BUSINESS NEWS LESSONS

Remote Work: Drawing the line between home and office

onestopenglish

Level: Advanced (C1–C2)

Time: 60–90 minutes

Business topics: remote/hybrid work arrangements, employee wellbeing, management, staff surveillance

Business language focus: words and phrases related to remote work and surveillance

Activities: Key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, addressing work-life balance

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student

Group size: Suitable for whole class, pair and small group discussion, one-to-one teaching, and online teaching.

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.

Overview: This article discusses the challenges of separating work and domestic responsibilities of remote workers and the role of managers and surveillance tech.

1. Warmer

Ask students to discuss the questions in small groups. Monitor and write any useful vocabulary on the board. Elicit the main ideas that arise from the discussion from the whole class.

2. Key words and expressions

a. Have students scan the article find the key words individually and compare their answers in pairs. Elicit answers from the whole class.

Key:

1. clash
2. simulate
3. emulate
4. surge, surged/has surged
5. surveillance
6. commission, commissioned/has commissioned
7. embedded
8. cadence
9. derailed
10. resentful
11. self regulate
12. intervene
13. disclosure
14. slack, slacking

3. Understanding the article

a. Ask students to find and highlight the relevant parts of the article and find the answers to complete the statements. Have them share their answers in pairs or small groups before eliciting answers from the whole class.

Key:

1. True
2. True
3. False. She thinks it encourages them to game the system.
4. False. She highlights that work-life balance should be a concern.
5. False. People were feeling more pressure from trying to do it all.
6. True
7. False. They think managers should encourage workers to find a better work-life balance.
8. True
9. False. She says they will have to get involved, whether they want to or not.

4. Business language – phrases

a. Ask students to match the phrases and their meanings and then find these in the article by scanning the text. Then, check answers with the whole class.

Key:

1. the system (meaning: to use the rules of a system for your own desired outcome)
2. off (meaning: to stop working and to stop thinking about work)
3. between (meaning: to find it difficult to choose between two things)
4. out (meaning: to be very tired or ill from too much work)

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5. *in (meaning: to become involved in a difficult situation to help find a solution)*
6. *the mark (meaning: to behave in a totally unacceptable way)*
7. *to your plate (meaning: to increase the amount of work or things you have to deal with)*
8. *out (meaning: to explain something clearly or put it in writing)*

Possible tools to explore: todoist, toggl track, clockify, habitica, forest, sanebox, nifty, time tree, focus booster

5. Discussion

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.

6. Wider business theme – addressing work-life balance

a. Students should be able to do this activity through a process of elimination, beginning with the verbs they may already know or are able to work out. If not, encourage them to find the verbs in the text and use the context to help them with the meaning

b. Ask students to work individually to create a schedule for themselves. Remind them that they must incorporate the strategies they have just discussed. This means blocking time and creating boundaries – establishing when they are available for queries, meetings, answering emails, etc. Encourage them to include other aspects of their life to ensure time for social connection/self-care.

Have students compare and discuss their schedules in small groups.

Extension

Elicit the tools students know that can help them organise, optimise and manage work. Write these on the board. Then, encourage students to explore one of these.
Ask students to mingle and report what they learned about the tool to someone who explored a different option.

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