

Unions

Pre-task:

Do some research on unions in your field: Which are the most important/most powerful unions in your field? What are their demands, and what actions have they taken in recent years? Share the information you have found with your partner. Do the roles and approaches of unions differ in your home countries?



Image 1

Task 1:

Discuss the importance of unions in your field. What has changed in the past few years when it comes to workers' rights in your country? Compare with your partner.

Task 2:

Why do you think people would or wouldn't go on strike? Would you, personally, go on strike? What kind of actions would you consider 'too much'? Find a specific example (e.g. the NHS strikes in the UK).

Bonus

Redundant

Health insurance

Redundancy pay

Holiday pay

Meeting

Holiday entitlement

Internship

Parental leave

Apprenticeship

Overtime

Health and safety

Promotion

(Trade) union

Salary increase

Work experience

Sick pay

Strike

Pension scheme

Improving worker safety

Wages

Improving living standards

(Reducing number of) working hours

Healthy work/life balance

To fire

Equality legislation

To resign

Ostensible self-employment

National minimum wage

Annual leave

Discrimination

Abide by contracts

After much thought, ...

After weighing up both sides of the argument ...

As I see it, ...

Correct me if I'm wrong, but ...

For me/ From my point of view, ...

I am not very familiar with this topic, but ...

I do believe/ feel/think ...

I have come to the conclusion that ...

I might change my mind later, but ...

I reckon/suppose ...

I'm (absolutely) convinced that ...

Personally speaking / Speaking for myself ...

The way I see it (is) ...

You could say ...

Follow-up activity:

Explain labour market rules of your countries to one another that are important in your field or the environment you work in. Then prepare a little role play for your next meeting:

A: One of you acts as a member of a union, the other is a member of one of the biggest firms in your field/the government and you are about to enter into collective bargaining. Which are the problems you could encounter, and what consequences could arise from these talks?

B: Alternatively, imagine you are a laboratory assistant and you went to work when you were ill (you had to because you were working freelance/on a zero hour-contract). Because you were ill you couldn't concentrate well and almost caused a big accident with chemicals. Now, the company you are working at wants to sue you. You take this incident to the union to see what can be done about the situation. Your partner is a member of the union and will advise you on how to proceed.

Sources

Image 1 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/rogerblackwell/15858580416>