



WORK IS THE NEW GOD

Watch the [video](#) "Work Is the New God" by The Atlantic.

1 WARM UP: TRUE OR FALSE?

Task 1: Are the following statements true or false in relation to your own life?

1. I worked more than 50 hours last week.
2. I usually skip lunch because of work.
3. I always leave work on time.
4. Every year, I take a 2-week summer vacation and don't do any work.
5. I have missed many social events because of work.
6. I often discuss work when I am with my family and friends.
7. I maintain a healthy sleep routine without work-related disturbances.
8. I regularly check my work emails after 8:00 p.m.

Task 2: Discuss the following lead-in questions as a class.

1. What do you do for a living?
2. Describe your usual work schedule.
3. Do you prefer to work at home or at the office?
4. Do you find your job stressful?
5. Do you believe you work more than your parents did when they were your age?

2 VIDEO: VOCABULARY

Task 1: Choose the correct definition for each of the words listed (1-8).

1. Workism.
 - a. Valuing work too much, making it a central part of your identity.
 - b. The belief that leisure activities are more important than work.
2. Work-life balance.
 - a. A strategy for increasing productivity by combining work and leisure tasks.
 - b. The division of time between working and family or leisure activities.
3. The American dream.
 - a. The idea that success is solely based on luck rather than effort.
 - b. Belief that hard work can lead to success and a better life.
4. Burnout.
 - a. Feeling exhausted and overwhelmed from stress and too much work.
 - b. A medical condition characterised by an inability to sleep due to overwork.
5. Workaholic.
 - a. Someone who is addicted to working and struggles to take breaks.
 - b. A person who prefers working from home rather than in an office.
6. Hustle culture.
 - a. A lifestyle focused on avoiding work and prioritising relaxation.
 - b. Constantly pursuing success and achievement in both work and personal life.
7. To be plugged in.
 - a. The act of disconnecting from the internet to focus on work.
 - b. Being connected or engaged, often in the context of technology.
8. Digital detox.
 - a. Taking a break from technology to reduce stress and improve well-being.
 - b. A process of upgrading old technology to new digital devices.

Task 2: Create eight sentences using each of the words to describe your work life.



3 QUOTES: WORKING WITH WORDS

Task 1: Use the words from the box to complete the quotes from the [video](#).

workaholics	Workism	hustle culture	plugged in
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1. This idea of bragging to people I had an all-nighter last night. We are essentially the _____ of the world.
2. _____ is the idea that work is the centrepiece of our identity, the focal point of our lives and really the organising principle of society.
3. This obsession with being constantly _____ and looking for meaning from a job is relatively recent.
4. You see it trickling down not only in the workplace but also in social media with hashtag _____. There's this bombardment of other people's successes.

Task 2: Use the words from the box to complete the quotes from the [video](#).

American dream	boundaries	Follow your passion	burnout
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5. The single most common piece of career advice in commencement speeches is "_____." "Love what you do!" "Take a chance on doing what you love!" But most of the available jobs in the economy are not designed to stoke passion.
6. I think at the end, we're being sold a false _____. We're being sold a vision of how life works out for a minuscule few of Americans and telling all Americans that this is what they should pursue.
7. And it's setting ourselves up for the anxiety and the frustration and the worries and the spiritual and psychological _____ that so many of us are feeling.
8. From my experience, I've been learning to create _____ for myself to protect my mental health, my career, and privacy.



4 VIDEO: COMPREHENSION

Task 1: Watch the [video](#), then choose the correct answer to the questions.

1. What was Elle Mills' initial motivation for consistently posting videos on YouTube?
 - a. To gain popularity and fame.
 - b. To share her personal struggles.
 - c. To maintain a steady income.

2. How does Derek describe the evolution of workism among the rich over the past few decades?
 - a. The rich have historically worked more.
 - b. The rich have started working less.
 - c. The rich have chosen to work more recently.

3. What cultural shift does Derek mention, both in the workplace and on social media, that contributes to the pressure of overworking?
 - a. The rise of traditional religious values.
 - b. The influence of hashtag hustle culture.
 - c. The decline of social media presence.

4. Why does Elle Mills mention that her approach to consistently uploading videos was not sustainable?
 - a. She was no longer interested in creating content.
 - b. She realised the importance of maintaining work-life balance.
 - c. She was not gaining subscribers as expected.



5. According to Derek, how has the concept of a job changed over the past 150 years?
 - a. Jobs have become more stable and secure.
 - b. Jobs were once seen as a calling and are now viewed as mere tasks.
 - c. The idea of career advancement has disappeared.

6. What does Derek identify as a central problem in the current work culture?
 - a. Lack of passion in available jobs.
 - b. The focus on financial success.
 - c. A false representation of the American dream.

7. Why does Derek argue that the common career advice is to "Follow your passion!" may be problematic?
 - a. Most available jobs are not designed to encourage passion.
 - b. Passionate individuals tend to be less successful in their careers.
 - c. Following passion leads to burnout.

8. According to Derek, what are the approaches to balancing life between love, work, family, and friends?
 - a. Spiritualism and procrastination.
 - b. Change public policy and engage in therapy, Buddha, existentialism.
 - c. Prioritise career success and engage in the hustle culture.



5 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Task: Discuss the following questions as a class. Have fun!

1. What is a workaholic? Would you describe yourself as a workaholic?
2. How has the idea of work changed over time, from just a job to a calling?
3. Can you give examples of what a “calling” may be for some people?
4. How has your own perspective on work evolved over time? Do you see it as just a job, a career, or something more?
5. What role do you think social media plays in shaping our attitudes toward work and success? Can you share a personal experience with this?
6. Discuss the pros and cons of the “hustle culture”.
7. Do you believe the advice to “follow your passion” is practical for most people? Why or why not?
8. If you were to “follow your passion,” what would you do? Is it realistic for you to follow your passion?
9. How has technology influenced the balance between work and personal life?
10. What strategies do you use to unplug from work when your official workday ends?
11. Have you ever suffered from burnout? Describe your experience and what you learned from it.
12. Have you ever felt overwhelmed by the need to constantly produce or achieve in your job or personal projects? How did it impact your well-being?
13. What is the American dream? Do you agree that society promotes a false American dream regarding work? Why or why not?
14. Can you think of any public policy changes that would make it easier for you to balance work and your personal life?
15. Do you agree that “a lot of people have essentially turned to work to find meaning that they used to seek from traditional religions”? Do you think it's possible to find meaning from work?
16. Considering your own experiences, what small changes could be made to create a healthier approach to work for everyone in your community or society?

6 LET'S DEBATE

Study the arguments. Decide if you agree or disagree with each person, explaining why. Adapt the language from the table to use in your argument. Have fun!

Rory "People should prioritise quality time with loved ones over excessive work hours fosters stronger personal connections and overall happiness."
Jane "Companies should not send work emails after office hours to protect employees' work-life balance and mental well-being."
Elsa "Every company should implement a 'Bring Your Pet to Work' day once a week to reduce stress and increase happiness in the office."
Harriet "Companies should offer child care support to help working parents balance their professional and personal responsibilities."
Johnny "All employees should have a 'No Meetings Monday' policy to start the week with uninterrupted focus and creativity."

Express an opinion It seems to me that... I feel that... I'm absolutely convinced that... In my opinion,... I believe / suppose / feel (that)...	Express disagreement I don't agree with you about... I can't accept your view that... I have a different opinion... I'm not sure if... I'm not convinced that...
Express pro's and con's There are two sides to this point... On the one hand...,on the other hand... An argument for / against is... Some people think that...,others say that... The advantages / disadvantages are...	Summarise So, in conclusion... To summarise.. Overall, it is clear that... As a result.. The bottom line is...

7 FAMOUS QUOTES: WORK IS THE NEW GOD

Task: Discuss the quotes as a class. Use the prompts (a-d) to help guide your discussion.

- Discuss the meaning of each quote.
- How could you apply the meaning of each quote to your life?
- To what extent do you agree/disagree with each quote?
- Can you think of any real-life example where you have seen the meaning of each quote in practice?

Quotes:

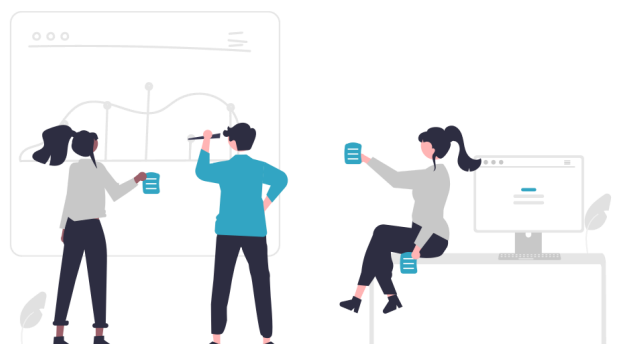
1. "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life."

2. "Success is not about climbing up the corporate ladder; it's about balancing your personal and professional life to be present for both."

3. "Don't confuse having a career with having a life."

4. "The key to work-life balance is not about achieving more, but about doing what matters most."

5. "No one on their deathbed ever said, 'I wish I had spent more time at the office.'"

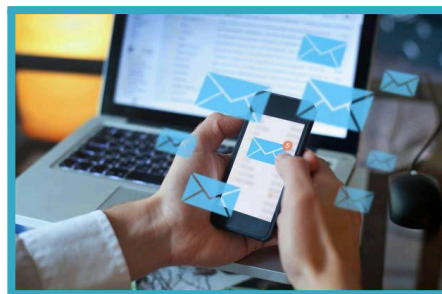


8 THIS OR THAT

Task 1: Read both options, then decide which you prefer, explaining why.



OR



1. Digital detox weekends.

staying connected all weekend?



OR



2. Saying 'no' to additional tasks.

taking on new challenges?



OR



3. Multitasking to get more done.

focusing on one task at a time?



HOMEWORK

1 THE PROBLEMS WITH WORKISM

Task 1: Read the following text.

Workism, a term coined to describe the increasing cultural obsession with work, has given rise to many problems in contemporary society. The relentless pursuit of professional success often comes at the cost of personal well-being and a balanced life. One of the primary issues is the erosion of work-life balance, as individuals find themselves obsessed with their jobs, sacrificing time with family, leisure, and self-care.

This obsessive focus on work also contributes to burnout, a common problem affecting individuals across various industries. The pressure to constantly excel and meet unrealistic expectations can lead to physical and mental exhaustion, jeopardising both productivity and mental health. Moreover, workism fosters a culture where one's worth is measured solely by professional achievements, neglecting the importance of other aspects of life such as relationships, hobbies, and personal growth.

The prevalence of workism also creates socioeconomic inequalities. As the emphasis on career success intensifies, those with fewer resources or limited access to education may find it harder to compete in the demanding job market, perpetuating cycles of disadvantage. Additionally, the glorification of overwork can hinder diversity and inclusion efforts in workplaces, as rigid expectations may disproportionately affect certain demographics.

Addressing the problems of workism requires a shift in societal values, emphasising the importance of one's well-being and recognizing that a fulfilling life extends beyond the boundaries of the workplace. Encouraging healthier work environments, promoting work-life balance, and valuing diverse talents and perspectives are crucial steps toward creating a more sustainable and happier approach to work and life.

Task 2: Write detailed answers to the following questions.

1. How does workism erode work-life balance? Give examples.
2. How can workism lead to burnout? Share your own experiences.
3. How can workism lead to socioeconomic inequalities?
4. What can be done to lessen the negative impact of workism?
5. Write a summary of what you learned from the text, and main lesson.