Lesson Plan © Easy Access English

Post Capitalism

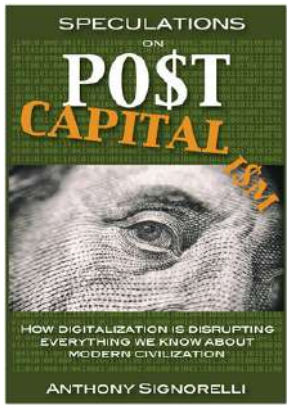


EAE Learning objectives for this lesson

Learn about and practice using phrasal verbs, idiomatic expressions and words to express your opinion. Reading comprehension and role plays.

Introduction – Questions and Answers

With your partner or teacher, ask and answer the questions below



1) What is post capitalism?
2) Do you think campitalism is becoming obsolete?
3) What do you think will come next?
4) Should this be something that is talked about more?

Activity One – Expressing your opinion

Here are some great expressions to help you express your opinions

I could be wrong, but... / As far as I know... / It seems to me that... / Obviously... / You probably won't agree, but... / This is just my opinion, but... / I'm fairly confident that... / I'd definitely say that...

Activity Two – What do you think?

Choose from one of the statements below that present 3 different expert's opinions on ways to fight capitalism in America. Express your own opinion using the expressions from the previous activity

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Give American workers a long-overdue pay raise

It has been a long time since the typical American worker got a significant increase in pay. Their average hourly or weekly earnings have been stagnant for the past 40 years. It's time to give them a raise.

Working parents need access to quality childcare

In the United States, access to quality care for children is a pressing concern for the majority of families. It should be a priority for policymakers.

It's time to break up extreme concentration of wealth

This can be done through more robust tax policy along with corporate governance and labor law reform.

Activity three – Phrasal verbs

Let's read about phrasal verbs and learn some that you will see in the text later in the lesson

Phrasal verbs are constructed using 'verb + preposition' – the prepositions often change the meaning of the verb

- Go through something – a difficult period or experience
- Turn out – prove to be the case / go somewhere in order to attend a meeting,vote,play etc.
- Live through something – to experience something difficult or painful and continue to live
- Break through – make or force a way through (a barrier) / achieve success in a particular area
- Come through – succeed in surviving or dealing with (an illness or ordeal) / (of a message) be sent and received.

Can you think of some more phrasal verbs that you use a lot?

Activity Four – Dictation

Listen to your teacher read, and write down what they say using the chat. If with a partner, read and relay what you see to your partner.

Source:
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/08/how-to-fix-capitalism-eight-experts-solutions

Capitalism is not broken. It does not always work perfectly, of course. But the free market combined with our strong safety net has drastically reduced poverty and improved quality of life for the vast majority of Americans.

A free and healthy economy ensures that wealth is being generated and allocated to those who contribute to its creation. That's why our current economic health has led to increases in production, and why wage growth for workers in the bottom half of the pay scale is outpacing those in the top half. With unemployment low and labor force participation ticking up, more people are going to enjoy the fruits of a dynamic capitalist economy.

Activity Five – Listening Comprehension

Answer the questions on the first half of the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEzSzptjS40

1) Complete the sentence:
What started as a crisis of the finance system has spilled over into social upheavals, civil wars, as in Syria and Ukraine, and …….

2) What does the presenter say will happen by 2050 if we do not find an alternative to the neoliberal model of capitalism?

3) What is the OECD and what has it forecast for the next 50 years?

4) According to Standard and Poor's, how will an ageing population affect country debts?

5) What kind of cycle will be created if wages are suppressed, worker's bargaining power is destroyed and the money supply is expanded without end?

6) The presenter tells us he believes there is a way out from capitalism - 'an escape route'

7) Complete the sentence:
It's not about suppressing the market or de-globalising the world... It's about
…….



Activity Six – Gap fill

Fil in the gaps with the correct phrasal verbs

- a telephone call _____ _____ for you while you were out
- I am _____ _____ something at the moment
- There was a large _____ _____ at the conference
- Demonstrations attempted to _____ _____ police lines
- He _____ _____ the operation and is on the road to recovery

Activity Seven – **Reading Comprehension**



Read the text below and answer the comprehension questions
Bonus - Can you identify any more phrasal verbs used in the text?
https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jul/17/postcapitalism-end-of-capitalism-begun?CMP=share_btn_fb

The end of capitalism has begun

Without us noticing, we are entering the postcapitalist era. At the heart of further change to come is information technology, new ways of working and the sharing economy. The old ways will take a long while to disappear, but it's time to be utopian

The red flags and marching songs of Syriza during the Greek crisis, plus the expectation that the banks would be nationalised, revived briefly a 20th-century dream: the forced destruction of the market from above. For much of the 20th century this was how the left conceived the first stage of an economy beyond capitalism. The force would be applied by the working class, either at the ballot box or on the barricades. The lever would be the state. The opportunity would come through frequent episodes of economic collapse.

Instead over the past 25 years it has been the left's project that has collapsed. The market destroyed the plan; individualism replaced collectivism and solidarity; the hugely expanded workforce of the world looks like a "proletariat", but no longer thinks or behaves as it once did.

If you lived through all this, and disliked capitalism, it was traumatic. But in the process technology has created a new route out, which the remnants of the old left – and all other forces influenced by it – have either to embrace or die. Capitalism, it turns out, will not be abolished by forced-march techniques. It will be abolished by creating something more dynamic that exists, at first, almost unseen within the old system, but which will break through, reshaping the economy around new values and behaviours. I call this postcapitalism.

As with the end of feudalism 500 years ago, capitalism's replacement by postcapitalism will be accelerated by external shocks and shaped by the emergence of a new kind of human being. And it has started.

Postcapitalism is possible because of three major changes information technology has brought about in the past 25 years. First, it has reduced the need for work, blurred the edges between work and free time and loosened the relationship between work and wages. The coming wave of automation, currently stalled because our social infrastructure cannot bear the consequences, will hugely diminish the amount of work needed – not just to subsist but to provide a decent life for all.

Second, information is corroding the market's ability to form prices correctly. That is because markets are based on scarcity while information is abundant. The system's defence mechanism is to form monopolies – the giant tech companies – on a scale not seen in the past 200 years, yet they cannot last. By building business models and share valuations based on the capture and privatisation of all socially produced information, such firms are constructing a fragile corporate edifice at odds with the most basic need of humanity, which is to use ideas freely.

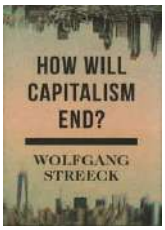
Third, we're seeing the spontaneous rise of collaborative production: goods, services and organisations are appearing that no longer respond to the dictates of the market and the managerial hierarchy. The biggest information product in the world – Wikipedia – is made by volunteers for free, abolishing the encyclopedia business and depriving the advertising industry of an estimated $3bn a year in revenue.

Almost unnoticed, in the niches and hollows of the market system, whole swaths of economic life are beginning to move to a different rhythm. Parallel currencies, time banks, cooperatives and self-managed spaces have proliferated, barely noticed by the economics profession, and often as a direct result of the shattering of the old structures in the post-2008 crisis.

You only find this new economy if you look hard for it. In Greece, when a grassroots NGO mapped the country's food co-ops, alternative producers, parallel currencies and local exchange systems they found more than 70 substantive projects and hundreds of smaller initiatives ranging from squats to carpools to free kindergartens. To mainstream economics such things seem barely to qualify as economic activity – but that's the point. They exist because they trade, however haltingly and inefficiently, in the currency of postcapitalism: free time, networked activity and free stuff. It seems a meagre and unofficial and even dangerous thing from which to craft an entire alternative to a global system, but so did money and credit in the age of Edward III.

New forms of ownership, new forms of lending, new legal contracts: a whole business subculture has emerged over the past 10 years, which the media has dubbed the "sharing economy". Buzzwords such as the "commons" and "peer-production" are thrown around, but few have bothered to ask what this development means for capitalism itself.

I believe it offers an escape route – but only if these micro-level projects are nurtured, promoted and protected by a fundamental change in what governments do. And this must be driven by a change in our thinking – about technology, ownership and work. So that, when we create the elements of the new system, we can say to ourselves, and to others: "This is no longer simply my survival mechanism, my bolt hole from the neoliberal world; this is a new way of living in the process of formation."



Comprehension questions:

1. What do you understand by the word "utopian" in the first paragraph?
2. The left's efforts to end capitalism did not work. What have we seen happening instead in the last 25 years?
3. The article explains that technology has created a new route (out of capitalism). Can you explain this? You may need to read to the end of the article to fully understand.
4. According to the article, why are we starting to move faster towards this new era of postcapitalism?
5. What do you think the author means when he quotes …. "the emergence of a new kind of human being"... How are people changing with the emergence of this new sharing economy?
6. List the three ways in which IT has changed society to such a degree that postcapitalism is possible
7. Give examples of some of the "sharing economy" style initiatives that were found by the grassroots NGO in Greece.
8. The writer believes this shift to postcapitalism / the sharing economy could "offer an escape route" from capitalism. However what must be done to ensure things are kept under control?

Activity Eight– Role play
Act out the following role play with your partner or teacher

- You are debating the prospect of post capitalism with your colleage and both have to express two sides of the argument. Will it become a reality or not?

