A Meaningful Workplace

EAE Learning objectives for this lesson

Learn about confusing words. Comprehension, discussion and opinions.

Activity One - Ask and Answer: What is most important for you at work:

1. A workplace where I find a sense of purpose.
2. A working environment which inspires me to be engaged in my work.
3. A workplace where I feel comfortable and motivated to be the best that I can be.
4. A workplace where I can develop new skills.
5. A workplace where my job is easy to do and I am comfortable doing it.

Activity Two - Words with confusing meanings.

★ See means to notice or become aware of (someone or something) by using your eyes
★ Look means to direct your eyes in a particular direction
★ Watch means to look at (someone or something) for an amount of time and pay attention to what is happening
★ Hear means to be aware of (sound) through the ear
★ Listen means to pay attention to someone or something in order to hear what is being said, sung, played, etc.

Fill in the gaps with the correct vocabulary:

1. Out of respect, it is important to …… at the person speaking during a meeting.
   a. look b. watch c. listen
2. Workplace culture differs in every office, try to……to how people talk to each other.
   a .hear b. listen c. see
3. Try to avoid participating if you ….. gossip in the office.
   a. watch b. look c. hear
4. If you … a colleague struggling and you have some free time, it's always nice to offer some help.
   a. listen b. see c. watch
5. ……. out for miscommunications as this can create confusion and tension.
   a. hear b. see c. watch

Activity Three - Reading Comprehension

The future means working less. This is the new common sense that has emerged in Britain and across the globe in recent years. Almost every week a new company announces that it operates with a four-day week or is at least trialling it.

The Monday to Friday working week we inhabit today is, of course, a social and historical construct. While it might appear as a "natural" configuration of time, the reality is that our 37-hour working week, and the weekend, are the result of labour movements of the 19th and 20th centuries demanding limits to the toil that industrialism had imposed upon them. Why should we demand a shorter working week today? In 2017-18, 57% of all sick days were due

to work-related stress, anxiety or depression, and 44% of these were caused by workload pressure alone.

Skidelsky is one of the world's leading experts on Keynesian economics. It was Keynes who famously predicted that by 2030 we would (or perhaps should?) all be working 15-hour working weeks. The main thrust of Keynes's argument makes sense: with each gain in productivity we could have worked less, enjoyed more leisure and let our machines take on more of the hard graft. But the "second machine age" is now upon us, with driverless technology breathing down transport workers' necks, software bots replacing the admin work of white-collar staff.

Skidelsky's review is an important contribution to the growing conversation, but we need to think bigger if we are to get the free time that a four-day week promises.

Comprehension Questions:



1. According to the text, what is a social and historical construct?
2. What is the history behind the 37 hour working week?
3. Why should we demand a shorter working week?
4. What was the prediction made for the year 2030
5. Give other examples of the 'second machine age'. Can you think of machines that could match your job?

Activity Four - More Words with confusing meanings.

False Friends: What are they?

False friends are words that *look* or *sound* the same in two different languages, but have different meanings. These words can easily trick you when listening to an English person, or to say something that you did not intend to say at all!

Click on the link for more practice: https://easyaccesslearning.com/faux-amis/

For example:

- **Journey vs. Journée**

In English, a journey is a trip, travelling from one place to another

Example: Despite the weather, I had an easy journey to work.

- **Pass an exam vs passer un examen**

In English, to pass an exam is to be successful, gain the required marks in an exam.

Example: She passed her exams and was able to start her internship at the hospital.

- **Envy vs Evie**

In English, envy is a feeling of jealousy

Example: I looked with envy at his new watch



Activity Five: False Friend Finder.

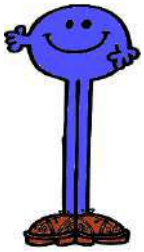
Look at the image below and talk about the false friend in each image:

1. Disappointment:





2. Grand:





3. Location:





4. Sensible:

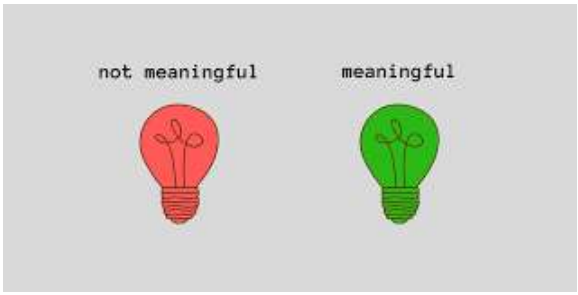




Activity Six - Even More Words with confusing meanings.

- **For vs During:**

For: is used to describe how long something goes on; or how long someone does something. It used to talk about a period of time.



For 10 years, for 2 minutes, for 3 days

Example: We watched tv for 2 hours last night

Example: I am going to Spain for 2 weeks

~~I went to London during 2 days~~

I went to London for 2 days

During: is used to mention when something happens. It also means, in the middle of an action or event.

Example: During the winter I use my car.

Example: "Mark, a customer called during your meeting."

- **Lose time vs waste time:**

Lose time: to delay, operate slowly

Example : The reshoot caused us to lose time, but we're still on track to meet the deadline.

Example: We lost time finishing our proposal because the software crashed.

Waste time: to do something useless, procrastinate

Example: Complaining is a waste of time, no one gets what they want by whining!

Example: The meeting felt like a waste of time, no one came to an agreement.

- **Say vs Tell**

Say something

Say something to someone

Tell someone something



Examples -

What did he tell the manager?

What did he say to the manager?

She said that she likes the lessons

She told me that she likes the lessons

He always says he is too busy to book a meeting

He told me he was too busy

Choose the correct word where there is a choice:

★ For/During many years I have worked for the same global corporation.

★ I have worked for/during long hours, trying to respect the values of that company and trying to implement its strategy to the letter.

★ Today I wonder if I was just losing/wasting my time!

★ It's a great deception/disappointment to me to note that after years of loyal service my company no longer needs my help today!

★ I don't think I'm being foolish, or over sensitive/ over sensible to say that I was duped by them for years!

★ They made me believe that going home late every night, missing out on family dinners, family events and time with my kids was all in a good cause, I was sensible/sensitive to the fact that other colleagues were also working hard and this put even more pressure on me to sacrifice my time.

Activity Seven: Comprehension and Discussion.

A sense of purpose at work… Read the text and give your opinion about it.

In order to have a sense of purpose and be fully engaged at work, different people need different things. It's important to understand that each employee is an individual and has their own purpose. Once employees see that they are working towards something that matters to them (e.g increasing awareness of climate change). If employees feel that they are wasting time, their feeling of purpose will decline.

On the contrary if they feel that they have impact, that their ideas are listened to and that they can really contribute something, then they are more likely to stay engaged.People need to trust their employer. There needs to be reciprocal trust between managers and co-workers . If a company has strong values and recruits based on values then managers have to lead by example. Actions and decisions and strategy also has to reflect those values.

A caring company culture can create an environment of solidarity where people work well together and certain obstacles to teamwork are removed. In times when the pressure is intense, this can make all the difference. Furthermore, on a daily basis, when people feel that their colleagues and company really car about them, they are more productive and creative and they can grow and be at their best.

Fear and a toxic workplace create stress and an environment of individualism, with a survival of the fittest mentality.

A company which cares about the wellbeing of their employees gain the trust of their employees.

Culture and values, once expressed though, also create expectations. Employees expect to see these values enacted without exception and can become quickly motivated if they find a gap between policy and values.

Work life balance is the key to productivity and wellbeing at work.

✳ If it was frowned upon to work too many hours.

✳ If people were perceived as being inefficient if they didn't get their work done during a 7 hour day.

✳ If managers made allowances for each individual's needs.

Coworkers would feel a sense of loyalty, duty and would go above and beyond to excel and to concentrate and contribute.

Feeling that your company cares about you gives you the best incentive to work hard and be engaged. Caring about wellbeing and work life balance can often be more important to employees than financial incentive. A high quality of life at work and outside of work creates that balance.

Activity Eight: Listening Comprehension - Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aticp_ruvrI

Companies are experimenting with a 4-day working week - and it's working

Comprehension questions

1. What percentage of employees reported an improvement in their work life balance?
2. What is work according to Derek?
3. What do you see with these kinds of experiment?
4. Did this experiment effect the bottom line?
5. What kind of jobs could have a four day working week?
6. How do peoples' attitudes change with a four day working week?
7. What is the downside to reducing five days to four?
8. What does the word downside mean and what's the opposite?



Activity Nine: Role Play dialogues: act out the following situations with partner/teacher.

1. You are the manager, talking to a colleague. You give him/her the option of working four days a week rather than five but they don't agree with your reasons for this change

2. 'We should work to live, not live to work'. You discuss with another manager what decisions you could make in order to make this quote more of a reality. One of you suggests a four day working week, but your colleague has other ideas

Activity Ten: Listening Comprehension - Song - Dolly Parton 9 - 5

Read the expressions and their definitions and then see if you can identify them in the song.

Folks - people of a specified class or group: country folk

a cup of ambition- in the song it means 'coffee'

It can mean - Start each day by reminding yourself why you're doing what you're doing, and you'll be a lot more motivated and prepared to meet the day.

give you credit - Acknowledge an accomplishment, as in They really should give her credit for the work she's done

to get by - manage with difficulty to live or accomplish something.

someone is out to get someone else - Deliberately committed to causing problems for another person

In the same boat - be in the same difficult circumstances as others.

drive someone crazy - greatly annoy and distract someone

make a living - To earn enough income to support oneself and, if applicable, one's family.

