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

Intermediate

Level: Intermediate (B1–B2)

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.

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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:
c

3. Key words

a. Split the class into two groups and assign half the items to each group. Have students complete the task individually and compare their answers with the rest

of their group. Regroup students so they work with someone who completed the other half of the task and share their answers. 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. strike
2. erode, eroded
3. slim
4. polish
5. disrupt, disrupted
6. rank
7. collision
8. residual
9. exploit
10. deploy
11. deskilling
12. augment

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 quickly to locate the information and then read it carefully.

Key:
1. *False. They are in the worst possible position.*
2. *True*
3. *True*
4. *False. Administration and legal services are more likely to be disrupted by AI.*
5. *False. Writers are getting short-term contracts, less pay and less experience.*
6. *False. Humans will likely do that, and AI will probably rough out potential scenes.*
7. *True*
8. *True*

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. material
2. imagination
3. reward
4. path
5. employment
6. contract
7. implications
8. 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. *vivid imaginations*
3. *consistent employment*
4. *literary materials*
5. *high rewards*
6. *crucial questions*
7. *broader implications*
8. *short-term contracts*

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 own 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.

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