

Level: Elementary (A2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes

Business topics: technology, health, AI, new ways of working

Business language: useful business vocabulary, prepositions, comparisons

Activities: discussion, understanding the text, vocabulary, grammar, writing pros and cons and making comparisons

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

Overview: This text discusses the advantages and disadvantages of companies focusing on employee well-being.

1. Warmer

- a. Start by asking students to read the sentence and follow the instructions provided. Allow a minute for students to think on their own about what might be changing before asking them to compare lists. Once they have discussed ideas in pairs, elicit a couple of ideas to briefly discuss with the whole class.

Think-Pair-Share activities give students the chance to think individually first, hence not being influenced by others, and then discuss ideas with a partner in order to share their opinions in a safe environment, which helps them gain confidence before sharing with the whole group.

2. Reading comprehension

- a. Ask students to read the title of the article and ask them the following questions to make predictions about what they are going to read. Making predictions activates students' prior knowledge of the topic and encourages them to use their critical thinking skills.
- What do you think the article will be about?
 - What 'new ways of working' will the article mention?

Give students some minutes to read the article and check their predictions. Then check with the whole class.

Tell students they are going to read the article again, this time to complete a mind map with all the advantages and disadvantages the new ways of working present for both employees and employers. Once they have completed their mind maps on their own, ask students to compare charts with a partner or in small groups and make any changes they consider necessary.

Mind mapping involves deep mental processes and higher-order thinking skills since it requires, not only understanding the content, but also organising ideas in a logical manner and presenting information clearly, therefore helping students reinforce knowledge, boost creativity and enhance cognitive abilities.

Key:

- *Advantages for employers*
 - *Employers need less office space, which can be very expensive*
 - *Workers can be equally or at times even more productive at home.*
- *Disadvantages for employers*
 - *Employers should provide their employees with extra money to buy suitable equipment.*
 - *For managers, it can be difficult to manage teams from home.*
 - *It can be harder to provide training and professional development opportunities for employees.*
- *Advantages for employees*
 - *Reduction in commuting hours- which means employees are saving both time and money while also reducing their environmental impact.*
 - *Some enjoy working from the peace and quiet of their homes.*
- *Disadvantages for employees*
 - *Staff might not have suitable equipment to work from home.*
 - *Working from home blurs the line between work and life.*
 - *Many employees end up working longer hours.*
 - *Working from home can also be lonely. Some people simply do not enjoy being on their own – they like to talk to and learn from other people in the office. And lonely employees are most likely to be affected by mental health problems.*

- b. Ask students to work in pairs and decide whether the sentences are correct or incorrect according to the text. Elicit where they can find the correct information in the text and remind them that underlining evidence in the text is a helpful strategy when doing this type of exercise.

Key

1. *Incorrect – Some enjoy working from the peace and quiet of their homes.*
2. *Incorrect – Workers can be equally, or at times even more productive at home.*
3. *Correct*
4. *Incorrect – For managers, it can be difficult to manage teams from home.*
5. *Incorrect – It can be harder to provide training and professional development opportunities.*
6. *Incorrect – They start work earlier and finish later.*
7. *Correct*
8. *Correct*

3. Vocabulary

- a. Ask students to look for the words in the article and try to guess their meaning from context. Then, ask them to use the words to complete the sentences. Have them check answers with a partner and give them a couple of extra minutes to discuss their answers and ask questions.

Key

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. <i>productive</i> | 5. <i>priority</i> |
| 2. <i>lonely</i> | 6. <i>commute</i> |
| 3. <i>dramatic</i> | 7. <i>suitable</i> |
| 4. <i>trend</i> | 8. <i>range</i> |

- b. Write the word 'linker' on the whiteboard and elicit its meaning. Ask students to jot down the linkers they know, then brainstorm ideas with the whole class. Direct their attention to the linkers highlighted in the text and ask students to classify them according to their function.

Add Information	Contrast Information	Give Examples	Introduce Result
also and	however despite	such as	Therefore So

After checking with the whole class, ask students to add any other linkers they know to the right columns in the chart.

- c. Ask students to work in pairs and select the correct linkers from the chart to complete the sentences.

Key

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <i>Despite</i> | 5. <i>also</i> |
| 2. <i>and</i> | 6. <i>However</i> |
| 3. <i>such as</i> | 7. <i>Therefore</i> |
| 4. <i>so</i> | |

4. Grammar

- a. Give students a couple of minutes to read the four sentences and discuss the meaning of the words in bold with a partner.
- b. Ask students to select the right word / phrase to answer each question. Then correct with the whole class.

Key:

1. *need to*
 2. *don't have to*
 3. *can*
 4. *might*
- c. Ask students to work in pairs again, this time to write sentences about the world of work using the prompts provided. Once they have written some sentences, ask them to swap pairs and take turns to share their sentences and say whether they agree or disagree with their partner's ideas, always justifying their opinions.

5. Communicative practice

Ask students to imagine their company is planning to offer employees the chance to work from home starting next month and write an email to their boss sharing how they feel about this and also some ideas for this to be a positive experience for everyone.

You may want to revise the conventions of email writing before doing this activity so students are confident when writing. It would also be beneficial to allow students to plan their writing in pairs.