

LESSON 18: READING

Multiple choice questions, Multiple matching & Gap filling

Getting started

Work with a partner. Ask and answer the following questions.

1. What skills do you think are needed to get a good job these days?
2. How has technology changed the way we work?
3. What kinds of jobs are most likely to be taken over by robots?

Activity 1: Read the following sentences and choose the correct definition or explanation for the word/phrase in bold based on the context.

1. **Increasingly capable machines** are now doing jobs like driving cars and checking medical scans better than before.
A. Machines that need people to operate them
B. Machines that are getting better at doing difficult tasks
2. Many apps and websites use **artificial intelligence** to answer questions and make suggestions.
A. Technology that helps machines think and learn like humans
B. Fake information used by computers
3. The **labour market** keeps changing as some jobs disappear and new ones appear.
A. The place where workers find and do jobs
B. The market where people buy tools and equipment
4. Social media uses **algorithms** to decide what posts or videos you see first.
A. A group of people who manage social media accounts
B. A set of rules or steps used by computers to make decisions
5. Even with computer help, doctors still need to use their **human judgement** to make final decisions.
A. A legal decision made by a court
B. The ability of people to make choices using experience and thinking
6. Shops collect **market intelligence** to learn what customers like and what other stores are doing.
A. Information about products, customers, and competitors
B. How smart people are in a business
7. In some tasks, computers can **outperform** people by being faster and more accurate.
A. Watch someone while they work
B. Do a job better than someone else
8. Computers can now do many **cognitive tasks**, like reading, writing, and doing math.
A. Physical tasks that involve moving objects
B. Mental tasks that involve thinking and understanding

9. Many companies use machines to **reduce costs** by spending less on workers or materials.
 - A. Spend less money to run a business
 - B. Make more money by selling products
10. New tools help office workers **enhance productivity** by finishing tasks more quickly.
 - A. Work more efficiently and get more done
 - B. Work fewer hours each day
11. When there is no clear answer, some people trust their **human instincts** to make a choice.
 - A. A rule they learned in training
 - B. A natural feeling or reaction about what to do
12. Some workers give **false data** to systems so they can meet targets or get bonuses.
 - A. Extra information that is not needed
 - B. Wrong or made-up information
13. People want AI to be **trustworthy and transparent**, so they know how it makes choices.
 - A. New and creative
 - B. Honest and easy to understand
14. The idea of **pensioned retirement** - stopping work and getting paid every month - is less common now.
 - A. Leaving a job and receiving regular payments afterward
 - B. Changing to a new job with higher pay
15. Thanks to **automation**, many jobs like packing or cleaning are now done by machines.
 - A. Moving workers from one job to another
 - B. Using machines to do tasks without human help
16. When machines take over tasks, some workers face **redundancy** and lose their jobs.
 - A. Losing a job because it is no longer needed
 - B. Getting the same job in another company
17. Fast changes in work make many people worry about their **job security**.
 - A. Safety rules people follow while working
 - B. The feeling of being safe from losing your job

Activity 2: Match each use of a dash (-) to the correct example.

1. To emphasize	a. Even the simplest tasks – washing, dressing, and going to work – were nearly impossible after I broke my leg
2. To define a term	b. Our teacher – who often gets cross when we're late – wasn't cross at all
3. To give examples or list items	c. Genocide – the systematic killing of a racial group – is an atrocity that has created black holes in history
4. To provide further explanation, clarification or summary of the content before the dash	d. The students – they were each over the age of eighteen – lined up in the streets to vote for the presidential candidates



EXAM NOTE 1:

The dash (—) can set off extra information, such as examples, explanatory or descriptive phrases. A dash also introduces a clause that explains or expands upon something that precedes it.

When skimming or reading for main information, you DON'T need to focus on what between the dashes.

The future of work

According to a leading business consultancy, 3-14% of the global workforce will need to switch to a different occupation within the next 10-15 years, and all workers will need to adapt as their occupations evolve alongside increasingly capable machines. Automation – or ‘embodied artificial intelligence’ (AI) – is one aspect of the disruptive effects of technology on the labour market. ‘Disembodied AI’, like the algorithms running in our smartphones, is another.

Dr Stella Pachidi from Cambridge Judge Business School believes that some of the most fundamental changes are happening as a result of the ‘algorithmicisation’ of jobs that are dependent on data rather than on production – the so-called knowledge economy. Algorithms are capable of learning from data to undertake tasks that previously needed human judgement, such as reading legal contracts, analysing medical scans and gathering market intelligence.

‘In many cases, they can outperform humans,’ says Pachidi. ‘Organisations are attracted to using algorithms because they want to make choices based on what they consider is “perfect information”, as well as to reduce costs and enhance productivity.’

‘But these enhancements are not without consequences,’ says Pachidi. ‘If routine cognitive tasks are taken over by AI, how do professions develop their future experts?’ she asks. ‘One way of learning about a job is “legitimate peripheral participation” – a novice stands next to experts and learns by observation. If this isn’t happening, then you need to find new ways to learn.’

Another issue is the extent to which the technology influences or even controls the workforce. For over two years, Pachidi monitored a telecommunications company. ‘The way telecoms salespeople work is through personal and frequent contact with clients, using the benefit of experience to assess a situation and reach a decision. However, the company had started using a(n) ... algorithm that defined when account managers should contact certain customers about which kinds of campaigns and what to offer them.’

The algorithm – usually build by external designers – often becomes the keeper of knowledge, she explains. In cases like this, Pachidi believes, a short-sighted view begins to creep into working practices whereby workers learn through the ‘algorithm’s eyes’ and become dependent on its instructions. Alternative explorations – where experimentation and human instinct lead to progress and new ideas – are effectively discouraged.

Pachidi and colleagues even observed people developing strategies to make the algorithm work to their own advantage. 'We are seeing cases where workers feed the algorithm with false data to reach their targets,' she reports.

It's scenarios like these that many researchers are working to avoid. Their objective is to make AI technologies more trustworthy and transparent, so that organisations and individuals understand how AI decisions are made. In the meantime, says Pachidi, 'We need to make sure we fully understand the dilemmas that this new world raises regarding expertise, occupational boundaries and control.'

Economist Professor Hamish Low believes that the future of work will involve major transitions across the whole life course for everyone: 'The traditional trajectory of full-time education followed by full-time work followed by a pensioned retirement is a thing of the past,' says Low. Instead, he envisages a multistage employment life: one where retraining happens across the life course, and where multiple jobs and no job happen by choice at different stages.

On the subject of job losses, Low believes the predictions are founded on a fallacy: 'It assumes that the number of jobs is fixed. If in 30 years, half of 100 jobs are being carried out by robots, that doesn't mean we are left with just 50 jobs for humans. The number of jobs will increase: we would expect there to be 150 jobs.'

Dr Ewan McGaughey, at Cambridge's Centre for Business Research and King's College London, agrees that 'apocalyptic' views about the future of work are misguided. 'It's the laws that restrict the supply of capital to the job market, not the advent of new technologies that causes unemployment.'

His recently published research answers the question of whether automation, AI and robotics will mean a 'jobless future' by looking at the causes of unemployment. 'History is clear that change can mean redundancies. But social policies can tackle this through retraining and redeployment.'

He adds: 'If there is going to be change to jobs as a result of AI and robotics then I'd like to see governments seizing the opportunity to improve policy to enforce good job security. We can "reprogramme" the law to prepare for a fairer future of work and leisure.' McGaughey's findings are a call to arms to leaders of organisations, governments and banks to pre-empt the coming changes with bold new policies that guarantee full employment, fair incomes and a thriving economic democracy.

'The promises of these new technologies are astounding. They deliver humankind the capacity to live in a way that nobody could have once imagined,' he adds. 'Just as the industrial revolution brought people past subsistence agriculture, and the corporate revolution enabled mass production, a third revolution has been pronounced. But it will not only be one of technology. The next revolution will be social.'

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Multiple-choice questions (MCQs) are a common task in the IELTS Reading Test. These questions test your ability to understand detailed information, identify the main ideas, and recognize specific points in the text.

- Question and Options: Each question provides 3-4 possible answers, and you must select the best one.
- Focus on Detail: MCQs may test specific details, the main idea, or the author's opinion.
- Order of Questions: The questions generally follow the order of the passage.

Activity 3: Look at the task below.

a. To answer each question, do you have to understand the main idea (M) of a paragraph or understand specific details (S)?

b. Which paragraphs have the information you need to answer questions 1-4 below? (Underline the key words and SCAN the text)

1. The first paragraph tells us about?

2. What is Stella Pachidi's view of the 'knowledge economy'?

3. What did Pachidi observe at the telecommunications company?

4. What is Ewan McGaughey's main idea in this recently published research?



EXAM NOTE 2: Locating information

Some multiple-choice questions require understanding the main idea of a paragraph, while others focus on specific details. If the question doesn't indicate which paragraph to read, locate the information by scanning for keywords from the question in the text. This strategy helps you quickly find the relevant section and answer accurately.

Activity 4: Skim the first paragraph of the reading passage *The Future of Work*. Decide which sentence is the topic sentence. Why?

Now answer this question.

27. The first paragraph tells us about

- A. the kinds of jobs that will be most affected by the growth of AI.
- B. how much AI will alter the kind of work that people do.
- C. the proportion of the world's labour force who will have jobs in AI in the future.
- D. the difference between ways that embodied and disembodied AI with impact on workers

Activity 5:

5.1. Look at Paragraph 2 and Question 28. Underline the part that contains the information of Stella Pachidi's view.

28. According to the second paragraph, what is Stella Pachidi's view of the 'knowledge economy'?

- A. It is having an influence on the number of jobs available.
- B. It is changing people's attitudes towards their occupations.
- C. It is the main reason why the production sector is declining.
- D. It is a key factor driving current developments in the workplace.

5.2. Look at the incorrect options in Question 28, why are they wrong?

- A. The text does not mention the number of jobs being created or lost as a result of the knowledge economy. Instead, it focuses on how algorithms are changing the nature of work, not the quantity of jobs.
- B. There is no mention of people's attitudes or feelings about their work. The text discusses tasks being automated by algorithms, not how people perceive their jobs.
- C. The passage does not mention the production sector at all. It focuses on jobs in the knowledge economy, which are data-driven, rather than production-based.



EXAM NOTE 3: Recognizing distractors for Multiple-Choice Questions

In multiple-choice questions, all the options will typically be mentioned or referenced in the text in some way. However, only **one option** will fully and accurately answer the question. The other options, known as **distractors**, may seem correct at first glance but are either incomplete, irrelevant, or contradictory to the question.

How to Recognize Distractors:

1. Partially Correct Information: A distractor may include information from the text but does not fully address the question.

Tip: Always compare the option with the specific details in the text.

2. Irrelevant Information: Some distractors contain information from the text that is unrelated to the question.

Tip: Focus on how the information connects directly to the question.

3. Opposite Meaning: Distractors may present the opposite meaning of what the text conveys.

Tip: Pay attention to qualifiers like not, only, always, or comparisons that might subtly change the meaning.

4. Paraphrased Words: Distractors may use synonyms or rephrased ideas to confuse you.

Tip: Look for the meaning, not just similar words, when matching options to the text.

Now answer questions 29-30.

29. What did Pachidi observe at the telecommunications company?

- A. staff disagreeing with the recommendations of AI
- B. staff feeling resentful about the intrusion of AI in their work
- C. staff making sure that AI produces the results that they want
- D. staff allowing AI to carry out tasks they ought to do themselves

30. In his recently published research, Ewan McGaughey

- A. challenges the idea that redundancy is a negative thing.
- B. shows the profound effect of mass unemployment on society.
- C. highlights some differences between past and future job losses.
- D. illustrates how changes in the job market can be successfully handled.

Activity 6: Read the passage again and answer the following questions.

Questions 31-34

The 'algorithmic' jobs

Stella Pachidi of Cambridge Judge Business School has been focusing on the 'algorithmic' of jobs which rely not on production but on 31 _____.

While monitoring a telecommunications company, Pachidi observed a growing 32 _____ on the recommendations made by AI, as workers begin to learn through the 'algorithm's eyes'. Meanwhile, staff are deterred from experimenting and using their own 33 _____, and are therefore prevented from achieving innovation.

To avoid the kind of situations which Pachidi observed, researchers are trying to make AI's decision-making process easier to comprehend, and to increase users' 34 _____ with regard to the technology.

A. Pressure

C. Intuition

E. Reliance

G. Information

B. Satisfaction

D. Promotion

F. Confidence

Questions 35-40

Look at the following ideas (Questions 35-40) and the list of researchers below.

Match each idea with the correct researcher, A, B or C.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

List of people
A. Stella Pachidi
B. Hamish Low
C. Ewan McGaughey

35. Greater levels of automation will not result in lower employment.
36. There are several reasons why AI is attractive to businesses.
37. AI's potential to transform people's lives is similar to big changes in history.
38. It is important to understand the range of problems that AI may cause.
39. People's jobs are going to be different from the past.
40. Authorities should take measures to ensure that there will be adequately paid work for everyone.



EXAM NOTE 4: Matching Questions (People and Opinions)

For Matching questions involving people and their opinions, use the following strategy:

1. Scan for Names: Quickly scan the text to locate the names of the people mentioned in the options.

2. Read Closely: Carefully read the information or opinions associated with each name.

3. Compare and Match: Compare the details in the text with the ideas or statements in the question to find the correct match.

All the statements provided in the task are true, so this task is **mostly about locating evidence in the text** and **recognizing paraphrasing**. This makes it a relatively straightforward task as long as you stay focused on matching ideas.

Activity 7: Look at the sentences in Question 31-34, identify how these sentences are paraphrased from the Reading test, note down the phrases with similar meanings.

31. Stella Pachidi has been focusing on the 'algorithmication' of jobs which rely not on production but on information.

32. Pachidi observed a growing reliance on the recommendations made by AI, as workers begin to learn through the 'algorithm's eyes'.

33. Meanwhile, staff are deterred from experimenting and using their own intuition, and are therefore prevented from achieving innovation.

34. ... researchers are trying to make AI's decision-making process easier to comprehend, and to increase users' confidence with regard to the technology.

Activity 8: Read the statements below carefully. Decide whether each statement describes a pro or a con of AI/automation on work. Note down which part from the text you can refer to.

1. AI can outperform humans in routine cognitive tasks, increasing productivity.

2. Automation may lead to a lack of opportunities for new professionals to learn by observing experts.

3. Algorithms allow organisations to make decisions based on "perfect information."

4. Over-reliance on algorithms can discourage human innovation and instinct.

5. AI and robotics can create more jobs in the long term.

6. Workers sometimes manipulate algorithms to achieve personal targets.

7. Automation can reduce costs for businesses.

8. Changes in job roles may require frequent retraining for workers.

9. Governments have the opportunity to improve policies for job security.
