



The Future of Jobs

Will Robots Replace Us?

How AI and automation are changing the world of work

■ B1 Reading ■ 30 min ■ Work & Education

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| Level | B1 (Intermediate) |
| Skill | Reading |
| Topic | Work & Education — AI, Automation, Future Careers |
| Duration | 30 minutes |
| Age Group | Teens & Adults |

Learning Objectives

- ◆ Read and understand a text about AI and automation in the workplace
- ◆ Learn 16 key vocabulary items related to technology and careers
- ◆ Identify jobs at risk and jobs safe from automation
- ◆ Discuss future career plans and necessary skills
- ◆ Write about personal career goals and technology's role

1 Before You Read — What Do You Think?

Before reading, discuss or think about these questions:

1. Can you name three jobs that did not exist twenty years ago?
2. Do you think a robot or computer could do your dream job? Why or why not?
3. What skills do you think will be most important in the future?

2 Reading: The Changing World of Work

The Changing World of Work

Imagine walking into a supermarket where there are no cashiers, a factory where machines build cars without any human workers, or a hospital where a computer analyses your medical scans faster and more accurately than any doctor. This is not science fiction — it is already happening. **Artificial intelligence** (AI) and **automation** are transforming the way we work, and the pace of change is faster than ever before.

For many people, these developments are exciting. Technology makes our lives easier, products cheaper, and services faster. But for others, the rise of intelligent machines raises a troubling question: *Will robots take our jobs?*

Jobs at Risk

The short answer is: some jobs, yes. Studies suggest that nearly 40 percent of existing jobs could be **automated** within the next fifteen to twenty years. The jobs most at risk are those that involve **repetitive** tasks — activities that follow the same pattern again and again. Factory assembly line workers, data entry clerks, and warehouse packers are already being replaced by machines that can work 24 hours a day without getting tired, making mistakes, or asking for a pay rise.

But it is not only manual labour that is affected. **White-collar** jobs are also at risk. AI programs can now review legal documents, write basic news articles, translate languages, and even create marketing campaigns. In the financial sector, **algorithms** already make millions of trading decisions every second — far faster than any human broker could. Customer service is another area undergoing rapid change, with **chatbots** handling an increasing number of enquiries that were once managed by call centre staff.

Jobs That Are Safe (For Now)

While machines are excellent at processing data and following rules, there are certain things they still cannot do well. Jobs that require **creativity**, emotional intelligence, or complex human interaction are much harder to automate. Teachers, nurses, therapists, social workers, and artists all rely on skills that machines find extremely difficult to replicate — empathy, moral judgement, **critical thinking**, and the ability to inspire and motivate other human beings.

Skilled tradespeople such as plumbers, electricians, and carpenters are also relatively safe. Their work requires physical problem-solving in unpredictable environments — fixing a leaking pipe in a hundred-year-old house, for example — which is something that even the most advanced robots struggle with. Similarly, jobs that depend on trust and personal relationships, such as counsellors and coaches, are unlikely to be fully automated any time soon.

New Jobs We Cannot Yet Imagine

History teaches us an important lesson: whenever technology destroys old jobs, it also creates new ones. When cars replaced horses, thousands of stable workers lost their jobs — but millions of new jobs appeared in car factories, petrol stations, road construction, and driving schools. The same pattern is happening now. The tech industry has already created entirely new **career paths** that did not exist a generation ago: app developers, social media managers, data scientists, drone operators, and **cybersecurity** specialists, to name just a few.

Experts predict that 65 percent of children starting primary school today will end up working in job types that do not currently exist. This sounds alarming, but it also represents an enormous **opportunity**. The key is to prepare for a world where **adaptability** — the ability to learn new things quickly and adjust to change — is more important than any single qualification or skill.

The Skills You Will Need

So, what should you focus on to stay relevant in the future job market? Education experts and business leaders consistently point to a set of **transferable skills** — skills that are useful across many different industries and roles. These include critical thinking, communication, teamwork, digital **literacy**, and creativity. Perhaps most importantly, you will need to become a **lifelong learner** — someone who never stops acquiring new knowledge and developing new abilities, even long after leaving school or university.

Languages, too, remain incredibly valuable. In a globalised economy, the ability to communicate across cultures gives you a significant advantage. Emotional intelligence — understanding and managing your own feelings, and recognising the feelings of others — is another skill that sets humans apart from machines and is highly valued by employers.

A Human Future

The future of work is not a simple story of humans versus machines. It is a story of humans *working with* machines. A doctor who uses AI to analyse scans will be more effective than either the doctor or the AI alone. A teacher who uses digital tools to personalise lessons for each student will achieve better results than a teacher relying only on traditional methods. The most successful workers of the future will be those who can combine human strengths — creativity, empathy, leadership — with the power of technology.

Change can be frightening, but it can also be incredibly exciting. The world of work is evolving, and those who embrace learning, stay curious, and remain open to new possibilities will not only survive — they will thrive.

3 Key Vocabulary

| Word / Phrase | Definition | Example Sentence |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| artificial intelligence (AI) | computer systems that can perform tasks requiring human intelligence | AI is used in everything from voice assistants to medical research. |
| automation | the use of machines or technology to do work without human help | Automation has made car production much faster and cheaper. |

| Word / Phrase | Definition | Example Sentence |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| automated | operated by machines or computers rather than people | Many supermarkets now have automated checkout machines. |
| repetitive | involving the same actions done again and again | Repetitive tasks like sorting packages are easy for machines to do. |
| white-collar | relating to office or professional work rather than manual labour | White-collar workers in banking are also affected by AI. |
| algorithm | a set of rules a computer follows to solve a problem | Social media uses algorithms to decide what you see in your feed. |
| chatbot | a computer program that simulates human conversation | The company uses a chatbot to answer basic customer questions. |
| creativity | the ability to produce original ideas or things | Creativity is one skill that machines cannot easily copy. |
| critical thinking | the ability to analyse information and make reasoned judgements | Employers value critical thinking more than memorising facts. |
| career path | the series of jobs a person has throughout their working life | A career path in technology can lead to many exciting opportunities. |
| cybersecurity | protection of computer systems from digital attacks | Cybersecurity experts are in high demand as online threats increase. |
| opportunity | a chance to do something positive or beneficial | Learning new skills opens up many opportunities in the job market. |
| adaptability | the ability to change and adjust to new conditions | Adaptability is one of the most important qualities for future workers. |
| transferable skills | abilities that can be used in many different types of jobs | Communication and teamwork are examples of transferable skills. |
| literacy | the ability to read, write, or have knowledge in a particular area | Digital literacy is essential for almost every modern job. |
| lifelong learner | a person who continues to learn new things throughout their life | Being a lifelong learner will be more important than any degree. |

4

Useful Collocations

artificial intelligence · job market · career path · critical thinking · digital literacy · transferable skills · lifelong learning · manual labour · data entry · assembly line · customer service · problem-solving · emotional intelligence · job security · white-collar jobs · adapt to change

5 Reading Comprehension

1. According to the text, what percentage of jobs could be automated in the next 15–20 years?

- a) About 15 percent
- b) About 25 percent
- c) About 40 percent ✓**
- d) About 65 percent

2. Which types of jobs are MOST at risk of being automated?

- a) Jobs requiring empathy and emotional intelligence
- b) Jobs involving repetitive tasks and predictable patterns ✓**
- c) Jobs in education and healthcare
- d) Jobs that involve working outdoors

3. Why are skilled tradespeople relatively safe from automation?

- a) Because they earn very low salaries
- b) Because there are laws protecting their jobs
- c) Because their work requires physical problem-solving in unpredictable environments ✓**
- d) Because robots are too expensive to use in construction

4. What historical example shows that new technology creates new jobs?

- a) The invention of the internet
- b) The Industrial Revolution in England
- c) Cars replacing horses and creating new industries ✓**
- d) The development of smartphones

5. What does the text say about children starting school today?

- a) They will all work in technology
- b) They will not need university degrees
- c) 65% of them will work in job types that do not exist yet ✓**
- d) They should start learning coding immediately

6. What is the text's main message about the future of work?

- a) Machines will completely replace humans in all jobs
- b) Only people with university degrees will find work
- c) Technology is dangerous and should be limited
- d) Humans and machines will work together, and adaptability is key ✓**

6 Vocabulary Exercise — Fill in the Blanks

Complete the sentences with the correct word from the box:

automation · adaptability · algorithm · creativity · lifelong learner · repetitive · transferable
skills · cybersecurity

1. The factory replaced 200 workers with machines as part of its move towards _____.
2. Packing boxes all day is a _____ task that machines can do easily.
3. The streaming service uses an _____ to recommend films you might enjoy.
4. _____ is the one human quality that robots find hardest to imitate.
5. Companies need _____ experts to protect their systems from hackers.
6. Communication, teamwork, and problem-solving are all examples of _____.
7. In a fast-changing world, _____ is more valuable than memorising facts.
8. My grandfather is 72, but he still takes online courses — he is a true _____.

7 Answer Key

■ Vocabulary Exercise Answers

1. automation
2. repetitive
3. algorithm
4. creativity
5. cybersecurity
6. transferable skills
7. adaptability
8. lifelong learner

8 Speaking & Writing Tasks

■ ■ Speaking Task: Discussion

Discuss these questions with a partner or your teacher:

- Which jobs in your country do you think will disappear in the next 20 years?
- Would you trust a robot doctor to examine you? Why or why not?
- What new jobs do you think will exist in 2040 that do not exist today?
- Is it more important to be good at one thing, or to be flexible and learn many skills?

■ Useful Phrases for Talking About the Future

- **In the future**, I think most factories will be fully automated.
- **It is likely that** AI will change the way we learn languages.
- **I doubt that** robots will ever completely replace teachers because...
- **One advantage of automation is that** it makes products cheaper and faster.
- **On the other hand**, many people could lose their jobs as a result.

📄 ■ Writing Task: My Future Career

Write a paragraph (120–160 words) about this topic:

"What kind of job would you like to have in the future? Do you think AI will help you or make your job more difficult?"

Use vocabulary from this lesson. Explain what skills you will need, whether your job is safe from automation, and how you plan to keep learning.