

Let's work less.



New Internationalist Easier English

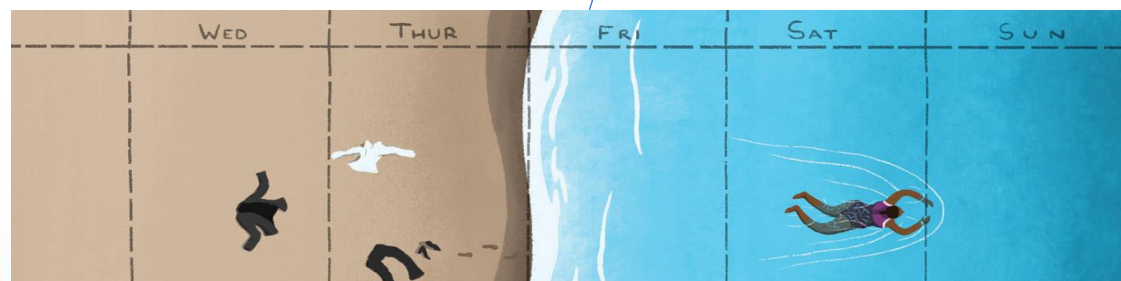
Self-study: Pre-intermediate

Let's work less

This lesson



Vocabulary



Grammar: questions



Reading



Match:

- 1) mental health
- 2) the economy
- 3) overwork
- 4) productivity
- 5) successful
- 6) anxiety
- 7) rise
- 8) depression
- 9) reduce

- a) do too much in your job
- b) describes something that has a good result
- c) how much you do or make in your job
- d) health for the mind and the way we feel
- e) the money system
- f) too much worry
- g) go up/become more
- h) make less



Check the answers
next page.



Match:

1) mental health

2) the economy

3) overwork

4) productivity

5) successful

6) anxiety

7) rise

8) depression

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a) do too much in your job

b) describes something that has a good result

c) how much you do or make in your job

d) health for the mind and the way we feel

e) the money system

f) too much worry

g) go up/become more

h) make less

i) great sadness



What do you think?

- 1) When we work a lot, we feel free. True/false?
- 2) The idea of working for four days every week is getting popular. True/false?
- 3) A lot of people overwork. True/false?
- 4) More and more people are not going to work because of mental health problems. True or false?
- 5) Losing work days is a problem in many countries. True/false?
- 6) In Japan thousands of workers die every year because they work too much. True/false?
- 7) At least one country has a word for the problem. True/false?

Alex Harper writes about these problems.

Read the text next page to see what Alex thinks and check the answers.

Alex Harper writes about the problem of overworking.

How can we say we are free when we have to work? It is a serious question. We can work or be hungry. It's not really the best idea for a free society. But let's think about changing the idea of how much time is for us. More and more people are thinking about a four-day week.

We work far too much and suffer from worse mental health. In 2018, the number of days lost because of stress, anxiety, and depression at work in the UK rose by three million to 15.4 million. Overwork is the biggest reason for illness at work. We lose one in four of all sick days as a result of too much work. It is an international problem. In Japan about 10,000 workers die every year from overwork. The problem is so bad it has its own name in Japan: karōshi.



Check the answers next page.



Check the answers.

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Grammar: questions

Make questions about Alex Harper's text. For example: *long hours/the economy/do/help?*

→ *Do long hours help the economy?*

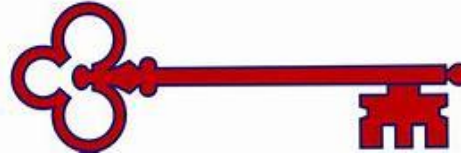
- 1) work/Germany, Norway, and the Netherlands/do/Europe/fewest hours/the/in?
- 2) than the UK/does/productivity/have/lower/Germany?
- 3) country/Germany/works/which/hours/fewer/the UK /or?
- 4) the /country/productivity/has/which/in the G7/lowest?
- 5) asking/hours/trade unions/are/shorter/for?
- 6) many/working/hours/Reykjavik/how/people/are/fewer/in



Check the questions next page.

Grammar: questions

Check the questions.



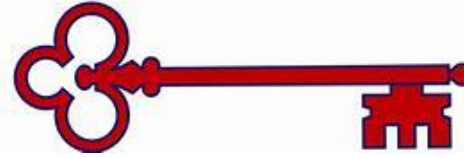
- 1) Do Germany, Norway, and the Netherlands work the fewest hours in Europe?
- 2) Does Germany have lower productivity than the UK?
- 3) Which country works fewer hours the UK or Germany (Germany or the UK)?
- 4) Which country has the lowest productivity in the G7?
- 5) Are trade unions asking for shorter hours?
- 6) How many people are working fewer hours in Reykjavik?

Read Alex Harper's text next page and find the answers.

Long hours are not only bad for our health. They are not really very good for the economy. Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway work the fewest number of hours in Europe. But productivity is 26 per cent lower in the UK than in Germany. In Germany people work fewer hours. If German workers stopped at Thursday lunchtime, they would produce as much as a British worker by the end of Friday. Japan's very overworked workers have the lowest productivity figures in the G7.

Some people are working fewer hours successfully. Trade unions in Europe are asking for shorter hours. Germany's IG Metall Union and the UK's Communication Workers Union are making progress with this. The European Trade Union Institute and the Trades Union Congress have also asked for a shorter working week. Some local governments are trying the idea. In 2015, Reykjavik, in Iceland, reduced the working week by about four hours per person. The idea started with about 70 people. It was so successful that it continued with 2,000 council workers. It will probably stay that way.

Check the answers.



- 1) Do Germany, Norway, and the Netherlands work the fewest hours in Europe? Yes
- 2) Does Germany have lower productivity than the UK? No
- 3) Which country works fewer hours the UK or Germany (Germany or the UK)? The UK
- 4) Which country has the lowest productivity in the G7?
Japan
- 5) Are trade unions asking for shorter hours? Yes
- 6) How many people are working fewer hours in Reykjavik?
2000

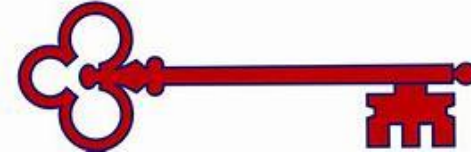
Put the sentences in the correct order.

- a) So organizations in Europe and the US are trying this idea of different working times.
- b) And life and stress were better.
- c) In New Zealand/Aotearoa, the finance company Perpetual Guardian moved its workers to a four-day week.
- d) Productivity was the same.
- e) And they gave them the same pay.

Check the answers next page.



Check the correct order.



- c) In New Zealand/Aotearoa, the finance company Perpetual Guardian moved its workers to a four-day week.
- e) And they gave them the same pay.
- d) Productivity was the same.
- b) And life and stress were better.
- a) So organizations in Europe and the US are trying this idea of different working times.

Read the LONGER article. How much can you understand?

<https://newint.org/features/2019/07/01/what-if-we-worked-less>

