Brick walls and glass ceilings

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
PRE-INTERMEDIATE | A2-B1

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each career-barrier word with its meaning.

1 glass ceiling ____	**a** an invisible limit that stops people (often women) reaching top positions
2 hit a brick wall ____	**b** to reach a point where you cannot make further progress
3 promotion ____	**c** a move to a higher position at work
4 obstacle ____	**d** something that blocks your path or progress
5 barrier ____	**e** something that prevents or restricts progress
6 breakthrough ____	**f** a sudden important success after difficulty
7 discrimination ____	**g** unfair treatment based on group membership
8 opportunity ____	**h** a chance to do something and improve your situation
9 struggle ____	**i** to try hard against difficulty
10 achieve ____	**j** to succeed in doing or reaching something

2 Choose the correct form.

1 She got a promotion / promote last year.
2 He hit a brick wall / brick walls in his career.
3 They faced discrimination / discriminate at work.
4 This is a great opportunity / opportune for her.
5 She struggled / struggle to get promoted.
6 He finally achieved / achieve his goal.
7 The glass ceiling / glass-ceiling still exists in some industries.
8 That was a real breakthrough / break-through for the team.

3 Complete the descriptions with words from the box.

achieve | barrier | breakthrough | discrimination | glass ceiling | obstacle | opportunity | struggle

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Ana: She worked hard for years but felt she had hit a 1 _____ in her company, unable to reach senior roles because of the 2 _____.
Leo: He faced a language 3 _____ when he moved abroad for work, but saw it as an 4 _____ to learn new skills.
Team: They had to 5 _____ against unfair treatment and reported 6 _____ to management. Finally, they had a 7 _____ when a new policy was introduced, helping them 8 _____ real change.

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4 Match each word with its opposite.

1 opportunity ____	**a** demotion
2 promotion ____	**b** failure
3 success ____	**c** obstacle
4 fair ____	**d** unfair
5 progress ____	**e** setback
6 support ____	**f** obstruction
7 confident ____	**g** doubtful
8 open ____	**h** closed

5 Read the text. Write T (true) or F (false).

A hard-earned promotion

Maja worked in a male-dominated industry for ten years. She often felt she had hit a glass ceiling, watching less experienced colleagues get promoted ahead of her. She faced discrimination early in her career, but she didn't give up. After years of struggle, she finally achieved a breakthrough when she was promoted to a senior leadership role. She now mentors other women facing similar obstacles.

1 Maja worked in a male-dominated industry. T / F

2 She was always promoted quickly. T / F

3 She faced discrimination early in her career. T / F

4 She gave up trying. T / F

5 She was eventually promoted. T / F

6 She now helps other women. T / F

6 Complete the sentences with the correct preposition (against, to, in, at).

1 She struggled _____ unfair treatment.

2 He got a promotion _____ senior manager.

3 They faced discrimination _____ work.

4 She hit a barrier _____ her career.

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OVER TO YOU

Write a 70-90 word description of an obstacle someone overcame at work or in life (real or imaginary). Include what happened and how they succeeded.

[ ] Use at least eight target words. [ ] Use past tenses accurately. [ ] Keep the description clear and positive.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Career-barrier words

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

2 Choose the correct form

1 promotion 2 brick wall 3 discrimination 4 opportunity 5 struggled 6 achieved 7 glass ceiling 8 breakthrough

3 Descriptions

1 barrier 2 glass ceiling 3 obstacle 4 opportunity 5 struggle 6 discrimination 7 breakthrough 8 achieve

4 Opposites

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

5 Reading

1 T
2 F - others were promoted ahead of her.
3 T
4 F - she didn't give up.
5 T
6 T

6 Prepositions

1 against 2 to 3 at 4 in

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check clear organisation, accurate forms and positive wording.