

## LESSON 4: JOINING A UNION

### Learning objectives:

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

- identify the most appropriate union to join and describe how a worker would go about applying for membership.

### Lesson outline:

Explain to students that if they have taken on a summer, part-time or casual job, they too can be represented by unions. (NOTE: Teachers should always reinforce the preference that students should stay to complete their education.)

- Ask students how many of them have worked in the past or intend working over the summer.

### Use the following to provoke discussion:

- Is there a union that could represent you? Have you thought of joining before?
- Ask students to identify what union could represent them in a current or future job?
- Do you know how to go about joining a union? How?

### Activity: Group work

- Discuss with students a union's aims and activities and the benefits of membership.
- Now in groups ask them to list their reasons for and against joining. A member from each group should report back to the entire class highlighting what the majority feeling of the group was about joining.

Based on the outcome, the class should consider:

- What were the main reasons for joining or not?
- What could unions do to convince more students to join?

### Assignment: Who has a union?

Students should find out from their family/friends about union membership and report their findings back to the class using the following questions as a guide.

- What is your current job/occupation?
- Do you belong to a union? If yes, which one? How and why did you join? If not, why did you not join a union?

Students should then compare the different responses and discuss the responses in class.

### Assignment: Where are union members?

Choose a company or organisation either in your local community or at national level.

Find out who is the head of the company and write to them using the following as a guide:

- Introduce yourself and the reason why you are writing to them.
- Does the company recognise unions? If so, what is the percentage of union members? If not, why not?
- What unions (do or could) represent workers in this organisation?
- What is their experience of unions?
- What are their views on unions? Reasons should be given for this answer.

### Optional activity: Class discussion

Compare the outcome of the reports in terms of the types of organisations in which workers are represented by unions and consider the reasons for this.

- Some employers do not wish workers to join a union, why do you think this might be?
- How could this problem be overcome?
- What would you do if your employer said you weren't allowed to join a union?