

Automation and the Future of Jobs

COMPREHENSION • VOCABULARY • DISCUSSION

INTERACTIVE ONLINE TEST

Take the full interactive test with instant feedback →

<https://www.esl-tests.com/reading/b2/automation-future-jobs>



Reading Passage

Read the passage carefully. Each paragraph is labelled with a letter for easy reference.

- A** As we move deeper into the 21st century, automation is becoming increasingly prevalent in various industries. From manufacturing to customer service, machines and algorithms are taking over tasks that were once performed by humans. For instance, in 2022, a report from the World Economic Forum indicated that around 85 million jobs could be displaced by automation by 2025. However, this shift does not only mean job loss; it also presents new opportunities. The same report suggested that 97 million new roles could emerge that are more suited to the changing landscape of work, emphasizing the need for adaptability in the workforce.
- B** Education and training will play crucial roles in this transition. Companies are now investing significantly in upskilling their employees to prepare them for the future. For example, a large tech firm in Silicon Valley recently launched a comprehensive program aimed at training its workers in artificial intelligence and machine learning. This initiative not only helps employees transition into new roles but also ensures that the company remains competitive in a rapidly evolving market. As automation continues to evolve, the key will be finding a balance between leveraging technology and maintaining a skilled human workforce capable of innovation and creativity. Furthermore, as industries adapt, the workforce must also embrace lifelong learning to stay relevant and effectively contribute to their organizations. This ongoing education will be essential for navigating the complexities of an automated future.

Vocabulary Glossary

Key words and phrases from the passage. Study them before attempting the exercise below.

WORD / PHRASE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
prevalent	common in a particular place or time	<i>Smartphones are prevalent in modern society.</i>
displaced	when someone or something is moved from its usual place	<i>The new shopping mall displaced several local businesses.</i>
adaptability	the ability to change when needed	<i>Adaptability is important when starting a new job.</i>
upskilling	learning new skills to do a different or better job	<i>The company offers courses for employee upskilling.</i>
competitive	trying to be better than others	<i>The market for new phones is highly competitive.</i>
leveraging	using something to gain an advantage	<i>He is leveraging his network to find a new job.</i>
innovation	a new idea or method	<i>Innovation in technology is happening rapidly.</i>
navigate	to find a way to deal with something	<i>She had to navigate a difficult work situation.</i>

Vocabulary Exercise — Fill in the Blank

Use one word or phrase from the glossary above to complete each sentence. Each item is used only once. Answers are on the final page.

1. Smartphones are _____ in most parts of the world today.
2. Many workers were _____ by the introduction of new machines.
3. Employees need _____ to handle the constant changes in the industry.
4. The company focuses on _____ to help employees keep up with technology.
5. Staying _____ is crucial for the survival of any business.
6. By _____ new technology, the company improved its production process.

Comprehension Questions

These questions are different from the online practice test. Choose the best answer (A, B, C, or D). Answers and explanations are on the final page.

Question 1

What does the passage say about the potential impact of automation on jobs?

- A. Automation will only lead to job loss.
- B. Automation will create more jobs than it destroys.
- C. Automation presents both challenges and opportunities.
- D. Automation is not a significant factor for future jobs.

Question 2

Why is adaptability considered important in the future workforce?

- A. Because it helps workers stay in the same job.
- B. Because it allows workers to handle changes in the work environment.
- C. Because it guarantees job security.
- D. Because it prevents the need for upskilling.

Question 3

What role does education play according to the passage?

- A. It is only important for young people.
- B. It is a minor factor in the future job market.
- C. It is crucial for adapting to an automated future.
- D. It is unnecessary because of automation.

Question 4

What does the passage suggest about companies' investment in training?

- A. It is only to increase profits.
- B. It helps companies remain competitive.
- C. It is a temporary trend.
- D. It is unnecessary in the tech industry.

Question 5

What is one of the main themes of the passage?

- A. The inevitability of job loss.
- B. The dominance of machines over humans.
- C. The balance between technology and human skills.
- D. The replacement of education by technology.

Discussion & Writing Prompts

Each prompt references a specific detail from the passage above. Use for classroom discussion or a short written response (150–200 words).

1. Paragraph 1 cites a report predicting 85 million jobs could be displaced by 2025. How do you think societies should prepare for this potential job loss?

2. In Paragraph 2, a tech firm is mentioned as investing in AI training for employees. Do you think other industries should follow this example, and why?

3. The passage talks about the need for lifelong learning in the workforce. What are some ways individuals can pursue ongoing education in your country?

Answer Key

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Q1 C

Q2 B

Q3 C

Q4 B

Q5 C

VOCABULARY EXERCISE

FIB1 prevalent

FIB2 displaced

FIB3 adaptability

FIB4 upskilling

FIB5 competitive

FIB6 leveraging

Comprehension Question Explanations

Why the correct answer is right — and why each wrong option is incorrect.

1. What does the passage say about the potential impact of automation on jobs?

✓ C — Automation presents both challenges and opportunities. The passage mentions both job displacement and the creation of new roles.

✗ A — Automation will only lead to job loss. *The passage also discusses new job opportunities.*

✗ B — Automation will create more jobs than it destroys. *The passage does not claim more jobs will be created than lost.*

✗ D — Automation is not a significant factor for future jobs. *The passage emphasizes the importance of automation.*

2. Why is adaptability considered important in the future workforce?

✓ B — Because it allows workers to handle changes in the work environment. The passage states that adaptability is needed for the changing work landscape.

✗ A — Because it helps workers stay in the same job. *Adaptability is about handling change, not staying in the same role.*

✗ C — Because it guarantees job security. *Adaptability helps cope with change, not guarantee job security.*

✗ D — Because it prevents the need for upskilling. *Adaptability and upskilling are both necessary.*

3. What role does education play according to the passage?

✓ C — It is crucial for adapting to an automated future. The passage states education is essential for navigating the future.

✗ A — It is only important for young people. *The passage discusses education's importance for all in the workforce.*

✗ B — It is a minor factor in the future job market. *The passage emphasizes the significant role of education.*

✗ D — It is unnecessary because of automation. *Education is highlighted as necessary despite automation.*

4. What does the passage suggest about companies' investment in training?

✓ B — It helps companies remain competitive. The passage mentions training ensures companies stay competitive.

✗ A — It is only to increase profits. *The passage highlights competitiveness, not just profit.*

✗ C — It is a temporary trend. *The passage presents it as an ongoing need, not temporary.*

✗ D — It is unnecessary in the tech industry. *The passage gives an example from the tech industry.*

5. What is one of the main themes of the passage?

✓ **C — The balance between technology and human skills.**

The passage discusses balancing technology with human skills and learning.

✗ **A — The inevitability of job loss.**

The passage also talks about job creation.

✗ **B — The dominance of machines over humans.**

The focus is on coexistence, not dominance.

✗ **D — The replacement of education by technology.**

The passage emphasizes the importance of education.

MORE B2 LEVEL READING PRACTICE

Letters Refugee Camp Family Story Hope — <https://www.esl-tests.com/reading/b2/letters-refugee-camp-family-story-hope>

Global Health Preparedness Lessons Recent Pandemics — <https://www.esl-tests.com/reading/b2/global-health-preparedness-lessons-recent-pandemics>

Climate Migration Communities Move — <https://www.esl-tests.com/reading/b2/climate-migration-communities-move>