**DOING MORE WITH LESS**

**1a Rank these economic problems from the worst (1) to the least bad (5).**

….. Low wages

….. Unemployment

….. Inequality

….. Excessive working hours

….. Bad contracts and working conditions

**1b Work in groups. Compare your ideas.**

**Which of the problems do you have direct experience of?**

**2 Carry out a short survey. Talk to six of your classmates. Put a tick () for each student who agrees / disagrees with each statement. Find out why each person feels the way they do.**

**a I spend too much time working**

Agree …………………………..

Disagree ………………………

**b The average person back home is expected to work too many hours.**

Agree …………………………..

Disagree ………………………

**c The forty-hour working week is too long.**

Agree …………………………..

Disagree ………………………

**3a** [**Now watch a short video**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=580VyI6hFmo)**. Decide:**

1 what the main message is.

2 how far you agree with this idea – and why.

**3b Compare your ideas with a partner.**

**4a Look at the sentences from the video. Then complete the definitions below by adding the words in *bold italics*.**

1 People get on a kind of a ***treadmill*** where they live to work and they work to earn and they earn to ***consume***.

2 There’s a growing interest in finding alternatives to ***business as usual***.

3 We had a public lecture at the LSE and it was ***packed***.

4 Conventional wisdom says that in periods of hard times what we need to do is ***double-down*** and work harder.

5 Germany and Denmark and the Netherlands all have shorter working hours than the UK and they have very ***robust*** economies.

6 Cutting working hours helps to spread a ***diminishing*** amount of paid employment around more people.

7 The higher earners spend more money on ***energy-intensive*** goods so they have bigger ***carbon footprints***.

a If something is ……………….., it uses a lot of electricity, gas, etc.

b A ………….. if a piece of exercise equipment that you run on in a gym. If you feel like you’re on a ……………., you feel tired and bored of doing the same thing all the time.

c If a system is ……………., it’s strong, successful and unlikely to break or fail.

d Your ………………. is a measurement of the amount of CO2 that your activities produce.

e If you …………………., you continue doing something in an even more determined way.

f If a space is ……………….., it’s extremely crowded.

g When you ………………, you buy goods or services.

h If something is ………………., it’s reducing in size or importance.

i ……………………….. is a situation in which everything happens normally, especially after a period of time when things have been happening in a different way.

**4b Work in pairs. Discuss these questions.**

* Can you think of two situations when you felt like you were **on** **a treadmill**?
* How can you **reduce your carbon footprint**?
* How **robust** do you think the economy is at the moment?
* When was the last time you went somewhere that was **packed**?
* Can you think of a time when you were **glad to get back to business as usual** – and a time when you **didn’t want things to return to business as usual**?

**5 Read the short newspaper article. Answer these questions.**

1 What are two potential benefits of a 21-hour work week?

2 What ‘worthy tasks’ are mentioned in the article?

3 According to the article, what problem is being caused by over-consumption?

4 How could a shorter work week improve our lives as individuals?

**6 Work in small groups. Discuss these questions**

a How long is the average work week in your home country?

b Do you feel you get fair pay for the work you do?

c Do you think a 21 hour-work week is possible?

d Do you agree that the only thing worse than having a job is not having a job?

**Cut working week to 21 hours, urges think tank**

The working week should be cut to 21 hours to help the economy and improve quality of life, a left-wing think tank has said.

A report by the New Economics Foundation claims that a reduction in working hours would help reduce unemployment and overwork.

The think tank said people were working longer hours now than they were thirty years ago, even though unemployment was at 2.5 million.

The foundation admitted people would earn less, but said they would have more time for worthy tasks like volunteerıng or spending time with family, friends, and loved ones.

Anna Coote, co-author of the ‘21 Hours’ report, said: "So many of us live to work, work to earn, and earn to consume, and our consumption habits are destroyıng the earth's natural resources.

Spending less time in paid work could change this. We'd have more time to be better parents, better citizens, and better neighbours.

We could even become better employees - less stressed, more in control, happier in our jobs and more productive.

After all, hands up: who wouldn’t want a four-day weekend?”

**ANSWER KEY & TEACHER’S NOTES**

As a lead-in, you could tell the class that today they’re going to be discussing the length of the working week. Explain how many hours you work yourself – both in terms of direct teaching hours and any extra work you have to put in. You could then compare this with other jobs you’ve done in the past – and say which work situation you preferred and why.

**Exercise 1a**

Tell students to look at the five problems in exercise 1 and to ask if there’s anything they’re not sure of. Then give them two or three minutes to rank the five problems in order from 1-5. Before putting students in groups to discuss their own ideas, you might want to share your own rankings – and briefly explain your ideas.

**Exercise 1b**

Put students in groups. Tell them to compare their ideas, explain their choices and see if they can reach an agreement on the order. They should also share their own experiences. Monitor and help out with new language, where necessary. You may want to get some better versions of things students are trying to say up on the board so you can come back to this as part of your round-up. It’s always good to gap the odd word here and there and then see if you can elicit the missing words from the group. You can include the first letter of the missing words if you want to make it easier. For example:

*Unemployment’s not so bad if you can claim b…………….. .* (benefits)

* *Yeah, but often, you don’t really get enough to live …….. .* (on)

One other way to round up might simply be to ask a couple of different groups what they felt the biggest problems were – and why.

**Exercise 2**

Explain that students are going to carry out a survey by asking six other students whether or not they agree with the three statements below. Give students a minute to read, check they understand everything and decide how they feel about each statement. You could model the task either by saying whether you agree with the first sentence – and explaining why – or else by asking one of the stronger students whether they agree, and then finding out why.

Now get students to walk around and talk to different students, sharing their opinions as they do so. Monitor and help out with new language, where necessary. One good way of rounding up is to read out a-c and see whether more people agree or disagree in each case. Ask a couple of students why each time.

**Exercise 3**

Here’s the video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=580VyI6hFmo>

Tell students they’re going to watch a video and give them time to read 1 and 2 so they know what to listen for. Play the video. Give students a few minutes to compare their notes / answers in pairs. Then round up by getting ideas from the whole group.

**Answers:**

1. The basic idea is that we should start moving towards a 21-hour week.

You could also ask the class why the NEF – the New Economics Foundation – think this is a good idea:

* It’d share out the decreasing amount of work more evenly.
* It’d cut the amount we spend on unemployment benefits.
* It’d be better for the environment as we’d consume less.
* It’d allow people to have more time to spend with loved ones.
* It’d increase productivity – people would do more and better work in less time.

1. There are no fixed answers. Encourage students to give their own ideas and explain why they feel that way.

**Exercise 4a**

Explain that you’re going to look at some of the new language from the video. Tell students to work on their own and read through 1-7. Encourage them to guess what any unknown words mean, but also to ask you or use a dictionary if needs be. They should complete the definitions in a-i. Once more than half the class look like they’ve finished, put students in pairs and get them to compare their ideas. Then elicit answers from the class as a whole.

Answers

a energy-intensive

b treadmill

c robust

d carbon footprint

e double down

f packed

g consume

h diminishing

i business as usual

As you’re eliciting the answers, you might add a little bit of extra information about some of the items to boost what students know about the new language. For example:

a So you can have **energy-intensive industries** like steel or shipbuilding, and **energy- intensive appliances** like kettles, for example.

b You might **do 5K on the treadmill** at the gym. And actors often have to **go on the publicity treadmill** when new films come out. It must get exhausting and very dull.

c So the economy can be robust, but older people can be **in robust health**, ir you can buy **a robust pair of walking boots**.

d You can **measure** or **calculate** your carbon footprint – and **try to reduce / shrink it**.

e When politicians have been caught lying, they can either admit to it and apologise or else they can **double down on the lie** and just keep repeating it. Or maybe you used lockdown to **double down on learning and self-development**. No, me neither!

f We often use it to talk about bars or restaurants, when they’re very busy.

g You can also talk about **reducing the amount of red meat you consume**, or buying new lightbulbs that **consume less electricity**.

h We also talk about **diminishing support for** an idea or a policy, and **diminishing trust in** a leader or a government.

i You sometimes see this written on signs when shops are being renovated or when there’s work going on outside the shop. It tells customers they’re still open!

**Exercise 4b**

Put students in pairs / groups. Tell them to discuss the questions – and stress that there are no fixed correct answers. Monitor and help out with new language, where necessary. Get some better versions of things students are trying to say up on the board so you can come back to this as part of your round-up.

One other way to round up might simply be to re-tell one or two of the stories / things you heard – in better English.

**Exercise 5**

Explain that students are going to read a short article about the proposed 21-hour week. Give them a minute to read 1-4 first so they know what information they’re looking for. Allow five minutes for everyone to read. When maybe half the class looks like they’ve finished, put students in pairs to discuss their ideas and then elicit answers from the whole group.

**Answers**

1. It’d help the economy and improve quality of life.
2. Volunteering // Spending time with family, friends and loved ones.
3. It’s destroying the planet’s natural resources.
4. We’d have more time to be better parents / friends / neighbours. We might even be more productive at work as we’d be happier and less stressed.

**Exercise 6**

Put students in groups to discuss the questions. Monitor and help out with new language, where necessary. Get some better versions of things students are trying to say up on the board to come back during your round-up.

Alternatively, just round up by asking the whole class how feasible they think the idea of a 21-hour working week is – and why.