

More work, less time

Level: Intermediate (B1–B2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes (plus extra time for the presentation)

Business topics: work intensification, deadlines, productivity, employee health and well-being

Business language: useful business vocabulary, phrases and expressions, language for describing professions

Activities: providing opinions, key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, focused research and presentation

Groups: whole class, one-to-one, small groups

Overview: This article discusses what effect increased workloads and tighter deadlines have on employees' health and productivity, why this is, who is affected, and what could be done to rectify it.

1. Warmer

- Students read the sentences and tick those that apply to them.
- Then they talk to a partner about what they ticked and why.

2. Key words

Key:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <i>intensification</i> | 7. <i>resonate</i> |
| 2. <i>think-tank</i> | 8. <i>warehouse</i> |
| 3. <i>tension</i> | 9. <i>spare</i> |
| 4. <i>discretion</i> | 10. <i>anxiety</i> |
| 5. <i>merger</i> | 11. <i>campaign</i> |
| 6. <i>headcount</i> | 12. <i>trial</i> |

3. Understanding the article

- Students read the statements and correct any that are false according to the article.

Key:

- True*
- False. The way we work has changed a lot during the past 30 years.*
- True*
- False. Work intensification has increased at both ends of the pay ladder.*
- True*
- True*
- False. In the UK, larger workloads and tighter deadlines have not resulted in better productivity.*
- True*

4. Business language

- Students use the expressions in the box – taken from the article – that have the same meaning as, or a very similar meaning to, the words in italics in each sentence to rewrite the sentences.

Key:

- in spite of*
- the pay ladder*
- raise the question of*
- in the absence of*
- gained momentum*

- Then, with a partner, they should come up with a new sentence for each of the expressions.

5. Business language

- Students write down jobs and professions from the article, then write sentences for the vocabulary that is new to them and they would like to learn, or that they are not confident using.

Suggested key:

(Amazon) production-line person, solicitor, professor, manager, nurse, aerospace worker, meat-processing worker, school teacher, IT staff, carer, (Uber Eats) driver, public-sector worker, manager, academic

6. Discussion questions

- a. Put the students in pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions. When students have covered all the questions, bring the whole class back together so that they can share their answers and any interesting information that arose from their discussions.

7. Wider business theme – taking a closer look

- a. Students work with a partner and follow the steps on the worksheet. Student presentations often deal with larger topics in less detail – this task requires them to do the opposite: focus on a few specific and interesting details.