

Can reducing public holidays inject the much-needed extra cash into the economy?

Level: Advanced (C1–C2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes

Overview: This article discusses the economic costs of days off and whether it is beneficial for state budgets to reduce them.

Business topic: Productivity, work culture, budgets, law

Business language: Talking about the law and government

Activities: Key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, writing a description of a legal system

Groups: Whole class, pairs, small groups, one-to-one

Key:

1. *policymakers*
2. *lambasted*
3. *went down like a lead balloon*
4. *yawning*
5. *gee-up*
6. *proclaiming*
7. *cutbacks*
8. *negligible*
9. *measly*
10. *bounceback*
11. *manoeuvre*
12. *law-abiding*
13. *nebulous*

4. Understanding the article

- a. Ask students to read the statements and then find the relevant parts of the article in order to determine if the statements are True or False. Encourage students not only to correct the false statements but also to be ready to explain what supports the true statements. Have them share their answers in pairs or small groups before eliciting answers from the whole class.

Key:

1. ✓
2. ✓
3. *False (It's not stated how many days they removed.)*
4. *False (He added public holidays but did not make them free of work.)*
5. ✓
6. ✓
7. ✓
8. ✓
9. *False (The study found people come back from holidays more engaged in work.)*
10. ✓

1. Warmer

- a. 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. Reading for gist

- a. Have students skim the article and choose the main idea. Then ask students to scan for phrases that support their answer.

Key:

1

3. Key words

- a. Have students work individually to match the key words to the definitions by referring to the section number given in brackets. Have students compare their answers in pairs. Elicit answers from the whole class.

5. Business language – talking about the law and government

- a. While working in business, students sometimes have to talk about the government and laws that impact their area of work. Therefore, it is important that they have a basic grasp of legal English even if they do not work directly in law. Encourage students to try to give definitions of the words in the wordpool and try to describe them before doing this task. This may also give you an idea of how well they can use basic legal English. After they fill in the gaps individually, have them compare the answers.

Key:

1. House of Commons
2. Prime Minister
3. Citizens
4. President
5. Federal
6. Trade union
7. Abolition
8. Officials
9. Illegal
10. Rights and responsibilities

- b. Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to complete the task. Compare answers as a class.

Key:

1. prime minister
2. federal
3. rights and responsibilities
4. illegal
5. president
6. trade union

- c. Have students write sentences using the words and phrases from tasks a and b. Review their examples as a class and discuss the differences between countries if you have a mixed nationality student group.

6. Discussion

- a. Put students in pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the statement. When students have finished, 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 - describing a political system

- a. Explain that students are going to write a short presentation about their country's legal system with specific reference to how it affects their industry. Briefly discuss what format such a presentation should have (intro, bullet points with key information, conclusions, questions), and what it should contain. The focus of this task is to use the right language for describing governments and laws, not structuring a presentation, so if the students struggle with the latter, you may ask them to refine it at home and redo it in the following class.

1. and 2. Ask students to work in pairs or small groups. Ask them first to read the text and fill in the notes.

Key:

ceremonial head of the state, the head of the government
Parliament
House of Commons
Regulatory Agency
health system

Once students have completed this task, hold a quick class discussion. Ask students how the UK system is different from that of their country.

3. Ask students to work individually and draft their presentations. When they are done, you can ask them to work in pairs, give their presentations to each other and give each other feedback.