



● **industrial relations** N-PLURAL

**Industrial relations** refers to the relationship between employers and employees in industry, and the political decisions and laws that affect it.

*The offer is seen as an attempt to improve industrial relations.  
New industrial relations legislation curbed the power of the unions.*

● **trade union** (trade unions) N-COUNT

A **trade union** is an organization that has been formed by workers in order to represent their rights and interests to their employers, for example in order to improve working conditions or wages.

*You can ask the tribunal to declare that your employer is infringing the regulations or get your trade union to take this up.*

● **works council** (works councils) N-COUNT

A **works council** is an elected body of workers within a company, which negotiates with management over such things as working conditions, holiday and safety.

*...a European directive calling for works councils for all companies with more than 50 employees.*

● **staff representative** (staff representatives)

N-COUNT

**rep** (reps) N-COUNT

A **staff representative** or **rep** is a worker who is elected by other workers to represent their interests to management.

*The company yesterday began the process of electing staff representatives to fulfil the legal requirements for consultation. He called for staff representatives on the boardroom committees that control directors' earnings.*

*If your employer has procedures to deal with bullying, follow them, taking a colleague or union rep for support.*

● **arbitration** N-UNCOUNT

**Arbitration** is the judging of a dispute between people or groups by someone who is not involved.

*The matter is likely to go to arbitration.*

● **blue-collar** ADJ

**white-collar** ADJ

**Blue-collar** workers work in industry, doing physical work, rather than in offices. **White-collar** workers work in offices rather than doing physical work.

*By 1925, blue-collar workers in manufacturing industry had become the largest occupational group.  
...corporate lawyers, accountants and other white-collar workers.*

● **colleague** (colleagues) N-COUNT

**co-worker** (co-workers) N-COUNT

Your **colleagues** or **co-workers** are the people you work with, especially people on the same job or project as you.

*Without consulting his colleagues he flew from Lisbon to Split.*

*A co-worker of mine mentioned that she leaves her computer on all the time.*

● **strike** (strikes, striking, struck)

□ N-COUNT

When there is a **strike**, workers stop doing their work for a period of time, usually in order to try to get better pay or conditions for themselves.

*French air traffic controllers have begun a three-day strike in a dispute over pay.*

*...a call for strike action.*

□ VERB

When workers **strike**, they take part in a strike.

*...their recognition of the workers' right to strike.*

*The government agreed not to sack any of the striking workers.*

● **go on strike** PHRASE

When workers **go on strike**, they strike.

*Staff at the hospital went on strike in protest at the incidents.*

● **industrial action** N-UNCOUNT

If workers take **industrial action**, they join together and do something to show that they are unhappy with their pay or working conditions, for example refusing to work.

*Prison officers will decide next week whether to take industrial action over staffing levels.*

● **grievance** (grievances) N-VAR

**grievance procedure** (grievance procedures)

N-COUNT

If you have a **grievance** about something that has happened or been done, you believe that it was unfair. A **grievance procedure** is a set of guidelines produced by a company or organization, which explains how to make a formal complaint against them.

*The main grievance of the drivers is the imposition of higher fees for driving licences and certificates of proficiency.*

*One of their biggest mistakes is failing to put a formal grievance procedure in place to deal with staff complaints.*

● **tribunal** (tribunals) N-COUNT

A **tribunal** is a special court or committee that is appointed to deal with particular problems.

*His case comes before an industrial tribunal in March.*

● **working conditions** N-PLURAL

**Working conditions** are the conditions which exist in your job, such as the number of hours you are expected to work and the amount of holiday you get.

*The strikers are demanding better working conditions.*

➔ **employee:** Topic 13.4; **personnel:** Topic 13.4; **staff:** Topic 13.4; **workforce:** Topic 13.4; **notice:** Topic 14.1



**PRACTISE YOUR VOCABULARY**

1 Use the terms in the box to complete the paragraph.

*industrial action   arbitration   staff representatives   strike   works council   tribunal*  
*trade union   grievance   industrial relations   co-worker*

Management and trade unions are jointly responsible for \_\_\_\_\_. Management and \_\_\_\_\_ often come together on a firm's \_\_\_\_\_ to attempt to resolve problems before they become too serious. If, however, the issue cannot be solved, they may use outside \_\_\_\_\_ to assist them. If all attempts to find a solution fail, the \_\_\_\_\_ may call a \_\_\_\_\_, or take other forms of \_\_\_\_\_. If an individual employee has a complaint, a company usually has a \_\_\_\_\_ procedure to deal with it. Employees may also contact their trade union or an industrial \_\_\_\_\_ if they have a complaint about their treatment at work or about a colleague or a \_\_\_\_\_.

2 Which jobs are held by blue-collar workers and which are held by white-collar workers? Complete the table.

- a computer programmer                      e receptionist                      i teacher
- b plumber                                      f clerk                                      j architect
- c washing machine repairman              g builder                                  k delivery van driver
- d recruitment consultant                    h electrician                              l lawyer

BLUE-COLLAR	WHITE-COLLAR

3 Read the text and answer the questions.

A recent EU directive requires every employer with more than 150 staff to establish a works council. Businesses will have statutory requirements for ongoing consultation on any proposed changes in working conditions, and to provide information about recent and probable developments and activities and about the establishment's economic situation.

- a What will companies with more than 150 employees have to do?
- b What will businesses be obliged to consult their workers about?
- c What two types of information will businesses be obliged to give their workers?

4 When an employee begins a job they will sign a written contract of employment with the company, stating the conditions of work that have been agreed. Look at the list of conditions and put them under the correct heading.

NUMBER OF HOURS	TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT	PAY	BENEFITS	DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES	NOTICE	GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES	EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

- a 4 weeks paid holiday per year
- b paid sick leave
- c 48 hours per week
- d one month's notice
- e consequences of breaking company rules
- f who to contact to make a complaint
- g £20,000 per year
- h \$9 per hour
- i trade union membership
- j permanent/temporary job
- k full time/part time