while I was in the audience and not mentioning me once?

Saeed: It doesn't surprise me, honestly. I know he's done the same with the Head of Accounting. And if you think about the monthly company meetings, he always talks in terms of 'I' and 'me' and you'd think that all of the new ideas for products were thought of by him personally. Yet, all the department heads seem to compete for his attention.

Helena: Yes, which is amazing to me given how rash his decision-making is. Sales had to entirely refocus on Asia after he decided he didn't want to sell to Latin America. We're not sure why, but it is suspected that he's not happy with the Latin American sales team. It is rumoured that a manager there said he wasn't good at his job. Yet, Latin America is an important market for us. We're huge there. I don't know if the shareholders will be happy about it.

Saeed: Well, he's the one who will tell them about it, probably using someone else's presentation! I'm sure he will put it in a way that will make him look good.

Helena: But when it affects our profits, that will be hard to disguise.



- Saeed:** Yeah, but I'm sure he'll blame it on the sales team in Latin America and present himself as the solution to the problem. Asia is a riskier market for us, but if we do well there, it'll be huge for the company and his profile. He's had the marketing teams working overtime to push into that area. I think some of them worked really long hours and hardly saw their families.
- Helena:** And of course, if it goes well, he'll take the credit; and if it doesn't, it will be someone else's fault.
- Saeed:** While we're on the subject, and keep this to yourself, but I know some people in accounts and I've heard whispers that he's using some kind of illegal scheme to avoid tax and boost profits.
- Helena:** Really?
- Saeed:** Yes. They think if the government gets wind of it, they will start taking a lot of interest in us.
- Helena:** You know, I think it might be time to start looking for another job. There are too many things here that are worrying and they all lead back to him.
- Saeed:** True. Or it might be that his days are numbered and he'll be out soon. It could be a good idea to just try and weather the storm.
- Helena:** Food for thought. I've got to get to a meeting but I'll catch you later, Saeed.
- Saeed:** OK, Helena. Mind how you go.

3. Listening for information

- Helena:** Saeed, you won't believe what he's done.
- Saeed:** What?
- Helena:** That presentation I spent weeks on using all the market research I've collected over the past few months, he's using it.
- Saeed:** Well, that's a good thing, isn't it? Wouldn't you want the CEO to be using your presentation?
- Helena:** Yes, but he used it and removed my name from the end so he could put his own in.
- Saeed:** Really?
- Helena:** Yes! He didn't even mention me, even when the team manager for sales said how much she enjoyed the presentation. He just said 'I'm glad you liked it.'
- Saeed:** He loves people telling him how well he is doing. And he's really in his element when everyone is looking at him, isn't he? I can see his appeal though. He's one of those people who, when he's talking to you, you feel as though you are all he is interested in.



- Helena:** Yes, like you're the centre of his world. I know what you mean. But wow, the arrogance of using my presentation and presenting it while I was in the audience and not mentioning me once?
- Saeed:** It doesn't surprise me, honestly. I know he's done the same with the Head of Accounting. And if you think about the monthly company meetings, he always talks in terms of 'I' and 'me' and you'd think that all of the new ideas for products were thought of by him personally. Yet, all the department heads seem to compete for his attention.
- Helena:** Yes, which is amazing to me given how rash his decision-making is. Sales had to entirely refocus on Asia after he decided he didn't want to sell to Latin America. We're not sure why, but it is suspected that he's not happy with the Latin American sales team. It is rumoured that a manager there said he wasn't good at his job. Yet, Latin America is an important market for us. We're huge there. I don't know if the shareholders will be happy about it.
- Saeed:** Well, he's the one who will tell them about it, probably using someone else's presentation! I'm sure he will put it in a way that will make him look good.
- Helena:** But when it affects our profits, that will be hard to disguise.
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- Helena:** Really?
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- Helena:** You know, I think it might be time to start looking for another job. There are too many things here that are worrying and they all lead back to him.
- Saeed:** True. Or it might be that his days are numbered and he'll be out soon. It could be a good idea to just try and weather the storm.
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- Saeed:** OK, Helena. Mind how you go.



Key

1. Warm up

5 mins.

This introduces students to the concept and gets them to think about narcissistic behaviours. Lower-level classes may want to look up some of the terms used.

2. Listening for details

5 mins.

This allows students to test their basic comprehension of the listening task ahead of doing more detailed work.

1. False. 'That presentation I spent weeks on using all the market research I've collected over the past few months, he's using it.'
2. False. 'He didn't even mention me...'
3. True. 'I can see his appeal though. He's one of those people who, when he's talking to you, you feel as though you are all he is interested in.'
4. True. 'But wow, the arrogance of using my presentation and presenting it while I was in the audience and not mentioning me once?'
5. False. '...he always talks in terms of 'I' and 'me' and you'd think that all of the new ideas for products were thought of by him personally.'
6. True. 'Yet, Latin America is an important market for us. We're huge there.'
7. False. 'Asia is a riskier market for us...'
8. True. 'Or it might be that his days are numbered and he'll be out soon.'

3. Listening for information

5 mins.

This relates the listening back to the Warm Up activity. You may want to ask students to take notes in order to justify their answers. This isn't a black and white exercise and if students are able to justify reasons for giving different answers, allow them to do so.

Possible answers:

- seek flattery. Example: 'He loves people telling him how well he is doing'
- are manipulative. Example: 'he used (the presentation) and removed my name from the end so he could put his own in.; 'if it goes well, he'll take the credit; and if it doesn't, it will be someone else's fault.'
- lack empathy. Example: 'He's had the marketing teams working overtime to push into that area. I think some of them worked really long hours and hardly saw their families.'
- have tunnel vision. (no particular mention)
- are happy to benefit from risky and sometimes illegal behaviour. Example: 'I've heard whispers that he's using some kind of illegal scheme to avoid tax and boost profits.'
- have innate self-belief. Example: 'Asia is a riskier market for us, but if we do well there, it'll be huge for the company and his profile.'
- are extremely sensitive to criticism. Example: 'We're not sure why, but it is suspected that he's not happy with the Latin American sales team. It is rumoured that a manager there said he wasn't good at his job.'



- are charming. Example: 'I can see his appeal though. He's one of those people who, when he's talking to you, you feel as though you are all he is interested in.'

4. Focus on vocabulary

5 mins.

Ensure students can correctly pronounce the target vocabulary. Ask them to do the exercise unaided in the first instance, but allow them to use a reference later if needed.

- | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. → f. | 2. → g. | 3. → c. | 4. → a. |
| 5. → b. | 6. → e. | 7. → h. | 8. → d. |

10 mins.

Part B: Ask students to predict which part of speech can be used in the gaps before completing the sentences. When they have finished, ask them to discuss the questions to practise using the vocabulary. Circulate and help as needed.

1. belittled
2. esteem
3. endemic
4. hubris
5. allure
6. humble
7. showboat
8. pre-eminence

5. Reading for gist (optional)

5 mins.

This gives students a chance to skim the text ahead of the main comprehension. You may want to set a strict time limit.

- A. The narcissistic CEO
- B. The effects of a narcissist
- C. The making of a star
- D. How to spot a narcissist

6. Reading comprehension

10 mins.

Ask students to carefully read the text and complete the sentences so that they are grammatically correct with one, two or three words.

1. fell in love
2. Over-confidence
3. collaborative
4. managerial fraud
5. the career ladder
6. underlying sexism
7. The flip side
8. higher socio-economic status



7. Scanning for vocabulary

10 mins.

This gives extra support with vocabulary and can be done ahead of the main comprehension or afterwards. You may want to allow lower-level students to use a reference.

Part 1

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. correlation | 2. <u>entrepreneurial</u> |
| 3. thrive | 4. steering |
| 5. <u>endure</u> | 6. <u>overt</u> |
| 7. <u>superficially</u> | 8. <u>piggybacking on</u> |

Part 2

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. correlation | 2. piggybacking on |
| 3. overt | 4. endure |
| 5. superficially | 6. entrepreneurial |
| 7. steer | 8. thrive |

8. Talking point

10 mins.

Ask the students to discuss the questions in pairs or small groups. Circulate and help as needed.

9. Extended activity / Homework

45 mins+

Ask students to plan, write and edit their written work. Be sure to give feedback to the students.