

## Hold on to your jobs, humans: The rise of the bots

**Level:** Advanced (C1–C2)

**Time:** Approximately 90 minutes (plus extra time for writing task)

**Business topics:** AI, worker rights, ethics

**Business language:** Useful business vocabulary, collocations, language for expressing strong opinions

**Activities:** Discussing the future of AI in the workplace, key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, expressing opinions, writing a manifesto

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

**Overview:** This article discusses the rise of AI bots, specifically in the screenwriting industry. The Writers Guild of America is making demands to protect writers' work and ensure a sustainable future for human writers.

### 1. Warmer

- a. Ask students to discuss the questions in small groups to activate their previous knowledge and introduce the topic. Note down relevant emergent language on the board. Elicit ideas that arose from the discussion from the whole class.

### 2. Reading for gist

- a. Ask students to skim the text and identify the main idea. Set a time limit and remind them not to read for detail.

**Key:**

b

### 3. Key words

- a. Have students complete the task individually and compare their answers in pairs. Elicit answers from the whole class. Many of the words have a more literal meaning. Ask students which ones they know and in what context the word is normally used.

**Key:**

1. erode, eroded
2. gambit
3. slim, slimmer
4. handy
5. polish
6. rank, ranked
7. tilt
8. fanciful
9. vestige, vestiges
10. residual
11. disband, disbanded
12. deploy, deployed
13. fragment, fragmented
14. deskilling

### 4. Understanding the article

- a. Ask students to scan the article individually to complete this activity and compare their answers. Remind them that they don't need to read the whole article each time but should instead look over it very quickly to locate the information and then read it carefully.

**Key:**

1. They are in the worst possible position: they have seen their pay erode in the streaming era, have lost the comfy conditions of broadcast television, and fear robots will take their jobs.
2. Because it draws attention to the fact that software might be able to do some of their job.
3. Because writing dramas that engage viewers requires a lot of expertise, structuring them into episodes, and polishing dialogue.
4. administration and legal services
5. ordering many pilot episodes, turning only some into series, and gradually winnowing them down
6. They preferred shorter series and started hiring writers on short-term contracts – this meant less money and less experience.
7. to use an outline written by a human to rough out potential scenes based on thousands of existing scripts
8. The guild wants to stop its members' work from being used to train AI. It also wants them to be paid as much for rewriting AI output as if it were theirs.
9. for AI to be used to augment labour and raise productivity

## 5. Business language – adjective + noun collocations

- a. Ask students to work individually to match the words and scan the article. Ask them to compare their answers in small groups and elicit the answers.

**Key:**

1. *imagination*
2. *chance*
3. *reward*
4. *path*
5. *extravagance*
6. *employment*
7. *contracts*
8. *showrunner*
9. *cycle*
10. *deskilling*
11. *implications*
12. *question*

- b. Ask students to work in small groups to take turns reading the sentences and choose the best collocation for each gap. Check answers with the whole class.

**Key:**

1. *traditional path*
2. *crucial questions*
3. *vivid imagination*
4. *consistent employment*
5. *slim chance*
6. *high rewards*
7. *short-term contracts*
8. *financial extravagance*
9. *broad implications*
10. *vicious cycle*

## 6. 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.

## 7. Wider business theme – AI ethics and governance

- a. Read the situation with the whole class.
- b. Allow students time to make a list of their ideas and beliefs.
- c. Divide students into groups of three to five. Ask them to meet to discuss the union's collective beliefs and mission. Tell them they will need notes from this activity for the next task.
- d. Ask students to give examples of manifestos. (The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Martin Luther King's 'I Have a Dream'; *The Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels; *Common Sense, Rights of Man* by Thomas Paine; US Declaration of Independence)

Ask students to use their notes' ideas and write a manifesto for the workers' union. This can be done individually or in pairs. Students can support each other with peer editing before sharing their text with the rest of the class.