

1 Warmer

a. Read the statements below and discuss with a partner.

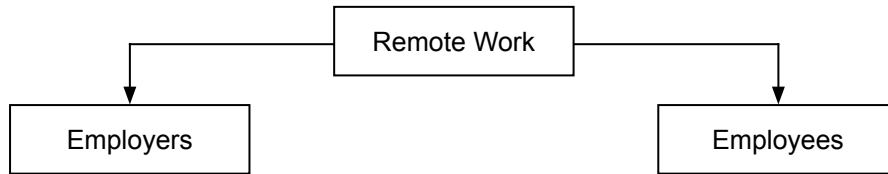
- In a recent survey, 96% of respondents said the workplace is changing. Do you agree?
- What are some of these changes? Make a list.
- Share your ideas with the whole group.
- Have you experienced any of these changes in your career or workplace? How do you feel about them?

New ways of working and employee wellbeing

- 1 The adoption of remote working after the pandemic has meant a **dramatic** reduction in commuting hours, which means employees are saving both time and money while also reducing their environmental impact. Some also enjoy working from the peace of their homes.
- 2 Employers can also benefit from this new **trend**, since they need less office space. We all know how expensive office rent can be, especially in city centres. They have also found that workers can be equally or, at times, even more **productive** at home.
- 3 However, working from home has also come at a cost to both employers and employees. Staff might not have **suitable** equipment to work from home, such as a good desk and chair. Employers should therefore help their employees with extra money for these items. It can be difficult for managers to manage teams from home and even more difficult to provide training and professional development opportunities for their employees. We all know the relationship between employee and manager can become difficult if employees don't feel supported, so managers need to make sure employees have access to training opportunities and a **range** of communication methods.
- 4 Working from home blurs the line between work and life. Being productive means working hard and, many times, working more hours. Now that people do not have to **commute**, or in some cases do not have a fixed timetable, they start work earlier and finish later. Working from home can also be **lonely**, and lonely employees can be affected by mental health problems. Some people do not enjoy being alone—they like talking to and learning from other people in the office.
- 5 Employers need to take care of their staff by helping them find a work-life balance and access help to manage their mental health, if necessary. Recent surveys have found that most leaders believe well-being and mental health should be top priorities.
- 6 Many workers do not want to return to the office despite the challenges. They do not like long journeys, expensive travel, or buying expensive coffee during breaks and prefer working from the comfort of their homes.

2 Reading comprehension

a. Read the article. Complete the mind map with the advantages and disadvantages remote work has for employers and employees.



<u>Advantages</u>	<u>Disadvantages</u>	<u>Advantages</u>	<u>Disadvantages</u>

b. Are these statements Correct (C) or Incorrect (I) according to the article? Fix any incorrect sentences. Underline the information in the text that supports your answer.

1. Most people prefer working from home.
2. Productivity has decreased because of this new way of working.
3. Some employees need their companies to give them office equipment.
4. It is relatively easy to manage a remote team.
5. There are many more opportunities for training these days.
6. When working from home, many people stop working earlier.
7. Some people miss interacting with colleagues.
8. Employees may need to help staff with their mental health.

3 Vocabulary

a. Find the words below in the text. Think about their meaning. Then use them to complete the sentences. Check your answers with a partner.

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. I'm far more _____ when I work from home because nobody interrupts me. | a. commute |
| 2. Do you ever feel _____ when working from home? Don't you miss socialising? | b. dramatic |
| 3. There's been a _____ increase in remote working since 2020. | c. lonely |
| 4. There's no doubt that the flexible working _____ will continue in the years to come. | d. priority |
| 5. Mental health should be a _____ for all managers. | e. productive |
| 6. It takes time and money to _____ to the office. | f. range |
| 7. You will need a desk and a _____ chair to work from home comfortably. | g. suitable |
| 8. We have a _____ of options for employees if they need support. | h. trend |

b. We use linkers to connect ideas. Classify the following linkers, which are highlighted in the text, according to their function.

however such as therefore so also and despite

ADD INFORMATION	CONTRAST INFORMATION	GIVE EXAMPLES	INTRODUCE RESULT

Worksheet

c. Choose the correct linkers from the chart to complete the sentences.

1. _____ the new trend, my boss doesn't let us work from home.
2. I need both a new chair _____ a bigger desk.
3. There are new wellbeing practices, _____ flexible and remote working.
4. My computer isn't working properly, _____ I need a new one.
5. I enjoy working in teams, and I _____ like having time to socialise with my colleagues.
6. I see the advantages of remote working. _____, there are also some disadvantages to consider.
7. These practices are here to stay. _____, we need companies support their employees.

4 Grammar

1. Look at the following sentences from the text. What do the words and phrases in italics mean? Discuss with a partner.

- Workers *can* be equally or at times even more productive at home
- Staff *might* not have suitable equipment to work from home.
- People *don't have to* commute.
- Employers *need to* take care of their staff.

2. Using the information from A, answer the following questions: Which word / phrase do we use to...

1. ...talk about something that is *necessary*?
2. ...talk about something that is *not an obligation*?
3. ...talk about something that is *possible*?
4. ...talk about something that is *possible, but we are not sure*?

3. In pairs, write sentences about the world of work using the following prompts:

1. Employers need to...
2. Employees (don't) have to...
3. Employees might...
4. Employers can...

5 Communicative practice

Imagine your company is planning to offer employees the chance to work from home starting next month. Write an email to your boss sharing how you feel about this and also some ideas for this to be a positive experience for everyone.