

More work, less time

Level: Advanced (C1–C2)

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 this.

1. Warmer

- a. Students complete the sentences using their own words, then read out their sentences to other students before scanning the article to see what words the author uses to complete the same sentences there and in what context.

Key:

1. **Technology** can liberate us from the drudgery of work.
2. Workers must keep pace with **machines**.
3. Working with high intensity increases the likelihood of **people reporting stress, depression and burnout**.

2. Key words

Key:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <i>intensification</i> | 7. <i>resonate</i> |
| 2. <i>share</i> | 8. <i>nudge</i> |
| 3. <i>think-tank</i> | 9. <i>stray</i> |
| 4. <i>tension</i> | 10. <i>spare</i> |
| 5. <i>discretion</i> | 11. <i>anxiety</i> |
| 6. <i>summon</i> | 12. <i>campaign</i> |

3. Understanding the article

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

Key:

1. *False. The idea that technology can free us from boring work is a powerful one, but one that has led to disappointment.*
2. *False. The way we work has changed a lot during the past 30 years and people say they are working to much tighter deadlines.*
3. *True*
4. *False. Work intensification has increased at both ends of the pay ladder.*
5. *True*
6. *False. The automation of workplaces has increased the pressure on employees as they have to keep pace with the machines.*
7. *True*
8. *False. Work intensification is negatively affecting employees' health, leading to them being more likely to work when sick.*

4. Business language

- a. Students find expressions in the article that have the same meaning as, or a very similar meaning to, the words in italics in each sentence. They should use the expressions from the article to rewrite the sentences. The paragraph numbers and number of words are given to help them.

Key:

1. *in spite of*
2. *the pay ladder*
3. *keep pace with*
4. *raise the question of*
5. *in the absence of*
6. *gained momentum*

5. Business language

- a. Students note down jobs and professions from the article and then discuss the vocabulary that is new to them or that they haven't used very often.

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

- b. Students discuss what each job entails. If they aren't sure, ask them to speculate or search the internet for ideas.

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.