






## WEEK 4

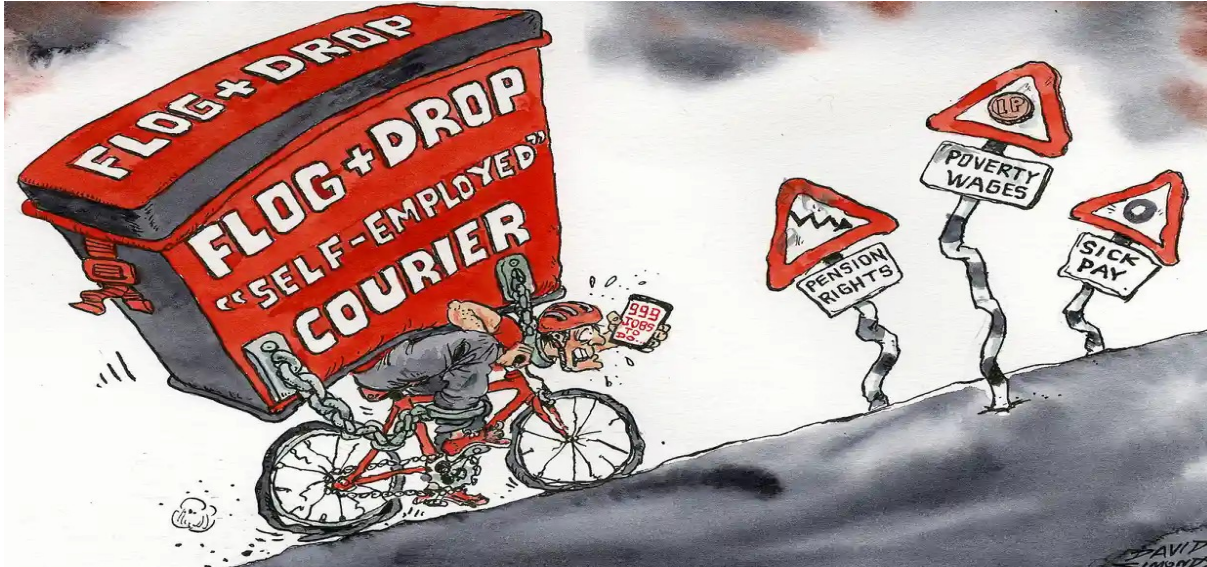
# The gig economy in the UK

What is coined as “the gig economy” has been taking off these past few years. It is estimated that about 4.5 million people work for gig economy companies in the UK, out of about 33 million workers. This type of economic activity relies on the use of temporary or freelance workers to perform jobs, usually in the service sector. Gig economy platforms such as Uber or Deliveroo have increasingly become popular and the number of delivery drivers has boomed since the COVID-19 pandemic. While they allow people to have more flexible hours and extra income, these side-hustle jobs are difficult to regulate. We will analyze how this ongoing economic trend partakes in a broader changing job market, showing both advantages and disadvantages to this relatively recent phenomenon.

<p><b>PREPARATORY WORK</b></p>	<p><b>Read the text</b> “The gig economy is not intrinsically a bad thing. In fact, it's given many of us a great opportunity” and do the <b>vocabulary exercise</b>.</p> <p><i>Estimated time: 15 minutes</i></p>
	<p><b>Cartoon analysis:</b> In pairs, analyze and comment the cartoon. Fill out the grid.</p> <p>Try to answer the following questions: What is the cartoonist's point of view on the gig economy? How does he convey his message?</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b> According to you, what could be the advantages to being a gig economy worker?</p> <p><i>Estimated time: 20 minutes</i></p>
	<p><b>Listening comprehension:</b> “Sorry We Missed You: Ken Loach skewers the gig economy” <i>From 0:25 to 4:10</i>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTf17GJ5PYQ&amp;t=324s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTf17GJ5PYQ&amp;t=324s</a></p> <p><i>Estimated time: 25 minutes</i></p>
	<p><b>Vocabulary:</b> Do the exercises</p>

Estimated time: 20 minutes

## Cartoon analysis



*The multi-drop mountain.* Illustration: David Simonds/Observer

- **Description (colour / size / labelling / speech bubbles / symbols / focus / background / angle / tone / facial expression / context etc.)**

---

---

---

- **What the various elements stand for:**

---

---

---

- **Message of the cartoon:**

---

---

## Listening comprehension

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITf17GJ5PYQ&t=324s>

1) What is Ken Loach consistent in? What has he been accused of?

2) What does Loach's film show?

3) Fill in the grid with information about the central characters of the film:

Abby	Ricky	Daughter	Son

4) "He's proud of never having been a day on the dole". How would you translate "on the dole"?

5) What problem does Ricky's boss bring up? What does Ricky realize?

6) What's the term used in French to describe the economic trend explored in the film?

7) Why do you think the critic compares the system to a "hamster wheel"?

8) What are the flaws of the gig economy that the film insists on? List at least four:

## VOCABULARY EXERCISES RELATED TO WORK/ THE ECONOMY:

### A. Traduisez en français l'expression ou le mot de la colonne de gauche:

WORD/EXPRESSION	FRENCH TRANSLATION
To work full-time	
To work part-time	
to get a pay rise (BR), to get a raise (US)	
to work overtime	
to dismiss somebody, to sack somebody (BR, informal)	
To give (one's) notice	
To apply for a job	
To work oneself to death	
To work around the clock	
Occupation	
A training course	
A full-time job	
A part-time job	
working hours	
Job application	
Work placement (BR)/ Internship	
A (trade) union / a labor union (US)	
A strike	
A temp => To temp	
The minimum wage	

On sick leave	
A salary/ a wage	
Benefits/perks	
The pay gap	
Welfare/unemployment benefits // jobseeker's allowance => To collect unemployment benefits/ To be on the dole	
To land a job	
To turn down an offer	

**B. Traduisez en anglais:**

1. Elle travaille comme secrétaire.

=>

2. La semaine de 35 heures était censée procurer des emplois.

=>

3. La direction des ressources humaines a du mal à pourvoir les postes vacants.

=>

4. Les politiques préconisent le recul de l'âge de la retraite comme solution à la crise des pensions de retraite.

=>

**C. Explain the following expressions in English :**

TGIF	
Dress-Down Friday	

The glass ceiling	
No work and no play makes Jack a dull boy	
Jack of all trades, master of none	

## Reading comprehension

The gig economy is not intrinsically a bad thing. In fact, it's given many of us a great opportunity

**When little seems to be happening to address stagnating wages, decreasing social mobility and the high cost of living, the gig economy fills the gap**

30 June 2019 Katie Bishop

1- In many people's minds, the phrase "gig economy" is synonymous with everything that is wrong with 2019, along with zero hour contracts, austerity, gentrification and, of course, avocados.

2- Characterised by short-term contracts, often facilitated by technology, the gig economy has more than doubled in the last three years. For many this is a sign of the increasingly insecure nature of work and irresponsible employees. But for me, and many gig economy workers like me, this hasn't been the full story.

3- Although many aspects of the gig economy are troubling there is also hope for a more positive future. In fact, an incredible 90 per cent of freelancers believe that the best days are ahead for them, and more than two thirds report earning more than they did in full-time employment. Over half of gig economy workers say that they are satisfied with their experience, highlighting independence and flexibility as the primary causes of their positivity.

4- My own experience has involved taking on extra work in my spare time — a so-called “**side-hustle**”. As a full-time book editor and freelance writer I'm often up early to squeeze in an hour of work before I head into the office. Instead of relaxing in the evening after a busy day, I'll work on pitches and polish up drafts. Weekends are regularly taken up by making edits, and a spare hour is always an opportunity to seek out new work. Working two jobs comes with a host of challenges but for me, and many like me, it has simply become a necessity. One wage just doesn't cut it anymore.

5- But although many might not envy my set-up, the gig economy has also enabled a career move that I might never have taken otherwise. In a career like journalism (dominated by privately-educated individuals with Oxbridge or postgraduate education who often undertake lengthy unpaid work placements **to get a foot in the door**) the ad hoc and opportunistic nature of the gig economy gives people like me a chance without having to give up on the stability of a regular **paycheck**. And it's not just me and other writers either—in fact a startling one in 10 UK workers now take part in the gig economy, many of them alongside a full-time job.

6- The current set-up is undoubtedly problematic, and there are troubling issues when individuals working full time **can't make ends meet**. We live in a society where real **wages** remain below the level recorded before the economic crisis but where house prices and living costs continue **to rocket**. Many gig economy workers carry out their contracts alongside a full-time job from necessity rather than a desire for creativity or entrepreneurship.

7- But when little seems to be happening to address stagnating wages, decreasing social mobility and the high cost of living, the gig economy **fills the gap**.

8- Of course, I acknowledge that I am fortunate to have found work that I enjoy doing in a way that suits me. There are many workers doing much more challenging roles for far less pay. But in an age where almost half of workers are dissatisfied with their primary career, the gig economy can also be a positive thing. It can be a chance to boost your **income** in a flexible way whilst pursuing a dream, albeit low-paid, job. It might be a way to juggle childcare with a career when a structured nine-to-five day doesn't meet your work-life balance needs. Or it might allow you to take back control of your career path at a time when burnout is endemic and over a third of workers feel that their skills are underused.

9- For me the gig economy has been an opportunity to straddle two careers that I am genuinely passionate about but that don't pay enough alone for me **to get by**. Given that many people consider personal values and social impact important priorities in their career, the ability to fund a low-paying but

personally fulfilling career is a seductive aspect of the gig economy's flexible nature.

10- Yet if the gig economy is here to stay there is much still do be done. A survey of the UK's gig economy workers showed that a quarter of participants said that they were dissatisfied with their work-related benefits and level of income, and that the lack of regularity and predictability of work was a significant challenge.

11- As the alternative work patterns rise in popularity, policy must respond to support this new-age wave of workers. Evidence of the gig economy's rapid rise should **spur** the government **to** protect workers' rights, including fair wages, regulation around paying people on time and clear definitions regarding what constitutes gig economy work. If the best days are truly ahead, we need to make this way of working **sustainable**.

**PREPARATORY WORK: VOCABULARY. Complétez le tableau.**

WORD(S) FROM THE TEXT (IN BOLD)	FRENCH TRANSLATION
Side hustle / side-hustle	
To get a foot in the door	
paycheck	
To make ends meet	
wages	
To rocket	
To fill the gap	
income	
To get by	
To spur someone/something to do something	
sustainable	

**1) Name two advantages that most gig economy workers highlight about their work experience.**

**2) Explain what Katie Bishop means by “One wage just doesn’t cut it anymore.” (Paragraph 5)**

**3) What is the author’s full-time job? What has the gig economy provided her with? Rephrase as much as possible.**

**4) What does the gig economy show about wages?**

**5) How can the gig economy be a positive thing? What are the three advantages that the journalist insists on in paragraph 8? Rephrase as much as possible.**

**6) What problems need to be addressed for this economic activity to be “sustainable”?**