

## We told young people that degrees were their ticket to a better life. It's become a great betrayal

### Level 3: Advanced

**Article summary:** This article discusses the declining job prospects for recent graduates of UK universities. It examines several factors that influence students' ability to secure competitive jobs, including the rise of AI. AI affects recruitment, interviewing and hiring, while automation makes many entry-level job tasks obsolete.

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Skills:** Reading, Speaking, Writing

**Language focus:** Idiomatic expressions

**Materials needed:** One copy of the worksheet per student

#### 1. Warmer

- a. The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to think about the role of AI in the modern job market. Explain to students how to use a Venn diagram. Jobs that can be done by *people only* should be listed in the circle on the left, while any jobs that can be done by *AI only* should be listed in the circle on the right. In the middle, where the circles overlap, students should write jobs that can be done by *both people and AI*. Students can do this activity individually or in pairs. If students have difficulty thinking of jobs, brainstorm common jobs in your community, like cashiers, doctors, teachers, restaurant servers, delivery people and journalists. Copy the Venn diagram on the board and encourage students to share their ideas with the group. Check if there are any jobs that students strongly disagree about.

#### 2. Key words

- a. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the definitions, and then find the words in the article. Allow a few minutes for students to check answers in pairs or groups before checking answers with the whole class. Draw a simple picture of a boomerang on the board to show the meaning.

Explain that a *boomerang* is a physical item that can be used to play. It also has a symbolic meaning – a person returning home after they leave (in the same way a boomerang returns to a person after they throw it).

**Key:**

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 9. c  |
| 2. b | 10. a |
| 3. a | 11. b |
| 4. b | 12. c |
| 5. a | 13. a |
| 6. c | 14. c |
| 7. b | 15. b |
| 8. a |       |

- b. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences using words from the previous activity. Remind students to change the verb endings (e.g. to the past simple) if needed. Encourage students to read complete sentences to you when they give answers, so you can check their pronunciation of the key words. To extend the activity, have students make sentences of their own with the key words.

**Key:**

1. *sifted*
2. *fired off*
3. *swamped*
4. *golden ticket*
5. *winnowed down*

#### 3. Comprehension check

- a. Students answer the questions based on the information in the article. Some questions are straightforward – students can find the answers directly in the article. Other questions require students to think critically about the topic or to analyse the author's opinions. Encourage students to re-read the article carefully before they answer the questions.

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#### Key:

##### Suggested Answers:

1. *The time of year when students leave university to return to their parents' home (because they don't have jobs to support themselves).*
2. *Universities are replacing in-person written exams; leaving early lets students save money on food and housing expenses.*
3. *sifting through CVs; conducting first interviews*
4. *Students use AI to write CVs or applications; companies use AI to read the CVs or applications.*
5. *It's very competitive, people have different advantages and disadvantages, there are a lot of risks and potential opportunities, it can create anger and resentment, etc.*
6. *Cambridge is one of the world's top universities; in the past, students who attended Cambridge often achieved great things.*
7. *Many jobs require postgraduate degrees, but most people can't afford to study for them, so only very wealthy people have access to certain types of jobs.*
8. *AI replacing young lawyers by writing contracts; AI replacing journalists by turning a press release into a story.*
9. *AI fills entry-level tasks; if young workers can't get entry-level jobs, they'll never have the opportunity to move up to higher-level jobs.*
10. *Yes – she says that young people will 'find their feet eventually', the current economic certainty won't last forever and graduate jobs still 'carry a lifetime premium'.*

#### 4. Key language

- a. Remind students that an idiom is a phrase or expression that uses figurative language. The meaning of the idiom is not obvious from the literal meaning of the words. Idioms are often related to culture, and different countries and languages usually have their own idioms. Have students look for the idiomatic expressions in the article. Have them guess the meaning from the context, then match the columns on the page. Students can work individually or in pairs. Check answers as a class.

#### Key:

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

- b. Have students work individually to make their own sentences using four idioms from the previous activity. Then have volunteers share a sentence with the class. Ask the class to decide whether the student used the idiom correctly. To extend the activity, ask your students to share idioms from their own country or culture that have similar meanings to the idioms in this activity.

#### 5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the questions in pairs or groups. Ask them to justify their opinions, referring to their own experiences whenever possible. To extend the activity, have students take turns sharing their own stories about job applications, CVs, interviews or job assessments, either in small groups or with the class.

#### 6. In your own words

- a. The aim of this task is to encourage students to reflect on what they read about in the article. Have them research jobs that are likely to be replaced by AI or bots in the near future (e.g. within 10 years). They can focus on jobs that are specific to their own country or region, special jobs from another part of the world, or jobs that are common in all countries. After students complete the research, they should write a pros and cons essay about the impact of AI and bots on jobs and society. They can use the questions for guidance. Remind students that pros and cons compare the positive and negative aspects of a topic. It's a helpful way to analyse the topic. It also helps students to better understand their own opinions about the topic.

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- b. Have students share their essays with the class.  
To extend the activity, have students compare their ideas in small groups, then report back to the class.  
Find out where students agreed or disagreed about the pros and cons.