




International Workers’ Day, also known as **Labour Day** or **May Day**, is celebrated on **May 1st** in many **countries around the world**. It is a day dedicated to recognizing the contributions of workers and the labor movement’s ongoing fight for fair wages, reasonable working hours, and safe conditions.

Vocabulary: Workers’ Rights

A. Here are some words related to workers and their rights. Divide them into the three columns.

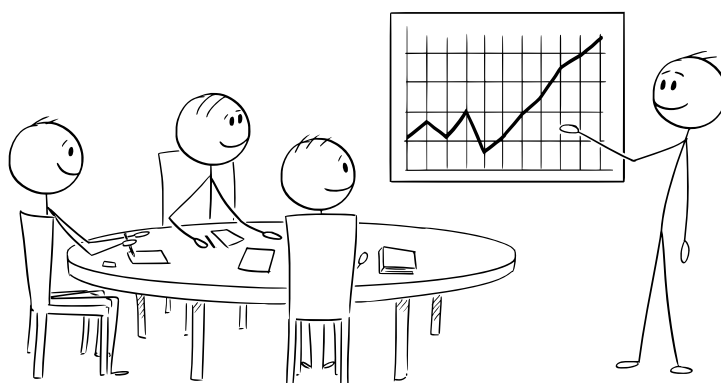
salary - minimum wage - job security - full-time vs part-time - overtime labor union - strike
collective bargaining - sick leave - redundancy - exploitation - zero-hour contract - wage gap -
burnout - gig economy

POSITIVE	NEUTRAL	NEGATIVE
		

B. Use the words from the column to fill in the conversation questions. Then, ask and answer the questions in pairs.



1. How important is a high _____ when choosing a job? Why?
2. Do you think the _____ in your country is fair? Why or why not?
3. Would you prioritize _____ over a higher salary? Why?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working _____ versus _____?
5. Have you ever worked _____? Should employees always be paid extra for it?
6. In your opinion, how important are _____ in protecting workers' rights?
7. Have you ever witnessed or participated in a _____? What happened?
8. How should companies handle _____ to ensure employees don't feel pressured to work when unwell?
9. What should employers do to support workers facing _____?
10. How can companies prevent worker _____ and ensure ethical treatment?
11. Do you think _____ contracts are fair for employees? Why or why not?
12. What factors contribute to the _____ between men and women?
13. What are some warning signs of _____? How can workers avoid it?



Pre-Listening

Before you listen, look at the **two tasks** below. For each option (A–H), try to **paraphrase** what the idea might sound like in real life. Think about how a speaker might **express this concern** or describe the **unexpected outcome** in other language. The first one has been done for you.

TASK ONE: Concerns about work

- A. The risk of being replaced by automation. They're introducing new software that can do most of my job.
- B. The difficulty of balancing work and personal life _____
- C. The unfairness of short-term contracts _____
- D. The need for better pay and working conditions _____
- E. The fear of speaking up against an employer _____
- F. The lack of career advancement opportunities _____
- G. The impact of job stress on mental health _____
- H. The challenge of working without paid benefits _____



TASK TWO: Unexpected outcomes

➔ What might a person say if they were describing these results?

- A. They became more politically active After that, I joined a union and started attending protests
- B. They found better job opportunities elsewhere. _____
- C. They gained a new skill out of necessity _____
- D. They realized job security is more important than salary. _____
- E. They formed strong workplace friendships _____
- F. They started prioritizing their mental health _____
- G. They left their industry for a completely different career _____
- H. They became more cautious about signing contracts _____

Listening

In this **Listening Part 4** task, you will hear five different people talking about their experiences related to employment and workers' rights.

While you listen, you must complete **two tasks simultaneously**:

1 For Questions 21-25, choose the main concern each speaker expresses about their job.

2 For Questions 26-30, decide what unexpected consequence each speaker experienced.

Task 1:

What is the main concern each speaker expresses?

21. Speaker 1: ____

22. Speaker 2: ____

23. Speaker 3: ____

24. Speaker 4: ____

25. Speaker 5: ____



A. The risk of being replaced by automation

B. The difficulty of balancing work and personal life

C. The unfairness of short-term contracts

D. The need for better pay and working conditions

E. The fear of speaking up against an employer

F. The lack of career advancement opportunities

G. The impact of job stress on mental health

H. The challenge of working without paid benefits

Task 2:

What was the unexpected consequence of their situation?

26. Speaker 1: ____

27. Speaker 2: ____

28. Speaker 3: ____

29. Speaker 4: ____

30. Speaker 5: ____



A. They became more politically active

B. They found better job opportunities elsewhere

C. They gained a new skill out of necessity

D. They realized job security is more important than salary

E. They formed strong workplace friendships

F. They started prioritizing their mental health

G. They left their industry for a completely different career

H. They became more cautious about signing contracts

Post-Listening Activity: Roleplay – The Workplace Roundtable



Context:

A group of employees at **WorkWell Inc.** have been experiencing different challenges at work. The management has agreed to sit down with representatives from each department to discuss possible changes.

Your teacher will give you a role to play. Then you have some time to think about this:

- Your main concern or demand
- One example or anecdote from your “experience”
- What kind of change you want to see
- How you would respond to other characters’ views

The Roundtable Discussion (10–15 mins)

In character, each student take turns explaining their position. Then you will respond to each other and try to come to an agreement about:

- Two changes you all want
- One compromise for management

Answer Key

POSITIVE	NEUTRAL	NEGATIVE
job security labor union collective bargaining	salary minimum wage full time part-time overtime	redundancy exploitation zero-hour contract wage gap burnout gig economy

- How important is a high **salary** when choosing a job? Why? (salary)
- Do you think the **minimum wage** in your country is fair? Why or why not? (minimum wage)
- Would you prioritize **job security** over a higher salary? Why? (job security)
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of working **full-time** versus **part-time**? (full-time, part-time)
- Have you ever worked **overtime**? Should employees always be paid extra for it? (overtime)
- In your opinion, how important are **labor unions** in protecting workers' rights? (labor unions)
- Have you ever witnessed or participated in a **strike**? What happened? (strike)
- Why is **collective bargaining** an important process for workers and employers? (collective bargaining)
- How should companies handle **sick leave** to ensure employees don't feel pressured to work when unwell? (sick leave)
- What should employers do to support workers facing **redundancy**? (redundancy)
- How can companies prevent worker **exploitation** and ensure ethical treatment? (exploitation)
- Do you think **zero-hour** contracts are fair for employees? Why or why not? (zero-hour contracts)
- What factors contribute to the **wage gap** between men and women? (wage gap)
- What are some warning signs of **burnout**? How can workers avoid it? (burnout)
- Would you ever consider working in the **gig economy**? Why or why not? (gig economy)

TASK ONE: Concerns about work (*Example answers*)

➡ What might a person *actually* say if they were expressing these concerns?

- A. The risk of being replaced by automation
→ “They’re introducing new software that can do most of my job.”
- B. The difficulty of balancing work and personal life
→ “I’m constantly working late — I barely see my family.”
- C. The unfairness of short-term contracts
→ “They keep renewing my contract every few months, but there’s no stability.”
- D. The need for better pay and working conditions
→ “We haven’t had a raise in years, and the office is freezing in winter.”
- E. The fear of speaking up against an employer
→ “I wanted to complain, but I was scared I’d get fired.”
- F. The lack of career advancement opportunities
→ “There’s no chance of a promotion, no matter how hard I work.”
- G. The impact of job stress on mental health
→ “I feel exhausted all the time, and I can’t stop thinking about work.”
- H. The challenge of working without paid benefits
→ “If I get sick, I don’t get paid — it’s really stressful.”

TASK TWO: Unexpected outcomes (*Example answers*)

➡ What might a person say if they were describing these results?

- A. They became more politically active
→ “After that, I joined a union and started attending protests.”
- B. They found better job opportunities elsewhere
→ “It pushed me to apply for a new job, and I actually got a much better one.”
- C. They gained a new skill out of necessity
→ “I had to learn how to manage social media because no one else could do it.”
- D. They realized job security is more important than salary
→ “I used to chase high-paying jobs, but now I just want stability.”
- E. They formed strong workplace friendships
→ “We were all in the same boat, and that really brought us together.”
- E. They formed strong workplace friendships
→ “We were all in the same boat, and that really brought us together.”
- F. They started prioritizing their mental health
→ “I began going to therapy and taking time off when I needed it.”
- G. They left their industry for a completely different career
→ “I quit and retrained as a nurse — best decision I ever made.”
- H. They became more cautious about signing contracts
→ “Now I read every clause and ask questions before accepting anything.”

Audioscript – C1 Listening Part 4: Workers' Rights & Employment Challenges

Speaker 1

I used to think having a job meant I wouldn't have to worry about my future. But when my company started making cuts, I quickly realized that no one was safe, and I still haven't been made permanent, so there's no stability. Some of my colleagues, who had been there for over ten years, were suddenly let go without much explanation. Seeing that made me question how secure my own position really was. It was a stressful period, but on the bright side, it pushed me to enroll in vocational training courses so I'd have more options in case I ever found myself in the same situation.

(Main concern: C – The unfairness of short-term contracts)

(Unexpected consequence: C – They gained a new skill out of necessity)

Speaker 2

At first, I was excited about my new job, but I quickly realized the expectations were completely unrealistic, although I was extremely well compensated and was suddenly financially solvent, which was new for me. We were constantly asked to stay late, sometimes working well past midnight. It wasn't technically "mandatory," but we all knew that refusing could affect our chances of getting promoted. After months of this, I started feeling exhausted all the time, and I ended up breaking up with my girlfriend. I would have preferred to skip some luxuries and have some peace of mind. Eventually, I reached a breaking point—I had to leave before it destroyed my health.

(Main concern: B – The difficulty of balancing work and personal life)

(Unexpected consequence: D – They realized job security is more important than salary)

Speaker 3

I'd been job hunting for ages and couldn't believe it when I was offered the job of my dreams. I was thrilled when I got my first paycheck, but I quickly realized after paying my bills, I barely had anything left. I absolutely love what I'm doing and I truly believe that I'm helping people but I don't see any possibility of improvement in the future. Some of my colleagues have been working here for years and still earn barely more than the minimum wage. I could have left my job for an accounting position, but instead I joined a labor union and started fighting for better pay and working conditions—not just for me, but for everyone in my field.

(Main concern: D – The need for better pay and working conditions)

(Unexpected consequence: A – They became more politically active)

Speaker 4

I never thought much about my rights at work until I got sick last year. I assumed I could just take a few days off, but then I found out that my contract didn't include paid sick leave. If I didn't work, I wouldn't get paid. It was a terrible situation—I had to choose between recovering or paying my rent. And I was worried that protesting would get me into hot water, so I went into work, even with a fever. After that, I started talking to my colleagues

and realized many of them were in the same situation. We started discussing ways to push for better conditions, and for the first time, I felt a real sense of solidarity with my coworkers.

(Main concern: E – The fear of speaking up against an employer)

(Unexpected consequence: E – They formed strong workplace friendships)

Speaker 5

When I started my new job, I was excited to prove myself. But after a few months, I realized my opportunities for growth were extremely limited. No matter how hard I worked, promotions always seemed to go to the same group of people. I wanted to stay and build a career, but I knew I wouldn't get anywhere unless I moved on. It was frustrating, but in a way, it was also a wake-up call—it pushed me to explore new opportunities and eventually switch to a company that valued my skills.

(Main concern: F. The lack of career advancement opportunities)

(Unexpected consequence: B – They found better job opportunities elsewhere)

Speaker 3

I'd been job hunting for ages and couldn't believe it when I was offered the job of my dreams. I was thrilled when I got my first paycheck, but I quickly realized after paying my bills, I barely had anything left. I absolutely love what I'm doing and I truly believe that I'm helping people but I don't see any possibility of improvement in the future. Some of my colleagues have been working here for years and still earn barely more than the minimum wage. I could have left my job for an accounting position, but instead I joined a labor union and started fighting for better pay and working conditions—not just for me, but for everyone in my field.

(Main concern: D – The need for better pay and working conditions)

(Unexpected consequence: A – They became more politically active)

Speaker 4

I never thought much about my rights at work until I got sick last year. I assumed I could just take a few days off, but then I found out that my contract didn't include paid sick leave. If I didn't work, I wouldn't get paid. It was a terrible situation—I had to choose between recovering or paying my rent. And I was worried that protesting would get me into hot water, so I went into work, even with a fever. After that, I started talking to my colleagues and realized many of them were in the same situation. We started discussing ways to push for better conditions, and for the first time, I felt a real sense of solidarity with my coworkers.

(Main concern: E – The fear of speaking up against an employer)

(Unexpected consequence: E – They formed strong workplace friendships)

Speaker 5

When I started my new job, I was excited to prove myself. But after a few months, I realized my opportunities for growth were extremely limited. No matter how hard I worked, promotions always seemed to go to the same group of people. I wanted to stay and build a career, but I knew I wouldn't get anywhere unless I moved on. It was frustrating, but in a way, it was also a wake-up call—it pushed me to explore new opportunities and eventually switch to a company that valued my skills.

(Main concern: F. The lack of career advancement opportunities)

(Unexpected consequence: B – They found better job opportunities elsewhere)