

## Technology in the Workplace

**Note to teacher or student:** Vocabulary words are capitalized and starred (\*) in the following paragraphs. Under each paragraph, a definition of the vocabulary words is given. At the end of Section 4, there are questions which the teacher may use to test a student, or a student may use to review his/her knowledge.

### Introduction:

Technology has changed the world of work since factories began in the 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY\*. For example, a machine called a *cotton gin* takes SEEDS\* out of COTTON\* and makes it easier to manufacture COTTON. When we talk about technology today, we are usually talking about *hardware*, such as HARD DRIVES\* and MONITORS\*, or we are talking about *software*, such as WORD PROCESSING PROGRAMS\*, the internet, or networks, which help computers to communicate with each other. Technology also means collecting, analyzing and storing DATA\*. Technology AFFECTS\* today's world of work in many ways: **the way we find work; the types of jobs we do; the education and skills we need to work; how we work; how a company works.**

### \*VOCABULARY

1. **19<sup>th</sup> century:** The years between 1800 and 1900, sometimes called *the eighteen hundreds*.
2. **Seed:** The small, hard part of a plant that makes a new plant.
3. **Cotton:** A plant with soft, white hairs that are used for making cloth, clothes, blankets, etc.
4. **Hard drive:** The physical, hard part of a computer.
5. **Monitor:** The part of a computer where you see what you're doing; also called the screen.
6. **Word processing program:** A program in a computer that helps with writing and changing documents, such as letters, books, charts, etc.
7. **Data:** Information about a company, school, or community.
8. **Affect:** A verb meaning to change or influence.

### 1. The way we find work

In the past, people looked for jobs in the newspaper, but now they use technology. People can look on WEBSITES\* such as Monster, Indeed.com, and Glass Door. People use SOCIAL MEDIA\* like LinkedIn and Facebook to introduce themselves, connect to other people, and find job opportunities. Employers use these places to find workers.

**\*VOCABULARY**

1. **Website:** a page on the internet that has information about a person, a company, a school, an organization, etc. and often has a way to get to other pages about other things.
2. **Social media:** A way to share personal information, ideas, photos, etc. with others.

**2. The types of jobs we do**

Technology has made some jobs end and some jobs begin. An example of a job that ended with technology is a video rental store. Because internet companies like Netflix can offer movies, we don't need to rent videos. Other examples of jobs that technology ended are TRAVEL AGENT\*, PORTER\*, and ticket agent. Technology makes new jobs, too, like 'APP\* developers', SOCIAL MEDIA experts, and health information managers.

**\*VOCABULARY**

1. **Travel agent:** A person who helps get a good price for an airplane ticket; a person who helps others plan trips.
2. **Porter:** A person who carries another's suitcases, for example at a train station or at a hotel.
3. **App:** An application on a computer or smart phone that lets you do different things like play games or order food.

**3. The education and skills we need**

A lot of work depends on technology. We use technology to do simple things like answering the phone. Employers depend on people to do hard work that needs new ways of thinking. They need people who can change the way they think, and people who have SOCIAL SKILLS\*. An employer might need a person to plan the LAYOUT\* of products in a store. An employer might need a person to give HANDS-ON\* care for sick patients. An employer needs technology for cashiers to use and to save medical information. Technology drives the world of work, and people who want to get, keep, and advance in a good job need to make sure they have the right education and skills. Workers need to know how to use technology.

**\*VOCABULARY**

1. **Social skills:** Skills that help a person act appropriately in a social situation that may include friendliness, eye contact, communication skills, patience, etc. Social skills are very important in the world of work.
2. **Layout:** Plan or design of a store.
3. **Hands-on:** Physically doing something.

#### 4. How we work

##### *Technology has changed how we work by:*

- Making workers more **PRODUCTIVE\***—Using technology can help you do your job better. You can do more, do things faster, and do things more **ACCURATELY\***. For example, with a word-processing program like “Word,” you can write and **EDIT\*** a letter faster than you can if you write it by hand.
- **REDUCING\*** the jobs workers do—Some jobs that workers used to do are now done by technology. For example, lawyers can use computer programs to look through thousands of documents to find information. This lets them spend more time doing work computers can’t do, such as making a case for the courtroom.
- **REPLACING\*** some workers—More and more, we have machines that do work without help from people. This is called **AUTOMATION\***. Many people think that someday machines or robots might **REPLACE** workers. Right now, machines can put together cars, answer phones, and check in passengers at airports. Robots can work together to fill orders. People disagree on how **AUTOMATION** will affect work in the future.
- Making some workers more **MOBILE\***—Cell phones, computers and the internet have helped workers to work from almost anywhere at almost any time. For example, some office workers can work from home, or they can work for a company based in another country. They can check email at the end of the day. With **VIDEOCONFERENCING\***, they can have meetings with people all over the world.
- Connecting people who need **GOODS\*** or **SERVICES\*** to people who can give them. Companies like Uber, AirB&B, and EBay can connect with customers quickly. Uber offers transportation; AirB&B offers places to stay; and EBay offers products to possible buyers.

##### **\*VOCABULARY**

1. **Productive:** Producing or doing a lot in a small amount of time.
2. **Accurately:** Correctly.
3. **Edit:** Correct a document such as a letter or essay.
4. **Reduce:** To make less.
5. **Replace:** To use one thing in place of another. In this case, to use technology in place of people.
6. **Automation:** Computers do the work that people used to do.
7. **Mobile:** Able to move from place to place.
8. **Videoconference:** The ability to meet with other people by video, rather than physically being there.
9. **Goods:** Products of any kind, such as food, clothes, paper, machines, etc.
10. **Services:** What a person can do for another, such as giving a haircut, grooming an animal, giving a medical exam, helping a person solve a problem, etc.

## 5. How companies work

With technology, organizations can produce more goods and provide services faster, more accurately, to more people and in better ways. They can reach more customers. And they can use huge amounts of information about INDIVIDUALS\* to help them sell more. This information is called ‘big data.’ How a company uses technology is what can make it different from other companies.

### \*VOCABULARY

1. Individual: One person.

### Conclusion:

Technology has changed the world of work in these five ways. The internet is a good example of a technology that changed everything. Other technologies that may change our lives are driverless cars, and advanced robots that can work with people or replace people completely. Some jobs are more changed than others by technology. For example, data entry, factory assembly line work and design work all depend on technology.

Technology has had some positive effects, but also some negative. For example, the internet has let many people find an incredible amount of information quickly, but it has made SECURITY\* and PRIVACY\* important. HACKERS\* can get private information they shouldn’t have. Governments make new laws and REGULATIONS\* to keep people safe.

Jobseekers and employees in today’s LABOR MARKET\* must be TECH-SAVVY\*. This can mean:

- Knowing how to operate a computerized cash register
- Knowing how to use Microsoft Office, including Word and Excel
- Knowing how to use medical technology and continuing to participate in training as the technology changes

Employees can STAY CURRENT\* with technological changes in their FIELD\* by reading online or print materials. Jobseekers can prepare for interviews by studying the job market and getting training. Jobseekers who are not tech-savvy are at a disadvantage to people who are.

### \*VOCABULARY

1. Security: Safety.
2. Privacy: Your personal information that is only for you.
3. Hacker: A person who knows how to illegally find on the computer and use other people’s personal information.
4. Regulation: Rule.
5. Labor Market: The world of work.
6. Tech-savvy: Know a lot about technology.
7. Stay current: Know the most up-to-date information about something.
8. Field: Area of work or study.

**For teacher or student:**

Use the following questions connected to each section to review or test.

**Introduction**

1. What is the difference between hardware and software in computers?

**The Way We Find Work**

1. Name one way that people used to look for a job before computers.
2. Name one way that people look for a job now.

**The Types of Jobs We Do**

1. What is an example of a job that has suffered because of technology?
2. What is an example of a job that has been created as a result of technology?

**The Education and Skills We Need**

1. Name a social skill a nurse needs. How about a cashier? A housekeeper in a hotel? A mechanic?
2. Why do workers need to know how to use technology?

**How We Work**

1. Technology has changed the way we work in many ways. Name three ways, and give an example of each.

**How Companies Work**

1. The paragraph says, “How a company uses technology is what can make it different from other companies.” What does this mean? Give an example.

**Conclusion**

1. Tell how some jobs have been changed by technology.
2. Name two positive and two negative consequences of the internet.