

Cambridge AS & A Level · Business 9609 · Notes

Motivation AS

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Read first: [Human resource management \(HRM\)](#)

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What you need to know

By the end of this topic you should be able to:

1. **Say why a business must get its staff to want to work well** if it is to reach its objectives, and why motivation is one of the tools that managers and leaders use.
2. **Explain in simple terms what a human need is.**
3. **Explain how a job can meet people's needs, and why it sometimes fails to.**
4. **Outline the ideas of the five content theorists** (Taylor, Mayo, Maslow, Herzberg, McClelland) **and of Vroom's process theory.**
5. **Apply those theories to real businesses and real jobs:** what each one tells a manager to do, and where it stops being useful.
6. **Explain the eight payment methods:** time-based pay, salary, piece rate, commission, bonus, profit sharing, performance-related pay and fringe benefits; and work out an employee's pay under them.
7. **Explain the non-financial motivators:** training, chances of promotion, development, status, job re-design, team working, empowerment, participation and job enrichment.
8. **Explain how employees can take part in managing and controlling what the business does.**

Recruitment, morale and welfare as HR policies, and labour turnover are covered in human resource management; leadership styles are in leadership.

Understand it

Why a business needs motivated staff

Motivation is what decides how much effort a person chooses to give their work, and for how long. Two people with the same skills can produce very different work because one cares about the result and the other does not. Pay, praise, ambition, pride and interesting work can all feed it.

A business reaches its objectives only through what its people do, so getting them to *want* to work well is part of every manager's job, alongside planning and controlling. Compare two workers who are both "doing the job": one does the minimum and leaves on time; the other spots a fault, fixes it and suggests how to stop it

happening again. Multiply that difference across a workforce and it shows up in:

- **productivity:** more output from the same staff, so a lower cost per unit;
- **quality and service:** fewer errors, fewer returns, customers who come back;
- **absence and labour turnover:** people who like their job turn up and stay, so less is spent on cover, recruitment and training;
- **change and ideas:** motivated staff are more willing to try new methods and to suggest improvements;
- **reputation as an employer:** good applicants want to join.

Warning signs that motivation is low: rising absence and lateness, many staff leaving, more mistakes and waste, more customer complaints, and frequent disputes with managers.

Morale is related but different: it is the general mood of the workforce, how content, confident and committed staff feel about their jobs and the business. Low morale usually drags motivation down with it.

Human needs

A **human need** is something a person requires, or strongly wants, to live a secure and satisfying life: enough to eat and a home, safety, the company of others, respect, and the chance to make the most of their abilities. Much of why people work is to meet these needs, so a job that meets them keeps people working well, and one that doesn't leaves them unhappy.

Need	How a job can meet it	Why it may not be met
Physical (food, shelter, rest)	A wage that covers rent and food; proper breaks; drinking water and somewhere to eat	Pay too low to live on; shifts so long there is no time to rest
Safety and security	A written contract, safe machinery and protective clothing, sick pay	Short or zero-hours contracts; dangerous conditions; fear that the business will close
Social (belonging)	Working in a team, a staff room, social events	Working alone (lone night shifts, home working); being left out by a group
Esteem (respect)	Praise, awards, a job title, promotion	Good work never noticed; a manager who treats staff as easily replaced
Self-actualisation (reaching your potential)	Challenging projects, training in new skills, the chance to lead	Repetitive work with no chance to learn or move up

Two points examiners like to see. First, **needs differ:** a student working weekends and a parent supporting a family want different things from the same job, and needs change during a career. Second, a business may be **unable** to meet a need, not just unwilling: a firm fighting to survive may simply lack the cash for a pay rise or new equipment.

Taylor: scientific management

F. W. Taylor studied factory work in the early 1900s. He believed every job has **one most efficient method**, which managers can find by timing and observing workers (**work study**, or time and motion studies). He saw the worker as "**economic man**": someone who works mainly for money and will do as little as possible unless pay depends on output. So managers should:

- split work into **small, simple tasks**, each done in the set way;
- **select and train** workers for one task, and **supervise** them closely;
- pay a **piece rate**, so more output means more pay.

Where it fits: simple, repeated work with output that is easy to count (packing, sewing, data entry). It can raise output a lot.

Where it fails: it ignores social and higher needs; dull, tightly controlled work raises absence and turnover; paying for quantity can hurt quality; it suits creative or skilled work badly.

Mayo: human relations

Elton Mayo's **Hawthorne studies** (1920s–30s) set out to test how working conditions such as lighting affected output. Output rose in the test group almost whatever was changed. Mayo concluded that the workers responded to **being noticed and consulted** by managers and to **working as a close group**. His ideas:

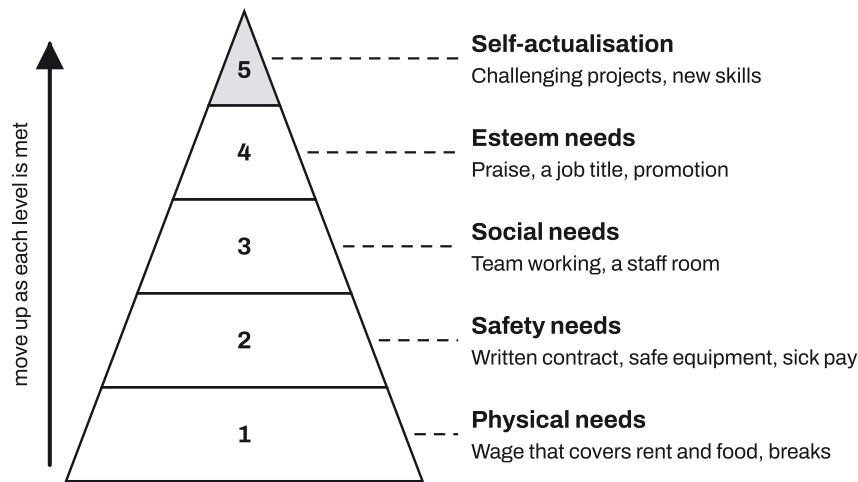
- people have **social needs** and work better when they belong to a team;
- the **group's own norms** (its unwritten idea of a fair day's work) influence each member's effort;
- managers who **communicate with and take an interest in** staff get more from them.

Where it fits: team working, regular meetings, consultation, social facilities.

Where it fails: a group's norms can just as easily hold output down; and a friendly atmosphere does not make up for pay people cannot live on.

Maslow: the hierarchy of needs

Abraham Maslow arranged the five needs in a **hierarchy**. A person is driven by the lowest need that is not yet met. Once it is met, it **stops motivating**, and the next level becomes what drives them.



Using it: find out which level each group of staff has reached (through appraisals, surveys or exit interviews) and offer what meets the **next** one. Fair pay and secure contracts come first; once they are in place, team working, recognition and then challenge and training will motivate.

Limits: needs are hard to observe or measure; people don't always climb one level at a time (some accept low pay for work they love); one reward, such as a promotion, can meet several levels at once; and the order may not be the same in every culture.

Herzberg: the two-factor theory

Frederick Herzberg interviewed engineers and accountants about times they felt very good and very bad at work. The two lists were different, so he split factors into two groups.

- **Hygiene (maintenance) factors** surround the job: pay, working conditions, job security, company rules, the quality of supervision, relationships at work. When they are poor, staff are **dissatisfied**. Putting them right **removes the dissatisfaction**, but it does **not** create motivation.
- **Motivators** come from **the work itself**: achievement, recognition, responsibility, interesting work, advancement and personal growth. These produce real **satisfaction**, and with it effort.

Hygiene factors (prevent dissatisfaction)	Motivators (create satisfaction)
Pay and fringe benefits	Achievement
Working conditions	Recognition
Job security	Responsibility
Company policy and rules	Interesting, meaningful work
Supervision and relationships	Advancement and growth

So a pay rise stops complaints about pay, but on its own its effect on effort fades. Herzberg's answer is **job enrichment**: build more responsibility, more challenge and a complete piece of work into the job.

Limits: his sample was professional staff, so it may fit low-paid workers, for whom pay is the main reason to work, less well; enriching jobs on a production line is difficult and costly; and some people see pay as recognition, which blurs the two groups.

McClelland: three needs theory

David McClelland argued that everyone has three needs, but in different strengths, and the strongest one shapes what drives the person and how they behave at work.

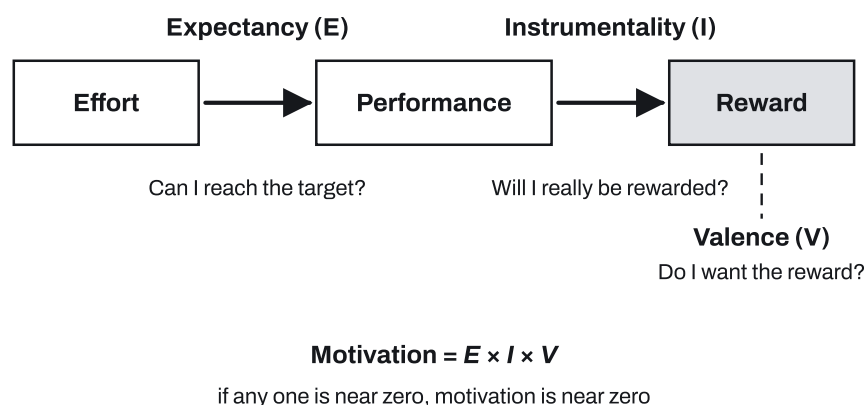
- **Need for achievement:** these people want to be judged on their own results. They choose tasks where success is possible but not certain (too easy is pointless, too risky is likely to fail) and want to hear quickly how they did. Give them stretching but realistic targets and frequent feedback.
- **Need for affiliation:** these people want to be liked and accepted, and dislike conflict. They do well in teams and in roles built on cooperation; they may avoid hard decisions that upset colleagues.
- **Need for power (authority):** these people want to influence others. **Personal power** is wanting control over people for its own sake; **institutional power** is wanting to organise people to achieve the organisation's goals, which makes a better manager.

Using it: identify each employee's dominant need (through questionnaires, interviews, observation) and match the job and rewards to it; it also helps choose who to promote into management.

Limits: measuring the three needs takes time and money; needs can change; and it says what drives someone but not exactly which reward to give.

Vroom: expectancy theory

The five theories above are **content theories**: they say **what** people need from work. Victor Vroom's **expectancy theory** is a **process theory**: it explains **how** a person decides whether a reward is worth working for. Three links must all hold.



- **Expectancy (E):** "If I try harder, can I actually reach the target?" (Do I have the skills, time, equipment? Is the target realistic?)

- **Instrumentality (I):** "If I reach it, will I really get the reward?" (Does the business keep its promises? Is it decided fairly?)
- **Valence (V):** "Do I want that reward?"

Because $\text{motivation} = E \times I \times V$, a weak link anywhere wrecks the whole scheme: a generous bonus motivates nobody if staff think the target is impossible.

Using it: set targets staff believe they can reach and give them the training and tools to reach them; make the link between performance and reward clear and reliable; offer rewards each group actually values (some want money, others time off or promotion).

Limits: people rarely calculate this carefully; and finding out each employee's expectations is hard.

Financial motivators: payment methods

Method	How pay is worked out	Strengths	Weaknesses
Time-based pay (wage)	Hours worked $\times$ hourly rate; extra hours often at a higher overtime rate	Simple; staff are not rushed, so quality and safety are protected; pays for work that can't be counted	Same pay for high and low effort; supervisors are needed to check work
Salary	Pay attached to the role rather than the hours: a manager earns the same in a quiet 38- hour week as in a 50-hour week. It is quoted per year and arrives monthly	Steady income for staff; the business knows its pay bill in advance; suits managers and office roles	No link between effort and pay; a fixed cost even when sales fall
Piece rate	Units finished $\times$ rate per unit	Pay rises with output, so output rises; the labour cost of each unit is fixed	Rushing can hurt quality and safety; income drops if machines break or orders dry up; only for countable output
Commission	A percentage of the value of the employee's sales, often on top of a low basic pay	Sales effort rises; the cost rises only when sales do	Pressure selling can harm reputation; staff may compete instead of helping each other; the pay bill is hard to forecast; uncertain income is stressful
Bonus	A one-off extra sum for reaching a target, set for a person, a team or the whole business	Points effort at the targets that matter most	A target that is too easy wastes money, one that is too hard is ignored; staff may cut corners

Method	How pay is worked out	Strengths	Weaknesses
Profit sharing	A staff bonus pot whose size rises and falls with the business's profit: large after a good year, empty after a loss	Staff take an interest in costs and profit	Each person's share hardly depends on their own effort; paid once a year; nothing in a loss-making year
Performance-related pay (PRP)	The manager scores each employee's work (often at a yearly review), and a higher score brings a bigger pay rise or extra payment	Rewards good work in jobs with no countable output (teachers, nurses, managers)	Appraisals take managers' time; ratings may feel biased; can damage teamwork
Fringe benefits (perks)	Rewards in kind that have a money value: a staff discount, private medical cover, a pension contribution, a gym membership	Help attract and keep staff; can cost the business less than the same value as pay	A cost to the business; not every employee values the same perk

Fringe benefits are **financial** motivators even though no cash changes hands. Many businesses mix methods: a low basic plus commission for sales staff, a salary plus profit share for managers.

Non-financial motivators

- **Training:** new skills let staff do the job better and show they are valued (esteem; a step towards self-actualisation).
- **Opportunities for promotion:** a visible route upwards gives a reason to work hard and to stay.
- **Development:** longer-term growth of a person's abilities and career (mentoring, secondments, new projects), preparing them for bigger roles.
- **Status:** signs of a person's importance, such as a senior job title, an award, their own office, or the right to sign off others' work.
- **Job re-design:** changing what a job contains.
 - **Job rotation:** moving staff between tasks at the same level, so the work is more varied and staff can cover for each other.
 - **Job enlargement:** adding more tasks at the same level to a job.
 - **Job enrichment:** adding higher-level tasks, such as planning, checking quality and making decisions, so the job carries more responsibility and stretches the person's skills. This is Herzberg's method.
- **Team working:** staff work in groups that share a goal, meeting social needs (Mayo, Maslow, McClelland's affiliation); ideas are pooled and members cover for each other.
- **Empowerment:** giving employees the power to decide how to do their own work, such as how to solve a customer's problem, without asking a manager first.
- **Participation:** involving employees in decisions about the business beyond their own job (next section).

Empowerment has costs too: staff without the experience or training may make **poor decisions**, so mistakes and risk rise; managers may **lose control** and coordination; some staff find the extra responsibility **stressful** or would rather be paid more; and well-trained, confident staff become attractive to rival employers.

Employee participation in management

Ways employees can take part in managing and controlling the business:

- **Consultation and suggestion schemes:** managers ask for staff views before deciding, and staff can put ideas forward at any time.
- **Works councils:** a standing body that speaks for the whole workforce and that managers must talk to before making changes that affect jobs, such as a new rota or a plan to cut posts.
- **Quality circles:** a recurring fault or delay is handed to the staff closest to it, who investigate why it keeps happening and take proposed fixes to managers.
- **Worker directors:** an employee is elected to sit on the board, so staff views are heard when strategy is decided.
- **Autonomous work groups** (self-managed teams): a team is given a goal and left to organise itself: who does which task, in what order, and how to solve problems as they arise.
- **Employee share ownership:** staff are given or sold shares, so part of their reward rises and falls with the company's success, and they can vote at shareholder meetings.
- **Democratic or laissez-faire management:** managers routinely involve staff in decisions, or leave them to make them.

For: the people doing a job often know best how to improve it; decisions that staff helped make are accepted more readily; higher needs (esteem, self-actualisation) are met. **Against:** decisions take longer; managers may be reluctant to share power, or may ignore what staff say, which leaves them more cynical than before; staff may lack the knowledge for some decisions; meetings and training cost time and money.

Theories in practical situations

Situation	Theory that helps most	What it suggests
Repetitive work with countable output	Taylor	Clear methods, training, piece rate or output bonus
Staff isolated or not working well together	Mayo; Maslow's social needs	Team working, regular contact, consultation
Staff complaining about pay, contracts or conditions	Herzberg's hygiene factors; Maslow's lower levels	Fix these first; nothing else works until they are fair
Experienced staff bored or leaving for "more challenge"	Herzberg's motivators; Maslow's top levels	Job enrichment, responsibility, development, promotion
A mix of very different people and roles	McClelland	Match each person's role and reward to their dominant need

Situation	Theory that helps most	What it suggests
A target or bonus scheme that isn't working	Vroom	Check each link: is the target reachable, is the reward reliable, is it wanted?

Key facts and formulas

There is no formula list for this subject in the exam. Everything below must be learnt.

Formula or fact	Status
Time-based pay = hours worked $\times$ rate per hour	Learn it
Monthly salary = annual salary $\div$ 12	Learn it
Piece-rate pay = units produced $\times$ rate per unit (add up each product separately)	Learn it
Commission = commission rate $\times$ value of the employee's sales; total pay = basic pay + commission	Learn it
Vroom's expectancy theory: motivation = $E \times I \times V$ (expectancy, instrumentality, valence)	Learn it
Content theories (what motivates): Taylor, Mayo, Maslow, Herzberg, McClelland. Process theory (how people decide): Vroom	Learn it
Maslow's levels, bottom to top: physical, safety, social, esteem, self-actualisation	Learn it
Herzberg: hygiene factors only prevent dissatisfaction; motivators create satisfaction	Learn it
McClelland's three needs: achievement, affiliation, power (authority)	Learn it
Financial motivators: time-based pay, salary, piece rate, commission, bonus, profit sharing, performance-related pay, fringe benefits	Learn it
Non-financial motivators: training, promotion, development, status, job re-design, team working, empowerment, participation, job enrichment	Learn it

How to do it

We have tagged 32 questions on this topic (2021–2026), all on Papers 1 and 2. 14 of them have parts of more than one type, so the counts add up to 49.

Question type	Questions
Define or explain a motivation / pay term	8
Explain an advantage or disadvantage of a payment method	6
Evaluate how far one motivation theory works in a given business	5
Explain or analyse human needs at work (Maslow, status, unmet needs)	5
Evaluate or recommend a payment method for the case business	4
Evaluate or recommend ways to improve motivation in the case business	4
Analyse two ways / non-financial motivators to motivate employees	4
Explain why motivation matters to a business, or evaluate whether it is the most important factor	4
Explain non-financial motivators and their drawbacks (empowerment)	3
Evaluate whether non-financial motivators are the most effective	2
Calculate an employee's pay under different payment methods	2
Identify one motivator or content theory (1 mark)	2

Marks are given for four skills. **K** (knowledge): a correct point, term or definition. **App** (application): using the business in the question, or explaining the point further. **An** (analysis): a chain of causes and consequences. **Eval** (evaluation): a judgement that is supported. In the examples, the label after a sentence shows the mark it earns.

1. Define or explain a motivation / pay term (8 questions)

Paper 1, define [2]: two marks for a precise meaning, one for a vague one. Give two separate ideas.

Examples: 9609/13/O/N/25 Q2, 9609/13/M/J/25 Q1.

Term	A 2-mark definition
Motivation	How much effort a person chooses to give their work and how long they sustain it (1), driven by the rewards on offer and how well the job meets their needs (1). Don't use the word "motivate" in it
Employee morale	The general mood of the workforce (1): how content, confident and committed staff feel about their jobs and the business (1)
Job enrichment	Adding higher-level tasks such as planning, checking and deciding to a job (1), so it carries more responsibility and stretches the person's skills (1)
Piece rate	Pay worked out as the number of units the worker finishes times a fixed rate per unit (1), so it depends on output, not on hours (1)
Commission	Pay equal to a percentage of the value of what the employee sells (1), usually added to a low basic wage or salary (1)

Term	A 2-mark definition
Performance-related pay	A pay scheme in which the manager's score for each employee's work (1) decides the size of their pay rise or extra payment (1)

Explain the term [3] (mostly Paper 2): one mark for knowing it, then two for using it, for example by naming a product **and** a business and saying what the method means for the worker there: "a cake shop paying its decorators for each cake iced, so a decorator's pay rises on busy days and falls on quiet ones". Example: 9609/21/O/N/23 Q1.

2. Explain an advantage or disadvantage of a payment method (6 questions)

These [3] parts name a payment method (or ask you to pick one) and want **one** plus or minus point, explained. Examples: 9609/22/M/J/25 Q2, 9609/22/F/M/23 Q1.

1. **State the point** (K), taken from the payment table: "piece rate can lower quality".
2. **Explain why it happens** (App): "because each extra unit adds to the worker's pay, so speed is rewarded and care is not".
3. **Tie it to the case** (App): a rate, a product or a problem named in the case.

Check **for whom**: an advantage "to employees" (a chance to earn more, control over their earnings) is a different answer from one "to the business" (lower cost per unit, easier forecasting), and points for the wrong one score nothing. If you are simply asked to explain one method, name it and say exactly how the pay is calculated, then give a numerical illustration or say who it suits. Older Paper 1 questions (2021–2022) asked for **two** points for 3 marks: explain both briefly.

3. Evaluate how far one motivation theory works in a given business (5 questions)

A Paper 1 essay names one theorist and one type of business (a school, a hospital, a software firm, a call centre) and asks whether that theory suits its staff better than any other approach: usually a [12] part (b) (2 K, 2 App, 2 An, 6 Eval), as in 2021 and since 2023; in late 2021 and 2022 some were whole [20] essays. Examples: 9609/11/O/N/23 Q6, 9609/11/O/N/22 Q6.

1. **K**: explain the named theory **accurately**, with its key terms (Herzberg's two groups; McClelland's three needs; Taylor's economic man and piece rate).
2. **App**: name the different jobs in that business. A hospital has nurses, porters, cleaners and administrators; a software firm has developers, testers, sales and finance staff. They will not all respond the same way.
3. **An**: for two or three of those roles, what the theory tells a manager to do, and what follows (better work, fewer leaving, lower costs), with a "but" where it doesn't fit.
4. **Eval**: compare it with **at least one other theory**, say which roles it suits and which it doesn't, then decide how far it is "the best way" and what that depends on (the roles, the cost, whether managers can act on it).

4. Explain or analyse human needs at work (Maslow, status, unmet needs) (5 questions)

Four forms. Examples: 9609/12/F/M/26 Q4, 9609/13/M/J/23 Q2, 9609/11/O/N/24 Q6.

- **How one need can be met at work [3]:** name one need (K), then say how the business meets it, developed twice (App). Pick one you can explain easily, such as social needs through team working, and explain only one.
- **Two reasons why needs may not be met [8]:** for each, the reason (K), which need it leaves unmet and for which worker (App), and a chain to how the worker then behaves and what it costs the business (An). Reasons: low pay, insecure contracts, unsafe conditions, isolation, no recognition or promotion, dull work, an autocratic style, a business that can't afford more. Chain: "pay fixed at the legal minimum with no rise for experience (K) leaves a skilled worker's esteem needs unmet, because their skill is never recognised (App), so they stop helping to train newcomers and do only what is checked (An); quality slips and new staff take longer to become productive (An)". Methods to meet **self-actualisation** needs [8] work the same way: challenging projects, job enrichment, training and development, responsibility for decisions, promotion.
- **Why status motivates [5]** (1 K, 2 App, 2 An): the answer is about the **employee**, not the business. Reason (K): self-esteem, recognition by others, progress towards a personal goal, authority, better pay that comes with a senior role. Develop how status gives it (App): a title such as "senior technician" shows colleagues and customers that the person is trusted. Then the chain (An): being looked up to is something people do not want to lose, so they keep their standards high to protect the title and aim for the next step up.
- **Using Maslow [3] or the owner's own need [3]:** the mark is for a **use** (for example, a staff survey sorted by Maslow's levels shows managers what each group still lacks, so they know what to offer next) or a **need of the owner** (esteem from running a successful business, self-actualisation from building something of their own), applied twice to the case. Describing the hierarchy earns nothing here, and "hygiene factors" is not a human need.

5. Evaluate or recommend a payment method for the case business (4 questions)

A Paper 2 part (d) where the case names its staff groups and how they are paid, and asks whether to change, keep or introduce a method: [12] since 2023, [11] "recommend ... justify" in 2021–2022. Examples:

9609/22/F/M/24 Q1, 9609/23/O/N/22 Q2.

1. **K:** define the methods in the case, even though they are named; the knowledge marks are for showing you know how each works.
2. **App:** each **staff group** and what its work is like: is output countable? is quality critical? is creativity needed?
3. **An:** the effect of each method on that group's **effort, quality and cost**, both sides. Piece rate for laboratory testers would reward the number of samples tested, not the accuracy of the results; a salary gives security but no reason to go further.
4. **Eval:** which method suits which group, a clear recommendation, and what it depends on (can output be measured, will staff accept a change, does the extra output pay for the cost). Two methods evaluated well in context can reach full marks.

6. Evaluate or recommend ways to improve motivation in the case business (4 questions)

A Paper 2 part (d) [12] (or [11] in 2021–2022) about staff the case says are poorly motivated, or (in one variant) about employee participation. Examples: 9609/22/O/N/25 Q1, 9609/21/O/N/21 Q1.

1. **Find the problems first.** Cases list them: quotes from staff, high absence or turnover, complaints. Write them down.
2. **Match a method to each problem.**

What the case shows	Methods that fit
Little contact with colleagues (remote, lone or night work)	Team working, regular team meetings (in person or online), shared projects
No link between effort and pay	Performance-related pay, individual or team bonus
Pay or conditions worse than rival employers offer	Fix the hygiene factor: a pay rise, an allowance, fringe benefits, better facilities
Dull, repeated tasks	Job rotation, job enrichment
No way up, or skilled staff leaving	Development, promotion routes, more responsibility
New staff struggling	Better induction and training
A manager who decides everything alone	Participation, empowerment, a more democratic style

3. **K and An:** name the methods (financial, non-financial, or a theory), and for two or three of them build a chain with a "but": cost, time, whether it fixes the main problem.
4. **Eval:** pick **one** method as the most effective **for this business**, say why it beats the others (it fixes the biggest problem, it is cheap, it works quickly), and what the choice depends on (what kind of employees they are, which problem drives people to leave, the money available). A judgement must name one method; "it depends" alone is not a decision.

For the participation variant, use the participation methods (works councils, quality circles, worker directors, autonomous groups, share ownership), not general motivation methods.

7. Analyse two ways / non-financial motivators to motivate employees (4 questions)

[8]: 2 K, 2 App, 4 An, with two ways analysed separately. Examples: 9609/22/F/M/23 Q1, 9609/11/O/N/23 Q6.

1. **K:** two methods of exactly the kind asked. If the question says non-financial, any payment method or fringe benefit scores nothing.
2. **App:** choose methods that solve something in the case, and quote one case fact for each.
3. **An:** a chain for each, at least two links, ending in output, quality, costs, sales or profit. A two-sided point (a benefit, then a cost or risk) also counts as developed.

8. Explain why motivation matters to a business, or evaluate whether it is the most important factor (4 questions)

- **One benefit of motivated staff [3]**: a benefit from "Why a business needs motivated staff" (K), developed twice (App). For [8], two benefits, each with a chain to cost, sales or profit.
- **Is motivation the most important factor [12]** (for the success of a type of business, or in a manager's role). Examples: 9609/13/M/J/23 Q6, 9609/12/O/N/23 Q5.
 1. **K**: what motivation is, and the **other** factors or roles to weigh it against: price and cost control, product quality, marketing, finance; or a manager's other jobs (planning, organising, controlling, Mintzberg's roles).
 2. **App and An**: why motivated staff matter **in this business** (how much of the product is the staff's service), with a chain to profit; then the same for one or two rival factors.
 3. **Eval**: decide which matters most there, and whether motivation is really a means to the other factor (productive staff help keep costs low). Say what it depends on.

9. Explain non-financial motivators and their drawbacks (empowerment) (3 questions)

Paper 1 [3]. Examples: 9609/11/M/J/25 Q1, 9609/12/F/M/22 Q2.

1. **State the point** (K): "managers lose control of how work is done".
2. **Explain why** (App): "each team now settles problems its own way without reporting back".
3. **Say what follows** (App): "so two customers with the same complaint can be treated differently, and the one who gets less complains again".

Read whether the question wants an advantage or a disadvantage. When asked for two non-financial motivators, choose from the syllabus list; fringe benefits are financial.

10. Evaluate whether non-financial motivators are the most effective (2 questions)

A Paper 1 essay about the staff of one type of business. Examples: 9609/11/O/N/24 Q6, 9609/11/M/J/22 Q6.

1. **K**: examples from both groups: non-financial (training, team working, job rotation, enrichment) and financial (pay rises, bonus, overtime, piece rate).
2. **App**: the different roles in that business and what each is like (skilled or unskilled, permanent or seasonal, well or poorly paid).
3. **An**: what each kind of method would do for those roles, with both sides.
4. **Eval**: staff on low pay or short contracts are often still trying to meet lower needs, so money may matter more to them (Maslow, Herzberg's hygiene factors); skilled, secure staff respond more to non-financial methods. Decide for this business and say what it depends on (its budget, its market position, which roles matter most to customers).

11. Calculate an employee's pay under different payment methods (2 questions)

Paper 2 part (b)(i) [3]. Examples: 9609/22/M/J/25 Q2, 9609/22/F/M/23 Q1.

1. **Write what you are adding up** in words: "total pay = salary for the month + commission".
2. **Work each piece out from the data, showing it:** a weekly salary times the number of weeks; the sales figures for each week (read from the chart or table) added up before the commission rate is applied; units of each product times its own rate.
3. **Finish what is asked:** the total, or the **difference** between two methods (subtract!).

A wrong final answer with clear working still earns the earlier marks, and the last step is marked on your own figures.

12. Identify one motivator or content theory (1 mark) (2 questions)

Paper 2 [1]: just the name. A non-financial motivator (training, team working, job enrichment, empowerment ...) or a content theorist (Taylor, Mayo, Maslow, Herzberg or McClelland). Vroom is a **process** theory, so he is the wrong answer for "content". Examples: 9609/21/O/N/23 Q1, 9609/22/F/M/23 Q1.

Worked examples

Example 1

(a) Define the term empowerment. [2]

(b) Explain one disadvantage to employees of being paid by piece rate. [3]

(a) Allowing employees to decide for themselves how to carry out their own work (1), such as how to settle a customer's complaint, instead of having to ask a manager first (1).

(b) Their income is uncertain (K). Pay depends on the number of units finished, so a week when a machine breaks down or materials arrive late means fewer units and lower pay through no fault of their own (App). The worker cannot be sure of covering fixed bills such as rent, which causes worry and may push them to work unsafely fast to catch up (App).

The point is about the **employee**, as the question asks; "quality may fall" would be a disadvantage to the business and score nothing here.

Example 2

Birchwood Kitchens (BK) designs and fits kitchens. Most new customers come from recommendations by past customers. BK's 6 sales designers each earn a basic salary of 1,740 dollars a month plus 2.5% commission on the value of kitchens they sell above 20,000 dollars in that month. BK is considering paying a flat salary of 2,450 dollars a month instead.

(a) In May, Maren, one of the designers, sold kitchens worth 68,000 dollars. Calculate the difference between her pay for May under the current method and under the flat salary. [3]

(b) Explain one disadvantage to BK of paying its designers commission. [3]

(a) Commission = $2.5\% \times (68,000 - 20,000) = 0.025 \times 48,000 = 1,200$ dollars (1)

Current pay = $1,740 + 1,200 = 2,940$ dollars (1)

Difference = $2,940 - 2,450 = 490$ dollars more under the current method (1)

A common slip is to apply 2.5% to the whole 68,000 dollars: the case says commission is only on sales **above** 20,000 dollars.

(b) Designers may push customers into buying more than they need (K). Above 20,000 dollars a month, every extra 1,000 dollars of kitchen sold adds 25 dollars to a designer's pay, so there is a reason to talk customers into bigger units and expensive extras (App). A customer who later feels they were oversold will not recommend BK, and because most of BK's new customers come from recommendations, future sales fall (App).

Example 3

Pawprint Supplies (PS) sells pet food and accessories online. Its warehouse manager decides alone how products are placed on the shelves and which route the 45 pickers follow to collect each order. In 2025, 3% of orders were sent with a wrong item, up from 1% in 2024. Several pickers say they know quicker routes and can see why mistakes happen, but nobody asks them. Most customers reorder pet food every month.

Analyse two ways PS could involve its pickers in managing the warehouse. [8]

Quality circles. A quality circle hands a specific quality problem to the staff closest to it, who work out its cause and take fixes to managers (K). PS's wrong-item rate has tripled from 1% to 3%, and its pickers say they can see why the mistakes happen (App). A circle of six pickers meeting each fortnight could find, for example, which look-alike products are shelved next to each other and propose moving them apart (An), so fewer wrong items are sent, fewer orders have to be refunded and re-sent, and PS's costs fall and its reviews improve; however, each meeting takes pickers off the warehouse floor, so it must be short or held in quiet periods (An).

Autonomous work groups. An autonomous work group is a team given a target and left to organise how it reaches it (K). PS's pickers say they know quicker routes than the ones the manager sets (App). If each shift team plans its own routes and shares out tasks, pickers use their knowledge and feel trusted, which meets esteem needs (An), so they collect more orders per hour and more orders leave on time, helping PS keep the customers who reorder every month (An).

Each way earns K + App + a developed chain: $2K + 2\text{App} + 4\text{An} = 8$. "Analyse" has no evaluation marks, so no judgement is needed.

Example 4

Solway Motors (SM) sells new and used cars from 4 showrooms and repairs cars in its own workshop. Its 28 sales advisers are paid a salary plus a bonus of 1,500 dollars each quarter if they sell 45 cars in that quarter. On average an adviser sells 31 cars a quarter, and last year only 3 of the 28 advisers ever earned the bonus. Most advisers describe the target as "impossible", although in a staff survey 25 of the 28 said a 1,500-dollar bonus would make a real difference to them. Its 12 mechanics are paid by the hour; customers have complained that repairs are often not ready on the day promised.

Evaluate whether Vroom's expectancy theory is the best way for SM to motivate its employees. [12]

Knowledge. Vroom's expectancy theory says a person works hard for a reward only if three things hold: they believe effort will let them reach the target (expectancy), that reaching it will bring the reward (instrumentality), and they value the reward (valence) (K). Motivation is the product of the three, so one weak link removes it (K).

For: the sales advisers. The data show where the chain breaks. The target of 45 cars is 14 cars, or about 45%, above what the average adviser sells, and fewer than 11% of advisers earned the bonus last year (App). Advisers do not believe extra effort will reach the target, so expectancy is close to zero and a 1,500-dollar bonus that 25 of the 28 say would matter to them changes nothing (An). Vroom points to a cheap fix: a target advisers believe they can hit, perhaps in steps with a smaller bonus at each, so effort leads to reward, more cars are sold each quarter and SM's revenue rises (An).

Against: the mechanics, and the theory's limits. For the mechanics the case shows a problem (late repairs) but not its cause; if they are waiting for parts, extra effort can't fix it, and Vroom only tells managers that a link is broken, not what reward or change would work (Eval). Hourly pay gives mechanics no reason to finish faster, but Taylor's piece rate per repair could make them rush safety-critical work, so Herzberg's motivators, such as making a senior mechanic responsible for meeting promised dates, may suit them better (Eval). Finding out the expectancy, instrumentality and valence of all 40 employees would take surveys and interviews, although for the advisers the sales data already reveal the problem (Eval).

Judgement. For SM's sales advisers Vroom is the most useful approach, because the case gives direct evidence that the broken link is expectancy: the survey shows the bonus is wanted, yet it is believed unreachable, and as long as a new target stays above the current average of 31 cars, most bonuses are paid only for extra sales (Eval). It is not the best way for the whole business: for the mechanics it diagnoses but does not cure, and another approach, such as job enrichment, is needed to deliver repairs on time (Eval). How well a lower target works depends on whether demand for cars allows each adviser to sell more; if the market is falling, no target will raise sales, and SM's problem is not motivation at all (Eval).

The marks: 2 K, 2 App, 2 An and 6 Eval for a judgement in SM's context that compares Vroom with other theories, treats the two staff groups separately and says what it depends on.

Common mistakes

- **Writing about a different theory from the one named.** In June 2021 (9609/11/M/J/21 Q7) many candidates did not know McClelland's ideas and wrote about Maslow and Herzberg instead. In March 2021 (9609/12/F/M/21 Q5) some answers on Herzberg in a school described other theories or discussed motivation in general. Learn all six theorists well enough to explain each in a few sentences.
- **Describing theory in an evaluate question.** In June 2021 Paper 2 (9609/24/M/J/21 Q2, part (d) on a restaurant's motivation problems), candidates who spent their time setting out theories, even drawing Maslow's pyramid, gained little. Start from the problems in the case and use only the theory that helps solve them.
- **Answering for the wrong person.** In June 2022 (9609/12/M/J/22 Q1) many gave advantages of time-based pay to employees when the business was asked for, and in November 2021 (9609/11/O/N/21 Q2) many gave advantages of PRP to the business when employees were asked for. The March 2026 status question (9609/12/F/M/26 Q4) was about the employee, yet many analysed benefits to the business. Underline the person in the question.
- **Advantages instead of disadvantages.** In March 2022 (9609/12/F/M/22 Q2) some explained the benefits of empowerment when drawbacks were asked for.
- **Stating, not explaining.** In the same paper, many simply named a drawback. "Staff may feel stressed" is a statement; add why and what follows: "because they now carry the blame for decisions they used to pass upwards, and stressed staff take more sick days".
- **Counting fringe benefits as non-financial.** In March 2023 (9609/22/F/M/23 Q1) answers on non-financial motivators that used perks or other money-based rewards scored nothing for them. Perks have a money value, so they are financial.
- **Forgetting the last step of a calculation.** In the same March 2023 paper some worked out both pays and never subtracted. Show every line: clear working keeps the earlier marks.
- **Explaining the need, not how it is met.** In June 2023 (9609/13/M/J/23 Q2) most named a need but struggled to say how the business satisfies it, and some explained more than the one need asked for.
- **Participation answered as motivation.** In June 2022 Paper 2 (9609/23/M/J/22 Q2) answers that wrote about general motivation methods instead of ways for staff to take part in decisions scored very little.
- **Judging payment methods without showing you know them.** In November 2022 (9609/23/O/N/22 Q2) many discussed the case's pay methods in general terms, or jumped straight to a judgement without first explaining how each method works.
- **Defining a term with its own words.** "Motivation is what motivates people" or "commission is being paid by commission" earns nothing: say what it actually is.

How to get the marks

- **Command words.** *Identify*: just the name, no sentence needed. *Define*: the precise meaning, two separate ideas. *Explain*: a point, then why or how, then the case. *Analyse*: points carried through chains of cause and effect to the business. *Evaluate* or *Discuss*: both sides, then a supported judgement.

- **[3] explain one:** one point (K) and two steps of development (App); on Paper 2 one of those steps must apply the point to the case business, except in "explain the term" parts, where any business or product counts.
- **[3] calculate:** what you are adding up in words, each part worked out, then the total or the difference.
- **[5] analyse one** (Paper 1, first set in March 2026): one reason (K), developed in context (2 App) and carried through a two-step chain (2 An).
- **[8] analyse two:** exactly two points of the kind asked, each with a case fact and a chain of at least two links; a third point earns nothing.
- **[12] evaluate:** 2 K, 2 App, 2 An, 6 Eval. The top band needs a judgement **in context:** the best method, or the value of the theory, **for this business and these staff**, with what it depends on. Judgements can appear throughout, not only at the end.
- **Use what the case gives you.** Staff quotes, turnover and absence figures and named job roles are there to be used; they usually point to the problem you should solve.

Quick check

1. Name the five content theorists in the syllabus, and the one process theorist.
2. A tailor's machinist is paid 2.25 dollars for each pair of trousers hemmed and 4.00 dollars for each jacket altered. In a 7.5-hour day she hems 14 pairs of trousers and alters 9 jackets. The business is thinking of paying 8.60 dollars an hour instead. Calculate the difference between her pay for the day under the two methods.
3. Sort these into financial and non-financial motivators: private medical cover, team working, a quarterly bonus, an "employee of the month" award, job rotation, a staff discount.
4. A firm promises a weekend break to the salesperson with the highest sales each month, but staff believe the prize always goes to the manager's favourite. Which of Vroom's three factors is weak, and what should the firm change?
5. A business shares 5% of its profit of 820,000 dollars equally among its 82 employees. How much does each receive? Give one reason why this may do little to raise each person's effort.

Answers

1. Content theorists: Taylor, Mayo, Maslow, Herzberg and McClelland. Process theorist: Vroom.
2. Piece rate = $14 \times 2.25 + 9 \times 4.00 = 31.50 + 36.00 = 67.50$ dollars. Time-based = $7.5 \times 8.60 = 64.50$ dollars. Difference = $67.50 - 64.50 = 3.00$ dollars, more under piece rate.
3. Financial: private medical cover, a quarterly bonus, a staff discount. Non-financial: team working, an "employee of the month" award, job rotation.
4. Instrumentality: staff doubt that winning on sales will really bring the prize. The firm should decide the winner openly from the sales figures alone and publish them, so the link from performance to reward is trusted.
5. $0.05 \times 820,000 = 41,000$ dollars, and $41,000 \div 82 = 500$ dollars each. Each share depends on the whole firm's profit, so one person's extra effort hardly changes it, and it arrives once a year, long after the work was done.

Past questions to try

- **9609/22/F/M/23 Q1**: parts (a)(i) to (c): a content theorist, piece rate against hourly pay, then two non-financial motivators for farm workers.
- **9609/12/F/M/26 Q4**: why status motivates an employee.
- **9609/12/O/N/23 Q5**: ways to meet self-actualisation needs, then whether motivating others is a manager's most important role.
- **9609/11/O/N/22 Q6**: how far Herzberg's theory would raise the quality of a school's teaching.