



# UBER AND THE LAW



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:

1AX2-41AC-RX2T

1

## Warm up

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. Have you ever used Uber or a riding sharing app? If so, what was your experience like?
2. What do you think are the positives of working as an Uber driver?
3. What do you think are the negatives to working as an Uber driver?

2

## Finding vocabulary

Find vocabulary in the article on page two with the same meaning as the following definitions.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ start an organisation or company (v, para. A)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ a special type of court to deal with problems in work situations (n, para. B)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ a legal document which details the conditions and pay of a job (n, para. B)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ the language used in a particular situation, often in a legal situation (n, para. B)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ state that something is true in an argument (v, para. B)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ money paid for a travel service (n, para. C)
7. \_\_\_\_\_ a legal decision by a court (n, para. C)
8. \_\_\_\_\_ the lowest amount of pay required so that people can buy the basics needed for life (n, para. C)



## Driver on demand

### Uber and the law

- A. *Uber* was established in San Francisco in 2009 using technology that allowed customers to call a car and driver to their home via an app on their phone. It began using luxury black cars, but by 2012, they had launched *UberX*, a cheaper option which allowed drivers to use their personal cars. The idea was very successful and spread across the world, changing the way people used transport and allowing people to make extra money by working as drivers in their spare time, although for some, it was a full-time role.
- B. In 2016, James Farrar and Yaseen Aslam, two drivers for *Uber* took a claim against the company to the Employment Tribunal in London over their lack of basic worker's rights. *Uber* argued that they were not actually employed by the company, but instead worked for themselves as private businesses. They pointed to there being two contracts: one between the driver and the company, and one between the driver and the passenger. The wording of the *Uber* contract meant that drivers were actually customers of *Uber*, who allowed them to use their app for a fee. Then separately, the passengers were customers of the driver. *Uber* contended that they were not providing transport, but the software.
- C. The Tribunal disagreed. This was on the basis that, despite their arguments that *Uber* didn't employ the drivers, they were in control of their pay. *Uber* decides how much the fare is for each ride, and does not tell the driver of each passenger's destination before they are picked up, taking away the opportunity to decline. *Uber* can also decide if fares are refunded in part or entirely if a passenger complains. Drivers are also forced to sign a contract before working for *Uber* which they do not have the power to change. There was also a legal ruling that drivers are employed while they have the app on and are ready to pick up passengers, not just during a journey. Mr Farrar said during the case that in August 2015, he had made just £5.03 per hour due to the way pay was calculated, well below the minimum wage. The decision by the tribunal means that drivers are now entitled to holiday pay, paid rest breaks and will receive the national minimum wage.
- D. In the United States in February 2021, the Supreme Court agreed with the tribunal that drivers were, in fact, employees of *Uber* and therefore subject to benefits and a guaranteed wage. This is likely to affect other companies that have similar ways of employing people on other apps.

Sources: BBC, The Guardian



**3****Skimming for gist**

You are going to read the article "Driver on demand". Match the following events to the year that they happened.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Uber became a company
2. \_\_\_\_\_ UberX was added to Uber's services
3. \_\_\_\_\_ James Farrar's pay was below the legal amount
4. \_\_\_\_\_ A legal claim was made against Uber
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The Supreme court in the United States made a ruling against Uber

**4****Reading comprehension**

**Part A:** Read the article again and complete the following sentences with one, two or three words.

1. Prior to 2012, Uber's service was limited to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. People working for Uber were able to earn \_\_\_\_\_ in their free time outside of their main job.
3. Uber argued that drivers were not their employees but were \_\_\_\_\_, meaning that they were not responsible for the money they made.
4. Uber said that they provided \_\_\_\_\_ and didn't actually offer transport themselves.
5. Uber drivers can't \_\_\_\_\_ a ride based on the fare as they are not told how much it will be beforehand.
6. The tribunal's decision means that as well as receiving holiday pay and paid rest breaks, they are also \_\_\_\_\_ to the national minimum wage.
7. The Supreme court also said that Uber drivers should receive \_\_\_\_\_ as well as paid time off.

**Part B:** Now, decide if the following statements are True (T), False (F), or Not Given (NG).

1. Uber Drivers were all working for the company as a second job. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Uber drivers pay to use the app. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Some Uber drivers made a lot of money from the service. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Uber cars are cheaper than traditional taxis. \_\_\_\_\_



## 5

**Focus on vocabulary****Part A: Match the vocabulary to the definitions.**

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. <u>complexity</u> (n)     | a. return money to a person or organisation that it has been borrowed from          |
| 2. <u>operate</u> (v)        | b. the degree of difficulty that something has                                      |
| 3. <u>conceive</u> (v)       | c. create an idea or plan in your head  |
| 4. <u>nonsense</u> (adj.)    | d. use a machine or system  |
| 5. <u>feedback</u> (n)       | e. the act of having people who will make an argument for you in a legal situation  |
| 6. <u>pay back</u> (phr. v)  | f. information about the quality of a service or work after it has been experienced |
| 7. <u>representation</u> (n) | g. make people work in a way that harms them in some way, but benefits you          |
| 8. <u>exploit</u> (v)        | h. believing information to be completely untrue or stupid                          |

**Part B: Now complete the following sentences with a different part of speech from the same word family as the Part A vocabulary in brackets.**

1. The contract is very \_\_\_\_\_ and I had to get my lawyer to read it carefully. (complexity)
2. We're setting up a new \_\_\_\_\_ in Europe next year and they've asked me to go over there to supervise it. (operate)
3. I was working under the \_\_\_\_\_ that I was going to be paid at the end of each month, when in fact it was at the end of the contract. (conceive)
4. I thought their advice was completely \_\_\_\_\_. I really don't think they know what they are talking about. (nonsense)
5. I'll watch his presentation this afternoon and \_\_\_\_\_ to him afterwards, but I think he'll do really well. (feedback)
6. I think he cancelled her business trip to the Caribbean as \_\_\_\_\_ for the comments she made during his presentation. (pay back)
7. It's important to remember that even when you're away, you still \_\_\_\_\_ the company and so must be professional at all times. (representation)
8. The company has been heavily criticised for the \_\_\_\_\_ of its workers who claim they are not allowed to take breaks during 12-hour days. (exploit)



## 6

**Listening for details**

Listen to two people talking about working for Uber. Tick the correct box in the table to show which of the words from the vocabulary each speaker uses.

	Matteus	Asif
1. conceive		
2. complexity		
3. exploit		
4. feedback		
5. nonsense		
6. operate		
7. pay back		
8. representation		

## 7

**Listening comprehension**

Complete the notes on the listening with one or two words or numbers.

**Matteus**

Drives for Uber for \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> per week. Also runs his own \_\_\_\_\_<sup>2</sup>. Thinks that the new regulations will mean Uber will leave the country. Believes the law needs to find \_\_\_\_\_<sup>3</sup> to work and not just try to keep the traditional business model.

**Asif**

Works for Uber \_\_\_\_\_<sup>4</sup>. Disagrees with the idea that he is an \_\_\_\_\_<sup>5</sup> business as Uber controls his pay. Can't drive a taxi instead as his money is already \_\_\_\_\_<sup>6</sup> in his car. Sometimes drives \_\_\_\_\_<sup>7</sup> per day and makes only \_\_\_\_\_<sup>8</sup> per hour. Unable to make enough money to support family or run his car. Thinks the law has been \_\_\_\_\_<sup>9</sup> to change.



## 8

**Talking point**

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

**Student A**

1. Who do you agree with most from the listening exercise, Asif or Matteo? Why?
2. Do you think *Uber* was correct that they were only selling software, or do you think they were exploiting people? Why?

**Student B**

1. Is there a minimum wage in your country? If so, how much is it and what kind of jobs pay it or pay the lowest salary?
2. Do you think that jobs should guarantee a minimum wage or do you think the issue of pay is only between the employer and the employee? Why?

## 9

**Extended activity/Homework**

Read the following question.

The amount of pay that someone receives has nothing to do with the government, but should be between the employer and the employee. If someone is happy to work for £2 per hour, then they should be able to do so. Setting a minimum wage means that some employers will not be able to afford to give people work which negatively affects workers.

To what extent do you agree with the above statement?

You should:

- write at least 250 words,
- check your grammar, spelling and punctuation.