

# Gambia introduces 3-day weekend

24<sup>th</sup> January, 2013



The president of Gambia has said all public workers will have three-day weekends starting from February 1st. President Yayha Jammeh has

added Friday to the regular weekend of Saturday and Sunday. He wants people to farm, rest more and pray. However, he also announced that government employees would work from 8am to 6pm Mondays to Thursdays. In addition: "Schools, banks and all other affected places are free to work on Saturdays." This means that people may have split weekends, and work an extra 10 hours a week. Government workers currently work from 8am to 4pm. Working until 6pm means eight hours extra, which could become ten if they have to work on Saturdays too.

The president said the new working hours would, "allow Gambians to devote more time to prayers, social activities and agriculture". He said people could, "go back to the land and grow what we eat and eat what we grow for a healthy and wealthy nation". Gambia's 'Freedom Newspaper' criticised the president's idea. It said the three-day weekend, "is going to [have a bad] effect on the economy and the country. Many workers...are worried that the changes are going to create problems for them." The paper added: "Gambia's economy and infrastructure have collapsed thanks to Jammeh's poor leadership." Gambia is the smallest nation on the African continent, with a population of just 1.8 million.

Sources: Reuters / Freedom Newspaper (Gambia)

## Writing

What are the advantages and disadvantages of a three-day weekend?

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

president / 3-day weekend / regular / farm / government employees / work Saturdays / devote more time / prayers / agriculture / healthy / wealthy / worried / infrastructure

## True / False

- Everyone in Gambia will have a 3-day weekend from February. T / F
- The president wants people to pray more and grow things. T / F
- Government workers will have to work 2 hours more on Wednesdays. T / F
- No one will work on Saturdays. T / F
- The president said the 3-day weekend would make Gambia richer. T / F
- The 'Freedom Newspaper' said the 3-day weekend was a great idea. T / F
- The newspaper said the president had done much to help Gambia. T / F
- There are fewer than 2,000,000 in Gambia. T / F

## Synonym Match

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. workers     | a. bad       |
| 2. regular     | b. farming   |
| 3. free to     | c. employees |
| 4. split       | d. make      |
| 5. extra       | e. country   |
| 6. agriculture | f. divided   |
| 7. wealthy     | g. usual     |
| 8. create      | h. able to   |
| 9. poor        | i. rich      |
| 10. nation     | j. more      |

## Discussion – Student A

- Would your country be healthier and wealthier with a 3-day weekend?
- What are the bad things about a 3-day weekend?
- How do you feel the evening the weekend is over?
- Why is it "three-day weekend" and not "three-days weekend"?
- What would happen to the world if we had a 5-day weekend?
- Do you do everything you want to do at the weekends?
- Should people have fun in the week instead of waiting for the weekend?
- What questions would you like to ask Gambia's president?

## Phrase Match

- |                                  |                          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. He wants people to farm, rest | a. weekends              |
| 2. Schools, banks and all        | b. on the economy        |
| 3. people may have split         | c. on Saturdays too      |
| 4. Working until 6pm means       | d. more and pray         |
| 5. if they have to work          | e. wealthy nation        |
| 6. devote more                   | f. other affected places |
| 7. a healthy and                 | g. just 1.8 million      |
| 8. have a bad effect             | h. infrastructure        |
| 9. Gambia's economy and          | i. eight hours extra     |
| 10. a population of              | j. time to prayers       |

## Discussion – Student B

- How much do you like weekends (and why)?
- What do you think of the idea of a three-day weekend?
- What would you do with an extra day off?
- Do you think Gambians are better with the president's idea?
- Which are better – weekends now or weekends as a child?
- Why do you think Gambia's president is changing the weekend?
- What would life be like without weekends?
- What do you think of the idea of a split weekend?

## Spelling

- The ntidspee of Gambia
- the larureg weekend
- government oyspmelee
- In anioddid
- other edfteafc places
- nrructyel work from 8am
- devote more time to rpaeys
- social activities and gculrariet
- etahylw nation
- cdiiecsir (UK) / zidicrcet (UK) the idea
- Gambia's mnooyec and infrastructure
- the African nietcnnto

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. c	2. g	3. h	4. f	5. j
6. b	7. i	8. d	9. a	10. e

## Role Play

**Gambia president** - You think a three-day weekend is a very, very good idea. Tell the others three reasons why. You think the idea of no weekend or a 5-day weekend is totally crazy. You think there is a big difference between a two-day weekend and a three-day weekend.

**2-day-weekend supporter** - You think a two-day weekend is a very, very good idea. Tell the others three reasons why. You don't think it's good to change the weekend. People are used to a two-day weekend. You are worried the economy will become bad if people work less.

**No-weekend supporter** - You think having no weekend is a very, very good idea. Tell the others three reasons why. The world economy is in bad condition. Everyone must work harder to make the country strong. People who want weekends are weak and lazy. No weekends also means higher salaries.

**5-day-weekend supporter** - You think a five-day weekend is a very, very good idea. Tell the others three reasons why. People work too much. They will be refreshed after a 5-day weekend and work hard. Everyone will have more family time and time to exercise and study. The country will be very happy.

## Speaking – More Free Time

What would you do? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                |                       |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| • sleep        | • go out with friends |
| • read         | • surf the Internet   |
| • exercise     | • go shopping         |
| • watch movies | • study               |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	F	h	T
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.