B2 **CLASS NOTES**
BUSINESS ENGLISH

# Can we work less and achieve more?

Reading + Grammar: the passive and impersonal reporting

NATeacher
*Where language meets opportunity.*

## 1 KEY VOCABULARY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **trial** | *n.* | a test of a new idea for a limited time |
| **burnout** | *n.* | exhaustion caused by long-term stress at work |
| **revenue** | *n.* | the money a company receives from sales |
| **productivity** | *n.* | how much work is done in a given time |
| **permanent** | *adj.* | lasting for a long time or for ever |
| **breakthrough** | *n.* | an important new development |
| **loss of pay** | *n.* | earning less money |
| **embrace** | *v.* | to accept an idea with enthusiasm |
| **sceptical** | *adj.* | doubtful; not easily convinced |
| **work-life balance** | *n.* | a healthy mix of work and personal time |

## 2 USEFUL PHRASES & EXPRESSIONS

- **The trial was hailed as a breakthrough.** — *passive: report a reaction*
- **with no loss of pay** — *condition of the change*
- **It was reported that burnout fell.** — *impersonal reporting*
- **They made the change permanent.** — *describe a final decision*
- **Some managers remain sceptical.** — *express doubt politely*
- **a better work-life balance** — *common collocation*

## 6 CULTURE & BUSINESS INSIGHT

★ **Productivity is not the same as hours**

In a six-month UK trial, 61 companies moved to a four-day week with no loss of pay, and 56 of them (92%) decided to continue. The debate shows that many businesses now measure results, not just time at the desk.

## 3 THE KEY POINT

Use the **passive** (**be + past participle**) when the action matters more than who did it. Use **impersonal reporting** to sound objective: **It is said / reported that…** or **X is said / reported to…**

The trial **was run by** 4 Day Week Global. The results **will be presented** to MPs.
**It was reported that** burnout declined significantly.
The four-day week **is said to improve** well-being.

## 4 QUICK PRACTICE

**Rewrite the sentences using the word in brackets.**

1. People say the trial was a success. (It)
2. Researchers will publish the results next month. (be)
3. Experts report that staff are happier. (Staff … reported)
4. 61 companies took part in the trial. → The trial ___ 61 companies. (involve, passive)

## 5 ANSWERS & EXPLANATION

**Answers: 1 It is said that the trial was a success. · 2 The results will be published next month. · 3 Staff are reported to be happier. · 4 61 companies were involved in the trial.**

Passive = **be + past participle** in the right tense (*will be published, were involved*).
Impersonal: **It is said that…** or subject + **is reported to** + infinitive.

**Today's resource:** UK four-day week trial hailed as a 'major breakthrough' (Euronews) · https://www.euronews.com/2023/02/21/uk-four-day-week-trial-hailed-as-a-major-breakthrough-as-92-of-companies-keep-the-shorter-

> *Measure output, not hours — and people will find smarter ways to work.*



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