

4-day working week



Learning objectives

By the end of this session you will be able to:

- Look at working schedules around the world
- Use phrases and vocabulary related to working hours
- Debate the idea of a 4-day working week

Ask and answer the questions

Initiate a conversation between students about working hours and a typical working week. Encourage students to engage, ask follow-up questions and explain their ideas.

- How many hours a week do you work? What do you think about this?
- The 40-hour working week is the “standard” why is this and what do you think about it?
- How many hours would you like to work?

Look at these countries, how many hours per week on average do you think they work?

Students should look at the names of the countries and discuss perceived conceptions of working environments in these countries and try to estimate the number of hours an average worker spends at work. Encourage students to back up their ideas with reasons.



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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mexico• USA• Spain• Turkey• Australia | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 49.7 hours per week• 34.5 hours per week• 43.5 hours per week• 33.6 hours per week• 34.7 hours per week |
|---|---|

Mexico - 43.5 hours per week
USA - 33.6 hours per week
Spain - 34.7 hours per week
Turkey - 49.7 hours per week
Australia - 34.5 hours per week

Ask and answer the questions

Ask students to reflect on the previous information and express their opinions.

- Is any of this information surprising? Why or why not?
- How do you think these statistics compare to your country?
- How do you feel about these numbers?
- What is work-life balance?

Look at these expressions in bold in the sentences, match the expressions to their meanings, and discuss to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements.

Elicit the meaning of the vocabulary words and check comprehension before starting the discussion. Encourage students to use the vocabulary in the answers.

1. Employees are paid a fixed **hourly rate**, so working **overtime** is the employee's responsibility.
 2. **Zero-hours contracts** are a legal loophole for companies to avoid giving their employees benefits and paying extra taxes.
 3. **Graveyard shifts** and jobs with **unsocial hours** are usually paid at a lower hourly rate.
 4. It is fundamental for every single employee to **clock in** on time and fill out the **timesheet** correctly.
- A work shift that runs through the early morning hours, typically covering the period between midnight and 8 a.m.
 - The working hours of an employee do not change or cannot be varied
 - To record the start or finish time of work on a special machine
 - The salary that is paid per hour of work
 - An agreement under which an employer can change the number of hours worked by an employee and does not have to offer any hours
 - Hours outside of the normal working week
 - A record of the numbers of hours worked by an employee

to clock in/out = to record the start or finish time of work on a special machine

hourly rate = the salary that is paid per hour of work

fixed hours = the working hours of an employee do not change or cannot be varied

unsocial hours = hours outside of the normal working week

timesheet = a record of the numbers of hours worked by an employee

graveyard shift = a work shift that runs through the early morning hours, typically covering the period between midnight and 8 a.m.

zero-hours contract = an agreement under which an employer can change the number of hours worked by an employee, and does not have to offer any hours:

Watch the video, <https://youtu.be/WBLxCPTPF0s>, and discuss the question.

As students watch the video, they should take notes about the topic and main ideas presented and report the information as well as their own opinions.

Where and when did the 4-day week work?

Spain is going to try the 4-day week, Microsoft trialled the 4 -day working in Japan, Google implemented a 20% scheme in 2005

Role-play

Student A: You are a young human resources manager with modern ideas and want to improve the working environment. You have a proposal to move to a 4-day working week.

Student B: You are a more conservative operations manager who believes that the traditional 40-hour standard week is the most productive approach to working.

Student C: Listen and provide feedback

Presentation

Students are assigned a country from the first activity. They should investigate the life of an average worker and present their findings to their peers. Set a time limit for the investigation and encourage students to give a news report or presentation about the country. Promote speaking and fluency by reminding the students not to read.

- Mexico
- USA
- Spain
- Turkey
- Australia

Vocabulary

These words and phrases are from the video, check the understanding by asking the students to match the words and phrases to the meanings.

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|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Take your first steps | A. Addicted to work |
| 2. Condone | B. Begin |
| 3. Workaholic | C. Give permission |
| 4. A hard sell | D. A policy or technique of aggressive salesmanship or advertising |

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

Follow-up discussion. Ask and answer these questions about the working week in your job and country.

Students can reflect on the topic of this lesson and how it compares to their country and current circumstances, encourage the use of the vocabulary from the previous tasks.

- Do you condone the idea of a 40-hour industrialized working week?
- Would a 4-day working week require the hard sell in your company?
- Do you consider yourself a workaholic?
- How would your country go about taking the first steps to adopting a 4-day working week?