

Paperless offices: workplaces of the future?



lingoda

READING

LEVEL
Advanced

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C1_4063R_EN

LANGUAGE
English



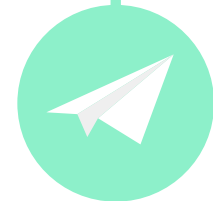


Goals

- Can read and understand a more complex text about the environmental impact of offices.
- Can evaluate the pros and cons of working in a paperless office and discuss the alternatives to using paper.



Though we think we are becoming more **environmentally friendly**, we actually use more and more **paper** each year.





Using paper

Thinking about your daily life,
whether this is at work, school or
at home, do you use a lot of paper?
How often do you print things at
home?



Paper in the workplace

Does your workplace have any initiatives in place for reducing the amount of paper used? If so, do they work?





Reducing paper use

Do you think we have reduced our paper use in the past few years? Have you made any alterations to the way in which you use paper?



shopping lists

junk mail

bills and
statements

printing





Paperless offices: workplaces of the future?

Digitisation has long been **touted** as the way forward for offices around the world. Since computers became more accessible to ordinary workplaces and the general public, the idea of keeping all documents in a digital format was **heralded** as the way towards a paperless office. But so far, this hasn't happened and offices still produce **reams** of paperwork.

It has been calculated that the average office worker uses 10,000 sheets of copy paper per year, and that 45% of all paper printed ends up in the rubbish bin by the end of the day. The consequences of this for our environment cannot be **overstated**: 40% of **logging** is done to produce paper, not to mention the use of large amounts of water and power needed to convert the **raw materials** into something we can use. If all of this is known, why does the paperless office remain a mythical being?



Discuss the below vocabulary

tout

herald

reams

overstate/overstated

logging

raw materials



Paperless lives?

Are you surprised by any of the facts given in the previous slide?





The environment



What things in your office or educational establishment, aside from using paper, do you think harm the environment?
What changes do you think could be made?



Environmental concerns

Do you think environmental concerns are enough to spur a business to go paperless?
Discuss your reasoning.



Paperless offices: workplaces of the future?

There are many ways to go paperless in the office. Using online document storage allows all employees access to documents internally. By doing this, requesting online statements and invoices is effective, as is tracking employees' printing records. Even an email signature which includes a reminder not to print unless absolutely necessary can help.





Paperless offices: workplaces of the future?

The real kicker behind creating a paperless office might not be the environment. **Efficiency** is always high on all employers' lists as an area for improvement and going paperless might just help with that. Photocopying wastes millions of hours of time over a year, as does filing documents and then searching for them again when they are needed. The chances of losing electronic documents are greatly reduced, and it is usually easier to find a digitally stored document. Having documents stored electronically also allows employees to access those documents from anywhere, which means that people can work from home. More flexible working opportunities usually results in higher **productivity** and greater staff **morale**.





Paperless offices: workplaces of the future?



Reducing or **eliminating** the use of paper results in costs being cut. Paper costs money, and almost all companies already have the hardware and the software to make a paperless office possible. Furthermore, digitised documents take up much less space than hard copies which means that storage costs are reduced. It may even be possible to save on rent by moving to smaller **premises** when huge numbers of documents do not need to be stored.



Answer these questions about the vocabulary in the text.

What is the difference between **efficiency** and **productivity**?

What kind of things can have an effect on staff **morale**?

Are there any costs you think your company could **eliminate**?

Do you think your business could move to smaller **premises**?



How to go paperless

Do you think the suggested ways of going paperless in the text are practical? Can you think of any other examples?





Wasting and saving time

How much time do you think is wasted and how much could be saved by going paperless at your workplace? Have you noticed any changes in recent years with regards to the amount of paper being used?



filing and searching

working from
home

photocopying



Paperless offices: workplaces of the future?

There are of course disadvantages and **barriers** to creating a paperless office, and it should be recognised that going completely paperless is impractical, at least for the foreseeable future. Firstly, costs may be **incurred** by the business in keeping software up to date and training employees in managing digitised documents. Training would be essential as today it is thought that a lot of time is wasted in the workplace by people searching for incorrectly stored digital documents – the wrong file name or folder can make things very difficult to uncover. Secondly, **tight security** is a must when storing documents on the computer. There have been several high profile cases of personal data being **hacked** and released in recent years. It is true, however, that paper documents must be kept securely too. Though it may be easy for offices to go paperless internally, it would be very difficult to go completely paperless if they deal with external companies who still use paper. Government regulations too can **mandate** that certain documents are stored with a hard copy.



Paperless offices: workplaces of the future?



Going completely paperless may be a **pipe dream**, but going **paper-lite** should not be. The multitude of ways to reduce paper usage are neither difficult to implement nor are the costs **prohibitive**.

It has been said that 70% of businesses in the world would fail if a disaster, such as fire or flood, were to destroy their paper documents. In the face of this news, it is surely an **unquestionable benefit** to go paperless.



Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps using the vocabulary from the article.

1. I've always wanted to be an astronaut but I'm over 50 now, so I think it's a _____.
2. The UN is seeking to _____ the release of political prisoners.
3. The price of property in some cities is _____ for first-time buyers.
4. Computer _____ is becoming more and more widespread.
5. A company will usually reimburse you for costs _____ related to your job.
6. Despite the language _____, I managed to communicate with my hosts.
7. There is always _____ at major football matches.

prohibitive

incurred

pipe dream

tight security

mandate

hacking

barrier



Losing paperwork

How do you think the company you work for would fare if all of the paper documents were destroyed in a natural disaster?





Going paperless?



Do you think it will be possible
for your workplace to go
paperless or paper-lite in the
near future?

Are there any policies in place to
assist in this change?



Future offices

What other changes do you foresee in the office of the future?





Pros and cons

On balance, do you think the advantages of going paperless outweigh the disadvantages?



internal/external

security
concerns

cutting costs

environment

efficiency



Write a letter

Write a letter to your boss giving your view on whether your office should or should not go paperless. Give reasons with examples to back up your thoughts.

A large rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing a letter. It contains several horizontal lines for text entry. The lines are arranged as follows: a single line on the right side, followed by a single line on the left side, then a block of seven lines on the left side, and finally a single line on the left side at the bottom.



Alternatives

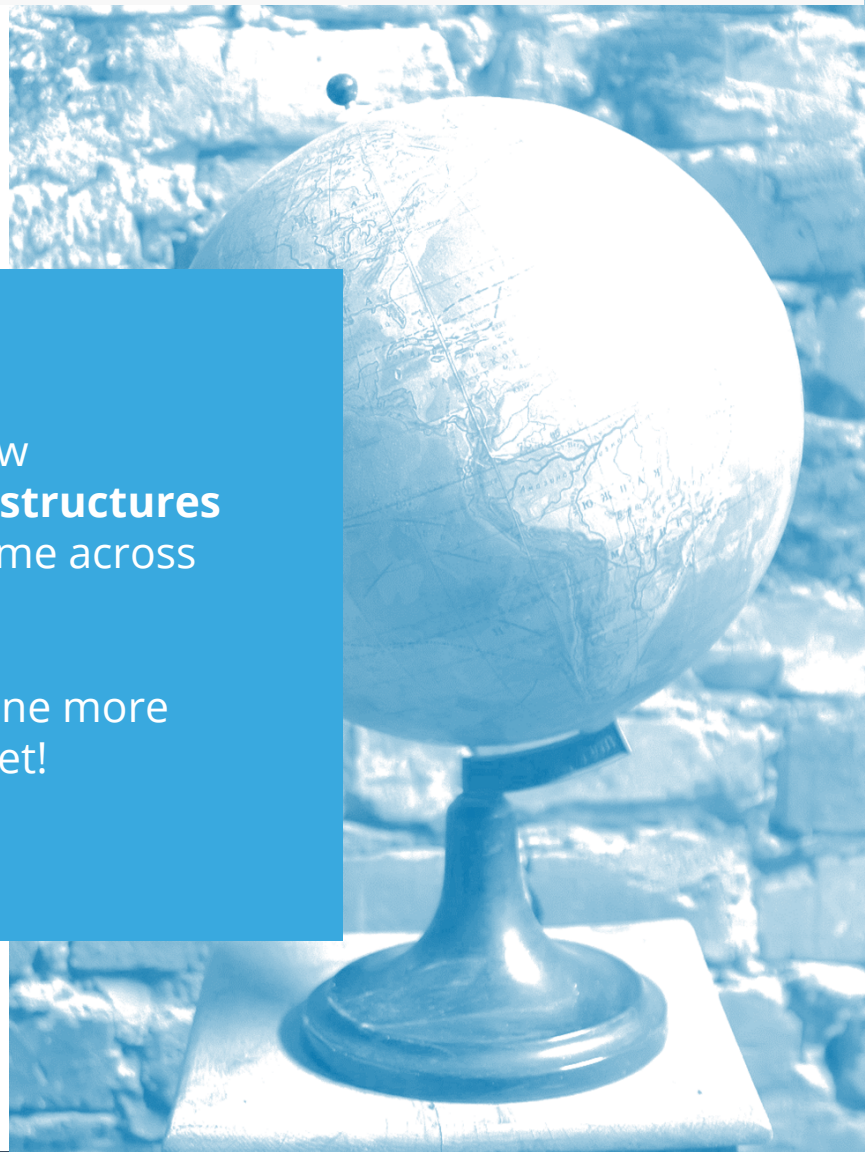
Can you think of any other alternatives to working predominately with paper? In an ideal world, how would you like your work place or educational establishment to be run? Thinking about efficiency and paper usage.



Reflect on this lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

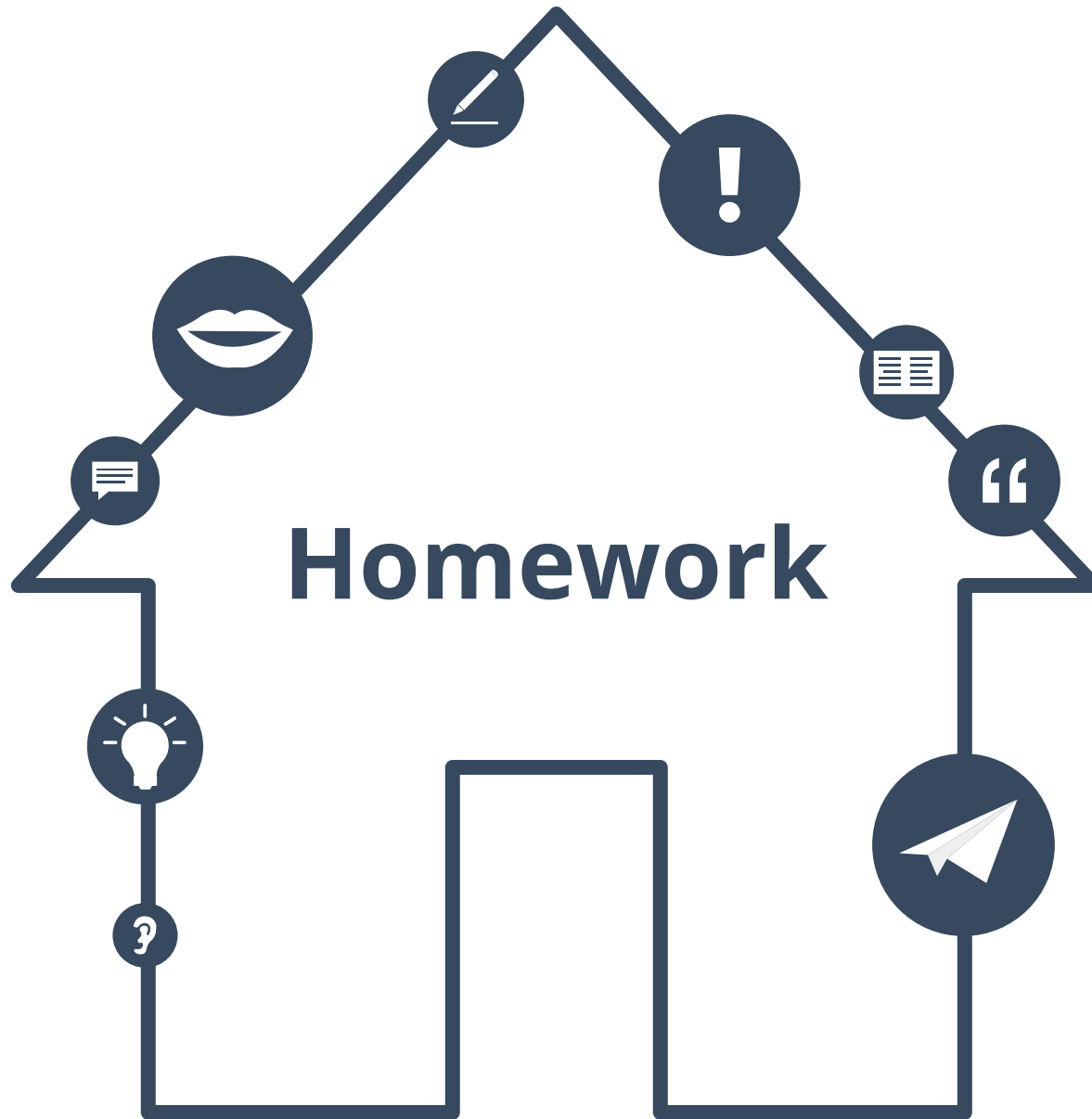
Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





Answer key

Activity p. 20
1. pipe dream, 2. mandate, 3. prohibitive, 4. hacking, 5. incurred, 6. barrier, 7. tight security





Flashcards

Create flashcards with new vocabulary from the lesson.
Remember to use the word in a sentence.





Lists

Write lists of the advantages and disadvantages of going paperless in the office.

Advantages

Disadvantage



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