Artificial or human intelligence: Which will drive future innovation?

Level: Intermediate

Time: 60–90 minutes

Business topic: technological developments

Business language focus: language associated with new technology and its implications for jobs and society.

Activities: In this lesson, students will:
- read a business article from a trusted news source and look at the language necessary to understand and talk about the article;
- learn or revise some business idioms;
- practise word formation
- learn or revise a set of phrases containing prepositions
- discuss aspects of the article in greater depth;
- research an innovative area of technology and present its current state and possible future development.

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student, possible internet access for exercise 8

Group size: All of the tasks can be completed in pairs or groups, so that as much communication as possible takes place in the class. The lesson plan can also be used in a one-to-one teaching situation or for an online class.

Teaching online: Ensure that all students (either in a group or in a one-to-one online teaching situation) are sent the worksheet well in advance of the lesson. This will give them time to print out the document if necessary. Use breakout rooms for small group or pair discussion, if available. When the lesson starts, work through the various activities in the order presented but always ensure that you allow sufficient time for feedback and discussion after each activity.

Overview: This lesson is based on an authentic article from a trusted news source, republished here with its full, original text. The article discusses the role of human intelligence in developing new technologies.

Procedure

1. Warmer

Give students time to think about the different technological developments listed and how soon they will happen, if at all. There is no single best answer and it is a matter of personal opinion. In the context of the lesson, however, you could point out that some of these technologies are already happening to some extent – e.g. some economies are already moving to a cashless mode while 3-D printing and drone deliveries are developing quickly.

2. Key words and expressions

Students search for words and expressions in the text and write them next to the definitions while noticing how the words are used in context. In the case of the word *poised* (#6), point out that the word also occurs in paragraph 4. You can be *poised for* something (e.g. Economies are *poised for* a downturn) or *poised to* do something (e.g. The government is *poised to* introduce tax increases).

Key:
1. prototype
2. off-the-shelf
3. work a treat
4. unicorn
5. stampede
6. poised
7. rollercoaster
8. option
9. balance sheet
10. revenue
11. surging
12. augment

3. Understanding the article

Students work individually to read the article again and decide whether the statements are true or false. They should correct the false statements. If students are working in pairs or small groups, they can collaborate on the answers to promote peer teaching. Then check answers as a class.

Key:
1. False. The driverless car almost/nearly crashed into a truck in Singapore.
2. True.
3. True.
4. False. They could disappear by 2035.
5. True.
6. False. The author suggests augmenting human intelligence.

4. Business language – two-word phrases

Students work individually to form two-word phrases by matching the words in the two columns. They then check their answers by looking in the text. Seeing the expressions in context will help them to see how each phrase is used. Make sure that they understand the meaning of each expression, especially *double whammy* (a set of two bad events or situations that have an effect at the same time) and *game plan* (the things that you decide you have to do to succeed in achieving a goal).

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

5. Business language – verbs

Encourage students to complete the exercise without looking in the text and then check their answers in the text.

Key:
1. *emerge*
2. *unlock*
3. *accelerate*
4. *reshape*
5. *deploy*
6. *veer*

6. Business language – word building

Students should try to complete the exercise without looking in the text. When they check their answers, you may provide the hint that the nouns are in the order in which they appear in the text and the adjectives are all in paragraph 3 of the text. Point out that *economic* means 'relating to the economy', while the adjective *economical* means 'not costing or spending much money'.

Key:
1. *safety*
2. *intelligence*
3. *stability*
4. *boldness*
5. *universal*
6. *facial*
7. *technological*
8. *economic*

7. Discussion

In small groups, students discuss the questions which expand on topics and quotes from the article. Hold a short whole-class feedback session and compare and contrast each group's answers and input. If you are teaching an online class or a one-to-one lesson, give the learner(s) plenty of time to consider their responses to each of the discussion questions.

8. Wider business theme – technological developments

Ask students to read paragraph 4 of the article again. The author mentions the colonisation of Mars as a possible future technological development. Give students time to consider the advantages and disadvantages of this colonisation and the challenges it would present. There might be challenges to people on Earth or to those colonising Mars or to both. Then ask students to consider the possible business opportunities colonisation might create and which businesses they would like to be involved in.

Encourage them to use a search engine to get more information if necessary.

When students present their ideas to the group, it is useful to make a note of any significant errors in their use of language and then to ask them to correct these after they have finished their presentation.

One-to-one teaching or online teaching
This task can be adapted so that students do the research on the colonisation of Mars as homework and then report back to you or the online class in the next lesson.

Teacher's notes