

BEING A WORKER



CRITICAL ELT MATERIALS

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MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

BEING A WORKER

FOR ADULT LEARNERS- B1 LEVEL

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Being a Seasonal Worker...



VOCABULARY: Glance over the text titled “*Four Seasons Drama*” on page 6, and find the vocabulary items given below in the text. Then complete the sentences under the table with the appropriate words.

working class	job security	migration	working children
challenges	organize	social security	tent
living conditions	seasonal worker	fair working environment	temporary shelter



1. The [] plays a crucial role in various industries, often engaged in manual or industrial labor.
2. Many employees seek jobs that offer [], providing stability and assurance against unexpected unemployment.
3. [] is a common phenomenon among individuals seeking better employment opportunities in different regions.
4. Laws and regulations are in place to protect the rights and well-being of [], ensuring they have access to education and a safe environment.
5. The working class faces numerous [], including economic uncertainties and workplace hardships.
6. Workers often [] into unions to collectively address issues and negotiate for better working conditions.
7. Government programs aim to provide [] to citizens, especially during times of unemployment, disability, or retirement.
8. [] are commonly used by seasonal workers as temporary shelters during their migration for employment.
9. The [] of many working-class individuals are influenced by factors such as housing, healthcare, and overall well-being.
10. A [] typically finds employment during specific times of the year, often in sectors like agriculture or tourism.

11. Creating a _____ involves establishing conditions that prioritize the well-being, rights, and dignity of all employees.
12. Individuals facing homelessness may find refuge in a _____ providing them with a place to stay temporarily.



GUESS: Look at the sentences below, and guess the meaning of the highlighted vocabulary items.

1. Many argue that the current **minimum wage** is not sufficient to meet the basic needs of workers in today's economy.
2. Through **collective bargaining**, the labor union negotiated with the employer to secure better working conditions and a fair wage for its members.
3. Reports exposed instances of **worker exploitation**, revealing harsh working conditions and unfair treatment of employees in the garment industry.
4. The formation of a **Labor Union** empowered workers to voice their concerns collectively and demand improvements in workplace conditions.
5. As a skilled **a blue-collar worker**, he excelled in his hands-on job, contributing to the construction of essential infrastructure.
6. Employees initiated **strikes and protests** to protest against unsafe working conditions, advocating for change and better treatment from the company.



WRITE: Now, write your own definitions for each vocabulary items below.

1. **Minimum wage:**
2. **Collective bargaining:**
3. **Worker exploitation:**
4. **Labor Union:**
5. **A blue-collar worker:**
6. **Strike and protest:**



CHECK: Check your answers from your dictionaries and compare them with the definitions you have found.



Read the passage below. **Highlight** the problems the seasonal workers face.

Four Seasons Drama

Seasonal changes symbolize new beginnings and bring excitement for many people. There are those who welcome the sea, sun and holiday in summer, and the world covered in white in winter. However, for **seasonal workers**, this period means hitting the road again and facing new challenges.

Agricultural and construction workers migrate from one place to another for temporary jobs, without homes or any specific address. They live with their families, including children, in **temporary shelters**, in fields or on construction sites. Children often cannot receive education and grow up in a healthy way.

The majority of seasonal workers in the agricultural sector take their children to where they work. Out of the 958 thousand **working children** between the ages of 6 and 17 in Turkey, 320 thousand children are agricultural workers. These children, along with those too young to work, face many difficulties during seasonal **migrations**.

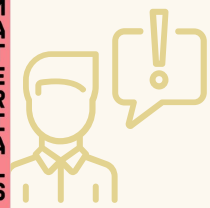


Seasonal workers live in difficult conditions under the sun in **tents**. Children struggle with diseases caused by mosquitoes, scorpion stings and pesticides. Additionally, most seasonal workers lack **job security** and **social security**.

One of the biggest problems faced by agricultural workers is their injuries and deaths in traffic accidents during migration. Adjustments made to the conditions of seasonal workers are generally not enough to solve the problems and the difficult **living conditions** of the workers continue.

Despite these difficulties, seasonal workers need decent working and living conditions. The need **to organize** and struggle together with the **working class** in general can alleviate the difficulties faced by seasonal workers and provide a more **fair working environment**.

Translated and adapted from Ezgi Şanlı's newspaper article titled 'Four Seasons Drama', (2014).



SPEAK UP: Read the text again and answer the following questions.

1. How does the text highlight the economic disparities between seasonal workers and people who look forward to different seasons for fun?
2. What impact does the migration of agricultural and construction workers have on the education and well-being of their children?
3. Why does the text emphasize the lack of job security and social security among seasonal workers? How might these factors contribute to the challenges they face?
4. Does the text suggest any regulatory measures or reforms that have been attempted to improve the conditions of seasonal workers? How effective are these measures in addressing the core issues?
5. In what ways does the text suggest that organizing and collectively struggling with the broader working class can improve the situation for seasonal workers?

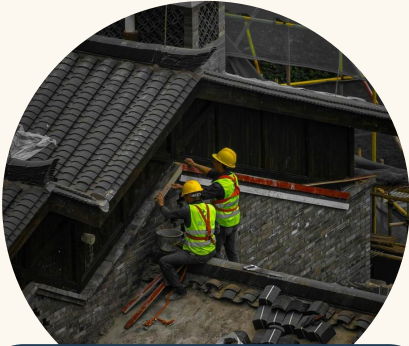


PAIRWORK: Discuss what other problems the seasonal workers can encounter, and then offer a solution for each problem with your partner. Write your answers in the gap below.

Workers' Voices...



THINK: Look at the sentences below. Think about the **highlighted** words and explain the function of them in each sentence.



Despite the difficulties, construction workers **who** need decent working and living conditions often struggle to achieve them.



The need to organize and struggle together with the working class, **which** can alleviate the difficulties faced by workers and provide a more fair working environment, is essential.



Adjustments **that** are made to the conditions of workers are generally not enough to solve the problems, and the difficult living conditions of the workers continue.



Children **who** often cannot receive education and grow up in a healthy way face long-term consequences.



Seasonal changes, **which** symbolize new beginnings and bring excitement for many people, vary across different regions.



The majority of seasonal workers, **who** are in the agricultural sector, take their children to where they work.



The working class, **who** struggle with low wages and high expenses, find it hard to make ends meet in today's economy.



Workers, **who** migrate from one place to another for temporary jobs without homes or any specific address, face numerous challenges.

Grammar: Relative Clauses

Relative clauses begin with **who**, **that**, and **which**. They give information about people or things. Use **who** and **that** refer to people and **that** and **which** to refer to things.

Subject relative clauses

Who, **that**, **which** are the subject of the verb.

Ayşe is a seasonal agricultural worker **who** / **that** does not have home or address.

Ayşe can not go on a summer holiday **that** / **which** planned before because she has to work in the farm during summer.

Object relative clauses

Who, **that**, **which** are the object of the verb.

Tamer is a factory worker **who** / **that** the headworkers can trust.

Gülce talks about the things **that** she is doing when her seasonal worker parents take her to the farm every summer.

In subject relative clauses:

- **Who** is more common than **that** for people.
- **That** is more common than **which** for things.

In object relative clauses:

- People often leave out **who** and **that**, especially before pronouns.
- **Which** is not frequent.

Don't use pronouns that repeat ideas in relative clauses.

Janet has a company **that makes** toys.
(NOT... company that it makes toys.)

She's a friend **that I met** through Mike.
(NOT... a friend that I met her through Mike.)

PRACTICE: Combine each pair of sentences using relative clauses. More than one answer may be possible.

1. Many workers lack job security. They face difficulties during seasonal migrations.
2. Children often struggle with diseases caused by mosquitoes. They grow up in unhealthy conditions.
3. Despite difficulties, seasonal workers need decent working and living conditions. They struggle with job insecurity.
4. Workers migrate for temporary jobs. They live with their families in temporary shelters.

5. Seasonal workers live in difficult conditions under the sun in tents. They migrate for temporary jobs.

AI USAGE IN THE WORKPLACE



PAIRWORK: Read the passages below. Discuss the place of AI in the workplace. How would you feel if you were a worker, working under AI surveillance?

Advantages

The world is currently experiencing a significant technological transformation known as Industry 4.0, marked by the **integration** of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and the Internet of Things (IoT). This shift is positively affecting various business processes, including **production, marketing, security**, and job safety. Particularly in industries dealing with **hazardous substances** and machinery, AI plays a crucial role in enhancing job safety by minimizing accidents and preventing injuries. The combination of AI and IoT allows for comprehensive **monitoring** of machines, production lines, and employees through sensors, identifying risks, proposing solutions, and predicting health hazards. AI contributes to workplace safety by reducing human errors, automating dangerous tasks using production robots and drones, monitoring individual workers through IoT sensors, using **harassment** monitoring, controlling equipment to prevent disasters, and aiding in crime detection and prevention through AI-enabled cameras. Overall, the integration of AI, IoT, and other technologies is transforming workplace safety, improving efficiency, reducing downtimes, and aiming for nearly zero injury rates in the future, presenting a **mutually** beneficial scenario for both management and the workforce.

Disadvantages

The widespread usage of artificial intelligence (AI) for employee surveillance and monitoring in workplaces has raised significant concerns. The demand for employee surveillance software increased by 54% between March 2020 and June 2023. This growth in monitoring technologies, tracking aspects such as work hours and online activities, has resulted in negative psychological effects on employees, with 51% being aware of such surveillance. The potential for inappropriate use of monitoring tools and the lack of transparency create challenges, leading to **strained** employee-employer relationships and worker **resistance**. The psychological impact includes reported fair or poor mental health (32%) for monitored employees, compared to 24% for those not monitored. Workers emphasize the limited benefits and argue that the stress associated with electronic monitoring outweighs the advantages, contributing to lower trust and commitment levels in the workplace.



DISCUSS: How would you react to being monitored in the class? What possible advantages and disadvantages could it provide?

MATCH: Look at the passages. Match the **bolded** vocabulary items with their definitions

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Integration: | A. The state of being free from danger, harm, or threat. |
| 2. Production: | B. In a way where two or more parties are involved in a shared or common manner. |
| 3. Marketing: | C. Stressed, tense, or under pressure |
| 4. Security: | D. The act of combining different components or systems to work together as a unified whole. |
| 5. Hazardous Substance: | E. The activities involved in promoting products or services. |
| 6. Monitoring: | F. The continuous observation to gather information or ensure control and safety. |
| 7. Harassment: | G. The act of opposing something. |
| 8. Mutually: | H. The process of creating, manufacturing, or generating goods or services. |
| 9. Strained: | I. Unwanted and offensive behavior or conduct. |
| 10. Resistance: | J. A thing that poses a risk to health, safety, or the environment |



ANSWER: Look at the passages. Answer the questions below.

1. In what ways does the integration of AI, machine learning, and IoT positively impact various business processes?
2. Explain how the combination of AI and IoT enables comprehensive monitoring in the workplace.
3. What are some specific contributions of AI to workplace safety, as mentioned in the text?
4. What negative effects are associated with the widespread usage of monitoring technologies?
5. What concerns are raised about the stress associated with electronic monitoring, and how does it weigh against the advantages mentioned in the text?
6. What do you think could be potential solutions or alternatives to address the concerns related to the use of AI in the workplace?





PAIRWORK: Look at the examples below.
Practice with your pair.

DEBATE LANGUAGE: Professional Speaking Skills

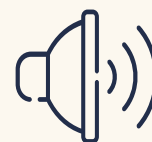


Component	Examples
Clarification and Information Requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Could you specify what you mean?• Can you elaborate further on that point?• Could you repeat or rephrase for clarity?
Opinion and Participation Requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are your thoughts on this?• Can we hear another perspective?• Let's consult the group before making a decision.
Disagreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I respectfully disagree because...• I understand your perspective, but...• I don't think that's accurate due to...
Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I concur with your opinion because...• That's a valid point.• I fully support your stance.
Interrupting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excuse me for interrupting...• May I add something here?• I'd like to contribute a point before we proceed.
Supporting and Emphasizing a Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This highlights the importance of...• I strongly believe that...• Allow me to underscore this idea.
Rephrasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let me rephrase to ensure clarity.• In simpler terms, it means...• Allow me to put it another way.
Connecting Ideas and Summarizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In summary, the main point is...• To connect this with earlier discussions...• Bringing it all together, the conclusion is...

DEBATE: Form two groups. Referring to the passages, discuss the issue of AI usage in the workplace, regarding worker rights. Try to find a common way for all parties involved.

(For example, one of the groups can advocate for AI usage, while the other is against it; one can represent administrators, while the other represents workers, etc.)

YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK



JESS: Read the sentences below, and guess the meaning of bolded words.

1. I had to **negotiate with** my boss for a better schedule.
2. They chose **arbitration** to settle their disagreement.
3. She filed **a grievance** when her paycheck was incorrect.
4. The information is **confidential**; don't share it.

ANSWER: Read the sentences below. Listen to the audio “Your Rights at Work” and then check (✓) the boxes if the sentences are “True”, “False” or “Not Included.”

		TRUE	FALSE	NOT INCLUDED
1	A self-employed person has no rights at work.			
2	If you work occasionally, you are not entitled to any protection.			
3	The first step is to negotiate with your boss if you have a problem at work.			
4	You should send the letter to your boss by email.			
5	ACAS will automatically take your side if you have a problem with your employer.			
6	The Work Rights Centre offers free and confidential consultations.			

ANSWER: Listen to the audio “Your Rights at Work” again and then answer the questions below.

1. What does the Work Rights Centre believe everyone has the right to regarding work? List three key elements mentioned in the belief statement.
2. What is the first step in getting your employment rights, according to the text?
3. What are some examples of evidence suggested in Step 2 for supporting your case? Why is it important to gather evidence?
4. In what circumstances does the text recommend going to court?
5. How does the Work Rights Centre offer assistance to individuals?

Labor Unions



DISCUSS: Why do workers need labor unions? How can unions and employers come to fair compromises? What rights should workers demand? What rights belong to employers?

READ & ANSWER: Read the passages below. Identify 3 strategies that union members used to seek justice and create change.

Have you ever heard the phrase "There's strength in numbers"? For many years, people who worked on farms, in factories, or in other low-wage positions were sometimes forced to **endure** terrible conditions with little pay. But they soon found, with "strength in numbers," that they could take charge of their circumstances. That's where labor unions come in.

A labor union is a group of workers who join together to ask their employers for better payment, working hours, and working conditions. Labor unions are very common today, and many workers in the United States are members of different kinds of unions. However, unions did not always exist. Modern labor unions didn't appear in the United States until the late 1800s.



What is a labor union?

In the past, when workers were mistreated by their employers, there was nothing they could do about it. Labor unions were the workers' solution to this problem. This article sets the scene for the dawn of labor unions, explores the history of workers' rights, and explains the strategies they still use today.

The United States experienced an Industrial Revolution from about 1860 until about 1920. People started to use machines and factories to make products instead of making them by hand. Factory owners became rich very quickly, but they did not treat their workers with kindness or respect. Employees had to work up to 12 hours per day for only a few dollars. They did not always get weekends off. In many industries, workers faced **inhumane** conditions such as having to bend over all day, or breathing in smoke from the machines.

One of the worst industries to work in was the coal industry, where workers spent all day deep underground in coal mines. The mines were very dark and usually damp and cold. Workers had to breathe coal dust and poisonous gases. They had to crawl through the mine in narrow tunnels and pull carts full of coal behind them. There was always a chance that the whole mine could collapse from an explosion. Because coal miners were paid so little, many families could not afford to buy enough food. They had to send their children to work in the mines too, just so the family could have enough money to live on. Children worked six days a week just like their parents, so they could not go to school.

Workers decided they could not keep living such hard lives. They knew they had to work together to **negotiate** with the rich and powerful factory owners, so they grouped together to form labor unions. Labor unions used 3 different strategies to protect workers:

The first strategy was called "collective bargaining." Workers chose a few leaders to represent them in a meeting with the factory or mine owner. In this meeting, everyone would agree to a new contract that gave workers shorter hours, higher pay, and safer working conditions. If the factory owner did not agree to the contract, all the workers would strike, or stop working until they got what they wanted. Many strikes occurred during the Industrial Revolution, and workers still go on strike today.



The second strategy was giving benefits to union members. If any worker got hurt on the job, the union would pay for the doctor's visit, medicine, and sometimes food.

The third strategy was working with the government to pass more laws. Union leaders could make deals with politicians to pass laws that helped workers. For example, child labor became illegal and the government began to send inspectors to make sure factories were safe.

Unions were very successful in making sure business owners did not take advantage of their workers. Unions still serve many of these same functions today. Workers still go on strike when their employer will not agree to a better contract, and unions still work with the government to get laws passed. Many people across the country rely on unions to keep their jobs safe and their families fed.

(McBirney, 2016)



ANSWER: Look at the passage again. Answer the questions below.

1) A labor union is...

- A. an organization of workers who make sure employers treat them fairly.
- B. a group of employers who handle the payment for their workers.
- C. an association of workers who are trying to start their own businesses.
- D. a group of people who build factories with healthy working conditions.

2) What is the main theme of the passage?

- A. The importance of individual strength in the workplace.
- B. The historical struggles of factory workers in the United States.
- C. The benefits of joining a labor union for workers.
- D. The methods used by businesses to exploit their employees.

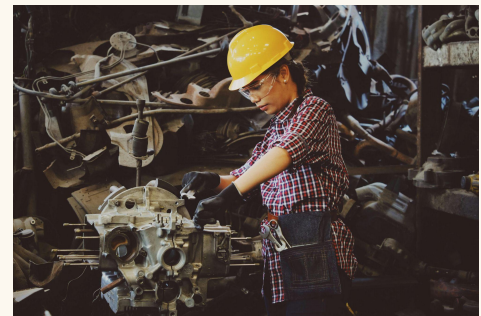


3) Which of the following was NOT a strategy used by labor unions to protect workers?

- A. Providing financial support to injured members.
- B. Lobbying for government laws that benefit workers.
- C. Offering discounts on goods and services.
- D. Organizing strikes to pressure employers.

4) The phrase "There's strength in numbers" is used in the passage to illustrate that labor unions:

- A. have strong financial resources.
- B. are supported by powerful politicians.
- C. gain bargaining power through collective action.
- D. are able to control the outcomes of elections.



5) Which of the following statements is NOT supported by the information in the passage?

- A. Labor unions helped improve the working conditions of factory workers during the Industrial Revolution.
- B. Child labor laws were passed in the United States due to the efforts of labor unions.
- C. Modern labor unions still use collective bargaining and strikes to negotiate for better contracts.
- D. All workers in the United States are required to join a labor union.

Raising a Grievance

If you are an employee and you want to make a formal complaint about something which has happened at work, you should raise a grievance.

Jane Doe

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December 23, 2024

Human Resources Department

GlobalTech Solutions Inc.
456 Maple Avenue
Springfield, IL 62702

Subject: Formal Grievance Regarding Workplace Mobbing

Dear Human Resources Team,

I am writing to raise a formal grievance about the behavior I have been subjected to in the workplace. Over the past several months, I have experienced repeated incidents of mobbing by certain colleagues in the Marketing Department, which I believe violate the company's policies on respect and professional conduct. The behavior I have faced includes:

Public Undermining: My contributions in team meetings have frequently been dismissed or ridiculed, especially by John Smith.

Exclusion: I have often been left out of important team communications and decisions, which has hindered my ability to perform my duties.

Spreading False Information: Emily Brown has circulated inaccurate statements about my performance, damaging my reputation and relationships with other colleagues.

These actions have caused significant emotional distress, including feelings of isolation and anxiety. The hostile environment has also impacted my productivity and ability to work collaboratively with the team. I attempted to address these concerns informally by speaking directly with John Smith on October 15, 2024. Additionally, I raised the issue with my supervisor, Michael Turner, but unfortunately, these steps did not resolve the matter.

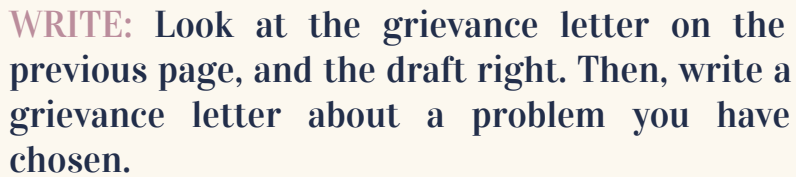
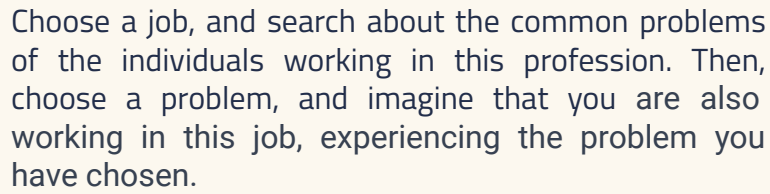
I would like the company to investigate these incidents and take appropriate action to ensure a respectful and supportive work environment. I would also appreciate guidance on any further steps I should take and reassurance that measures will be implemented to prevent similar situations in the future.

I am happy to provide more details or discuss the matter further during the grievance process.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Doe



[Your name]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Answer Key

Four Seasons Drama

Vocabulary

1. working class
2. job security
3. migration
4. working children
5. challenges
6. organize
7. social security
8. tent
9. living conditions
10. seasonal worker
11. fair working environment
12. temporary shelter

Discussion Questions

1. The text points out economic disparities by illustrating that while some eagerly anticipate seasonal changes for recreational purposes, seasonal workers face the challenge of hitting the road again for temporary jobs, lacking homes or specific addresses. This contrast highlights how seasonal changes bring excitement for some but economic struggles for seasonal workers.
2. The migration of these workers has a detrimental impact on their children's education and overall well-being. Living in temporary shelters, fields, or construction sites, children often cannot receive education, face health challenges such as diseases from mosquitoes and pesticides, and grow up in difficult conditions under the sun in tents.
3. The text emphasizes the lack of job security and social security among seasonal workers to underscore the precarious nature of their employment. This absence contributes to the challenges they face by leaving them vulnerable to exploitation, uncertain income, and inadequate access to health and social services, perpetuating difficult living conditions.
4. The text doesn't explicitly mention specific regulatory measures or reforms. However, it highlights that adjustments made to the conditions of seasonal workers are generally insufficient to solve the problems they face. This implies that existing measures may not effectively address the core issues of job insecurity, lack of social security, and difficult living conditions.
5. The text implies that organizing and collectively struggling with the broader working class can alleviate the difficulties faced by seasonal workers. By joining forces with the larger working class, seasonal workers may gain strength in advocating for better working and living conditions, job security, and social protections, fostering a more equitable and fair environment.

Workers' Voice

Grammar: Relative Clauses

1. Many workers **who / that** lack job security face difficulties during seasonal migrations.
2. Children **who / that** often struggle with diseases caused by mosquitoes grow up in unhealthy conditions.
3. Seasonal workers **who / that** need decent working and living conditions struggle with job insecurity.
4. Workers **who / that** migrate for temporary jobs live with their families in temporary shelters.
5. Seasonal workers **who / that** migrate for temporary jobs live in difficult conditions under the sun in tents.

Answer Key

AI Usage in the Workplace

Matching Questions

1. Integration: **D**
2. Production: **H**
3. Marketing: **E**
4. Security: **A**
5. Hazardous Substance: **J**
6. Monitoring: **F**
7. Harassment: **I**
8. Mutually: **B**
9. Strained: **C**
10. Resistance: **G**

Comprehension/Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does the integration of AI, machine learning, and IoT positively impact various business processes?
The integration of AI, machine learning, and IoT positively impacts various business processes, including production, marketing, security, and job safety.
2. Explain how the combination of AI and IoT enables comprehensive monitoring in the workplace.
The combination of AI and IoT enables comprehensive monitoring through sensors, identifying risks, proposing solutions, and predicting health hazards.
3. What are some specific contributions of AI to workplace safety, as mentioned in the text?
Specific contributions of AI to workplace safety include reducing human errors, automating dangerous tasks using production robots and drones, monitoring individual workers through IoT sensors, using harassment monitoring, controlling equipment to prevent disasters, and aiding in crime detection and prevention through AI-enabled cameras.
4. What negative effects are associated with the widespread usage of monitoring technologies?
The negative psychological effects include fair or poor mental health reported by 32% of monitored employees, compared to 24% for those not monitored. Strained employee-employer relationships and worker resistance arise from the potential inappropriate use of monitoring tools and the lack of transparency.
5. What concerns are raised about the stress associated with electronic monitoring, and how does it weigh against the advantages mentioned in the text?
Concerns are raised about the stress associated with electronic monitoring, and it is described as outweighing the benefits in most occupations.
6. What do you think could be potential solutions or alternatives to address the concerns related to the use of AI in the workplace?
Potential solutions or alternatives to address concerns related to the use of AI in workplace monitoring could involve increased transparency, clearer guidelines on monitoring use, and mechanisms for employee input and feedback.

Answer Key

Your Rights At Work

True/False/Not Included Questions

1. Not Included (Limited rights mentioned, depends on the situation.)
2. False (If you work occasionally, you are entitled to pay and safety.)
3. True
4. False (You should send the letter to your boss by a recorded delivery.)
5. False (ACAS will try to mediate the issue.)
6. True

Short Answer Questions

1. The Work Rights Centre believes everyone has the right to work that is fair, safe, and that pays. Fairness, safety, and proper compensation.
2. The first step is finding out your employment status.
3. Text messages, phone logs, emails, pictures, time sheets, or witnesses. Gathering evidence strengthens your position and supports your case.
4. Going to court is recommended if nothing happens after following the previous steps.
5. The Work Rights Centre offers help to individuals facing work-related issues.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. A
2. C
3. C
4. C
5. D

RESOURCES



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