

Why is America the 'No-Vacation Nation'?

by A. Pawlowski, CNN

Let's be **blunt**: If you like to take lots of vacation, the United States is not the place to work for you. Besides a handful of national holidays, **the typical American worker** gets two or three **precious** weeks off out of a whole year to relax and see the world - much less than what people in many other countries receive. And even that amount of vacation often **comes with strings attached**....

A **recent poll** found that only 57% of U.S. workers use up all of the vacation days they could have, compared with 89% of workers in France.

So what's going on here?

A big reason for the difference is that paid time off is **mandated by law** in many parts of the world. Germany is among more than two dozen industrialized countries - from Australia to Slovenia to Japan - that **require** employers to offer four weeks or more of paid vacation to their workers.



But employers in the United States don't have to offer any paid vacation, so about a quarter of all American workers don't **have access to** it. That makes the U.S. the only **advanced nation** in the world that doesn't guarantee its workers **annual leave**. Most U.S. companies, of course, **provide** vacation as a way to attract and **retain** workers.

But the fear of **layoffs** and the ever-faster **pace of work** makes many Americans **reluctant** to be absent from the office - **anxious** that they might look like they're not **committed** to their job. Or they worry they won't be able **to cope with the backlog of work** waiting for them after a vacation.

Then, there's the way we work. Americans believe more than Europeans do that hard work is **associated with** success. "Americans maximize their happiness by working, and Europeans maximize their happiness through leisure."

So **despite** the clear **benefits** in regard to health and productivity **caused by** taking time off, a long vacation can be **undesirable**, scary, unrealistic or just impossible for many U.S. workers.

Source: adapted from <http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/05/23/why-is-america-the-no-vacation-nation/>

Working on the text

1. Vocabulary in this article:

be blunt	
precious	
recent	
poll	
mandated by	
require	
have access to (something)	
advanced nation	
provide	
retain	
layoff(s)	
reluctant	
anxious	
be committed to (something)	
associated with (something)	
despite	
caused by (something)	
undesirable	

2. Expressions

A **worker bee** is someone

Come with strings attached means that

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The **annual leave** is the same as a

The **pace of work** is how

To **cope with** something means that

The **backlog of work** is

.....

A **benefit** is

3. Questions on the text

How long is an American workers holiday a year on average (durchschnittlich)?

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Why do other industrialized countries often have more paid time off?

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Most U.S. companies, however, provide vacation to their workers. Why?

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What makes many Americans reluctant to be absent from the office?

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How do Americans and Europeans maximize their happiness?

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What are the benefits of a vacation for workers and companies?

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6. In general: Would you like to work in the USA? Why/Why not? Please write at least 5 sentences to explain your opinion.

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