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Cheam Common Junior Academy

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Whyteleafe School

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# THE FUTURE OF WORK



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**Progress in technology and important global events throughout history have forced the working world to evolve. Covid-19 has already caused big changes, but what about the future?**

Through November and December, Burnet News Club students took a closer look at the problems and opportunities that might arise in the future of work: how have different industries been affected by the pandemic? What does this mean for their workers? And how might business models change in the future?

In this edition of Hub Highlights we showcase some of the best contributions on this topic.

**SEE EDITOR'S PICKS**  
[bit.ly/EP-Work](https://bit.ly/EP-Work)

*Some entries have been edited for clarity.*

**hardworking\_dinosaur**

## Is a four-day working week back on agenda?

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Ormiston Park Academy

**T**HERE ARE many arguments both for and against having a four-day working week - so let's explore some of the pros and cons.

According to *Eurostat*, people in the UK spend an average of 36.5 hours a week working. This is higher than the overall European average of 36.2 hours. However, that does not make us more efficient.

People have been researching the impact of a four-day working week, both on companies and their employees, and many have found it to be beneficial. Microsoft reported a 40% boost in productivity when it allowed people to have Fridays off in a trial in 2019 .

Having a four-day week might not only help mentally but also environmentally. Countries with traditionally shorter working hours typically have a smaller carbon footprint - so reducing the working week by one day might help the environment by reducing travel for employees and only powering large offices for four days a week.

However, good ideas sometimes have a bad side - such as companies taking the wrong approach. One such company expected their employees to work longer hours to cover for the days they were off. This made people lose concentration and take more sick-leave.

To conclude, I think having a four-day week would be better but it would need to be managed carefully for it to be effective. ■

## THE EXPERT VIEW: Best of the questions



**impartial\_shark**

**Boucher Primary School**

asked Natasha Sayliss, owner of Mae + Harvey cafe, who featured in the [Roman Road video](#) in Session 3

What was the biggest challenge you faced in reacting to the pandemic?



**buzzing\_morning**

**Braiswick Primary School**

asked Kike Oniwinde, founder of the [BYP Network](#)

Have you ever faced difficulties at work because of the colour of your skin?



**meticulous\_ibex**

**Manor Park Primary School**

asked Andy Haldane, Chief Economist at the [Bank of England](#)

What's your most interesting memory from your career so far?



**ethical\_cliff**

**New Horizons Children's Academy**

asked Debbie Marks, founder of [Qube Events and Productions](#)

What top tips do you have to become a successful businesswoman?



**content\_eagle**

## Final Piece: Automation

PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Cheam Common Junior Academy**

**W**E HAVE studied three predictions about the future of work: the rise of the gig economy, more remote working and the focus of my report - increased automation. Even if automation is still in its early stages, it will bring the most changes, problems and opportunities in the future.

One problem with automation, specifically robots, is what if they are developed to have minds of their own? If this happens, they might want rights. Some people might argue that robots with “intelligence” should just be given their own rights too. We may have no choice but to give them what they want. But, if we learn how to keep control of their minds, we could avoid this. A possible solution would be to create control centres to keep all robots in check.

On the other hand, automation is predicted to create many opportunities. For example, it could help make work much quicker, meaning humans could have more free time. We could spend this with our families or even turn our attention to restoring peace and nature. This would make people happier.

The pandemic may be a turning point for work and for automation. People have had to stay at home but robots could be used in their place. For example, scientists could use robots to help them to find a cure for covid-19. As well as this, robots can't catch diseases so people could control robots to do their jobs for them. This might even help slow the spread of covid-19 and bring the pandemic to an end faster. ■

## Is working from home a good thing?

This fantastic question from **interesting\_spring** of **Hammond Junior School** got everyone thinking...

### Comments

**interesting\_spring**

**Hammond Junior School**

Working from home is good for some people but not others. In session three for example, the journalist could work from home but the cafe owner couldn't. I feel that working from home during lockdown will change the way people work in the future. For example, some people might choose to keep working from home. My dad said he might work from home on a Wednesday, a Thursday and a Friday from now on. What do you think about working from home?

**consistent\_cliff**

**Whyteleafe School**

For office-based workers, working from home might feel like a good idea - especially if you have a family and want to spend more time with them rather than commuting. However, if you live alone, working from home could be lonely. I think a good balance would be to work from home for some of the week and then meet up in an office for the rest. Training and meeting new people are not always easy to do remotely or on Zoom.

**Arjan Bains @ KPMG**

**Expert**

I really like the extra time from not travelling every day, but I find it easier (and more interesting!) to chat to team members in person. Do you think 50/50 working (also called “hybrid” working) would suit everyone?

**rhetorical\_orange**

**Cheam Park Farm Primary**

I think this year the way people work has changed a lot, as lots of people are now working from home. The good side is that you can get some other jobs done in the house (like doing the washing). But the bad side is that some people might not concentrate as well as they would at the office. Moving forwards, I think that the government will make more people work from home after covid-19 because people have proved that they can do it.

**emotional\_tomato**

## Why aren't women paid the same as men?

SECONDARY SCHOOL  
**Bruntcliffe Academy**

ON MAY 29th, the UK celebrated 50 years of the Equal Pay Act. Sadly, men and women are sometimes still not paid the same for doing the same work and I think this is totally unacceptable.

In recent years, companies with more than 250 employees have been legally required to report if they have a gender pay gap. But this year it will not happen because of covid-19. This means that thousands of people could be paid unfairly and nobody would know. ■

**COMPETITION**

## Extinct jobs

Sparked by **witty\_performance of Preston Manor School's** brilliant question "Have milkmen really gone extinct?", we challenged students to research jobs that no longer exist.

**incredible\_world**

Pinner High School

The extinct job that I have chosen is that of the coachman, who drove horse-drawn carriages containing passengers, getting a fare for each journey. Up to the early 20th-century, horse-drawn carriages were one of the main ways for people to get about. This changed with the invention of the motor car in 1896. Soon afterwards, taxis started to replace horse-drawn carriages and the job of the coachman became extinct.

However, maybe it didn't become extinct - perhaps it just evolved into the job of the taxi-driver - who carry passengers in cars rather than using horses. In fact, the job of a taxi-driver is in the process of evolving again, with the invention of the Uber cab in 2009.

**SEE MORE RESPONSES**  
[bit.ly/extinct-jobs](https://bit.ly/extinct-jobs)



## Comments

**sincere\_dove**

Whyteleafe School

This is not fair because there is no difference between men and women so why are men getting paid more than women? I think that the government should monitor whether businesses are checking that men and women are being paid equally. If businesses are not doing this, they should be fined.

**daring\_whale**

Cheam Common Junior Academy

I think to solve this, the better option would be to start paying women more rather than paying men less. Paying men less might cause chaos: they might get angry at the lower pay and may even want to stop working.

**ADVICE**

Here's some final advice from Kike Oniwinde:

**“As a young person... follow your journey, be aware and take things in and be ambitious.**

**Research in advance about the skills you need to succeed and then know that you can be anything - you can make the world what you want it to be.”**

