

# UNDERSTANDING WORK AND THE WORKPLACE

## LESSON 2: DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

### Lesson aim:

- To highlight changes to working conditions and practices.
- To explore the impact of changes in the workplace and advances in technology on workers.

### Learning objectives:

At the end of this lesson students will be able to:

- outline changes and highlight differences in the workplace over a number of years; and
- assess the likely impact of new technology on their own and workers' future.

### Lesson outline:

#### In-class activity: Discussion

Ask students to consider what life would have been like 100 years ago for workers and their families in terms of:

- daily life and household chores;
- jobs and associated equipment;
- communications;
- travel and transport; and
- entertainment.

Ask students what they consider to be the most significant differences between now and then? Then consider how these changes might have been brought about – would it have been an easy transition?

#### Student assignment: Changes in the workplace

Students should use **Worksheet 2a** to complete this assignment.

#### Student activity: Past changes

Provide students with **Worksheet 2b** and ask them to answer the questions that follow.

#### In-class activity: Group discussion

Ask students to consider “change” and write the word on the blackboard. What does it mean to each of them? Is change a good or bad thing or is it more complex? What affects how change is perceived? What makes it a good thing or a bad thing? If they wished to implement a change to the workplace, how would they go about it? What might make workplace changes easier to implement?

#### Student assignment: Designs on the future

Ask students to identify what they expect the workplace of the future in the years 2020, 2050 and 2100 to look like. Provide students with **Worksheet 2c** to complete; this is a guide only and areas can be added as required.

## LESSON 2: DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WORKPLACE (CONTINUED)

### In-class activity: Group discussion

On completion of the worksheet students should then consider the following:

- ✎ What is the likely impact of new technologies on workers' lives (inside and outside the workplace)? What do they think would be the most significant change? Why?
- ✎ What do you think might be the issues of concern to workers regarding new developments?
- ✎ Do you think workers of the future will have more or less of a say in the workplace? Why do you think this might be so? How might this be achieved? Do you think this is realistic? Why?
- ✎ Is it a realistic goal that working conditions will improve into the future? Why?
- ✎ How might these improvements be achieved?
- ✎ Do you think improving working pay and conditions is a positive? Give reasons.

### Student activity: Essay

Ask students to write an essay on technology and work-related topics such as the following:

- ✎ "Aspects of our lives still remain untouched by technology."
- ✎ "Advances in technology make skills redundant and causes massive unemployment."
- ✎ "Technology will eventually make workers redundant."
- ✎ "Technology has brought as many negatives for workers as positives."
- ✎ "Education doesn't harness technology as much as it should."
- ✎ "Workers should embrace technology for the freedom it provides."