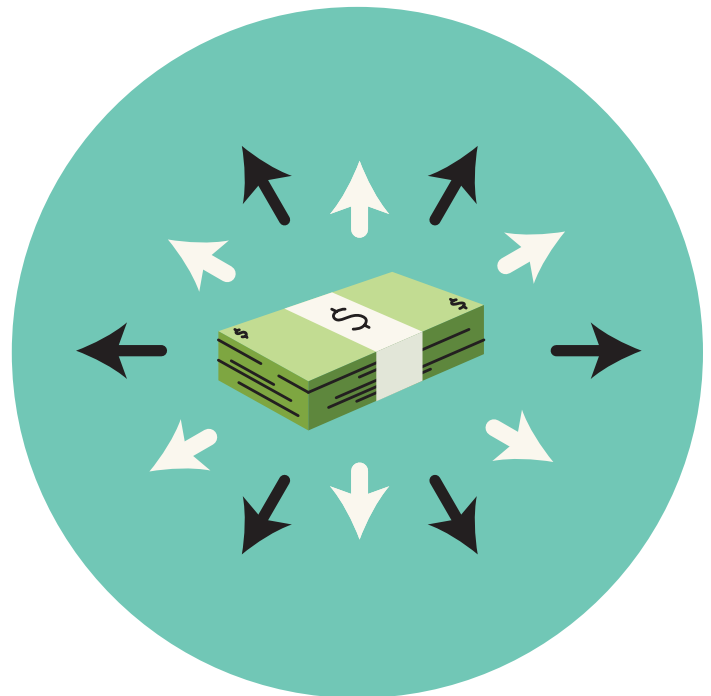


Universal Basic Income

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Is having enough money to live a basic human right?
2. What does it mean to live below the poverty line?
3. Should people who work pay taxes to help pay for those who don't work?
4. Besides money, what incentives do people have for getting a good job?



B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. lump sum | a) the act of not contributing, laziness |
| ___ 2. make ends meet | b) the use of machines rather than humans for production and work |
| ___ 3. idleness | c) a set amount of money in a single installment |
| ___ 4. universal basic income | d) financial support for one's well-being |
| ___ 5. automation | e) to have the conditions required to receive something beneficial |
| ___ 6. pilot (<i>verb</i>) | f) to consider what is the best solution or choice |
| ___ 7. looming | g) to talk about a troubling issue |
| ___ 8. weigh options | h) a thing people need, such as food, clothing, or shelter |
| ___ 9. necessity | i) threatening to be a problem in the near future |
| ___ 10. voice a concern | j) to test or conduct a trial |
| ___ 11. welfare | k) a base income for every citizen that is funded by the government |
| ___ 12. qualify | l) to have enough money for the necessities of life |

Reading

UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

No strings attached

1. What would you do with a **lump sum** of free money every week? Some people would work less and spend more time with their families. Others would go back to school, start a business, or write a book. Instead of using it to **make ends meet**, some would undoubtedly spend it on drugs and alcohol. Is free money an invitation to **idleness**?
2. The idea of government-funded **universal basic income** (UBI) is not new. British philosopher Bertrand Russell and author Virginia Woolf both supported the idea over 100 years ago. In the 1960s, many minorities agreed with Martin Luther King Jr., who called UBI the solution to poverty. With an aging population and the rise of **automation**, the basic income debate is experiencing a third wave. Governments in Switzerland, Finland, India, and Canada have tried or have considered **piloting** basic income programs.
3. The **looming** decline of the job market due to technological advances, such as machine learning and artificial intelligence, is forcing governments to **weigh** their **options**. Driverless cars alone are expected to drastically affect unemployment rates. At the 2017 World Government Summit in Dubai, Tesla CEO Elon Musk predicted that some form of basic income will be a **necessity** in the near future. Despite this recognition, Musk **voiced concerns** about the lack of self-worth people might have when they're no longer defined by their jobs.
4. Perhaps the greatest concern about basic income is affordability. Offering financial security to every citizen comes at a much higher cost than current **welfare** systems where people have to apply and **qualify** for aid. Could Bill Gates be onto something? Instead of taxing the rich, Gates suggests taxing companies that replace employees with robots.

“The solution to poverty is to abolish it directly by a now widely discussed measure: the guaranteed income.”

—Martin Luther King Jr., activist

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers below.

1. What does the author want readers to think about at the beginning of the reading?

2. What is paragraph two mainly about?

3. Why does the reading mention driverless cars?

4. Is Elon Musk a proponent or opponent of UBI? Explain.

5. How does the reading end?

Vocabulary Review

A. Chunking

Create six words or expressions by pairing the words that are commonly found together in English. Write a sentence for each example.

Word List:

- | | | | |
|---------------|------------|---------|----------------|
| • weigh | • sum | • voice | • unemployment |
| • welfare | • income | • rates | • system |
| • the options | • concerns | • basic | • lump |

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

B. Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1. You may need to change the word forms.

1. Food, clothing, and shelter are all _____ .
2. Local businesses are worried about the _____ property tax increase.
3. My brother doesn't have a job. He receives a _____ check each month.
4. The mayor _____ about poverty in our downtown core.
5. We are _____ of having another child or not.
6. Do you want to pay in one _____ or in four weekly payments?
7. I didn't _____ for the student loan. My income is too high.
8. UBI promotes _____. There is no incentive to get a good job.

Third Conditional

PAST REGRETS

A. Reference

The third conditional is used to express a hypothetical situation in the past. It shows a different outcome that would have happened if a certain condition had been met. Review the pattern and examples below.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Pattern | If + had + past participle, would + have + past participle |
| Examples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I had qualified for the basic income benefit, I would have started a pet grooming business. • If the government hadn't canceled the UBI program, I would have gone to nursing school. • I would have switched to part-time if I had received more money from the government. |

Reminder:

When the *if* clause (condition) comes first, use a comma before the result (outcome) clause.

B. Matching

Match the clauses to form third conditional sentences.

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ 1. If I had received \$1,000 a month, | a) if she had been part of the UBI pilot program. |
| _____ 2. We would have started our own business | b) I would have bought a rental property. |
| _____ 3. Alia would have wasted her benefit on clothes | c) if we had received financial help from the government. |
| _____ 4. If my son had received a basic income benefit, | d) they would have piloted a basic income program. |
| _____ 5. If they hadn't lost the election, | e) he probably would have gone to college. |

Third Conditional cont.

C. Case Study

In 2018, a newly elected government in Ontario, Canada, canceled a modified UBI program that the previous government was piloting. Many participants of the pilot program expressed regrets that the experiment was canceled. Imagine that you are the following participants. Express a regret from each person using the third conditional.

| # | Participant | Regret |
|---|--|--------|
| 1 | a single mom with two jobs | |
| 2 | a middle-class businessman | |
| 3 | an employed college student | |
| 4 | a couple who both have minimum wage jobs | |
| 5 | a homeless person | |

Discussion

1. Universal Basic Income means that all citizens receive the same benefit without conditions. Does it make more sense to only provide financial aid to people below the poverty line? Why or why not?
2. While Elon Musk fears that basic income programs may cause people to experience a lack of self-worth, some experiments have shown that UBI actually boosts well-being and mental health. Why do you think this would be the case?
3. How might guaranteed income programs help improve gender inequality?
4. Critics feel that UBI programs will encourage employers to pay lower salaries. Proponents think it will require employers to pay more to entice people to work. What do you think?

Critical Thinking

IN PAIRS OR SMALL GROUPS

Many technical entrepreneurs are supportive of UBI. Why do you think people in the tech industry typically support this idea? Explain your reasoning. Then watch the video featuring Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes titled “Universal Basic Income: Two Contrasting Views on Free Money” on ESL Library’s YouTube channel. Discuss the video.

Selfie Video Challenge

How would you define the word “work”? Do we need to redefine this word to include things that are not related to earning a paycheck?

Use a mobile device or computer camera and explain your definition of “work.” Do you agree or disagree that UBI programs encourage people to view “work” as optional?

“To me, work is...”

Submit your 1–2 minute video to your teacher and share it with your classmates.

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

No strings attached

1. What would you do with a _____ of free money every week? Some people would work less and spend more time with their families. Others would go back to school, start a business, or write a book. Instead of using it to _____, some would undoubtedly spend it on drugs and alcohol. Is free money an invitation to idleness?
2. The idea of government-funded universal basic income (UBI) is not new. British philosopher Bertrand Russell and author Virginia Woolf both supported the idea over 100 years ago. In the 1960s, many minorities agreed with Martin Luther King Jr., who called UBI the solution to _____. With an aging population and the rise of _____, the basic income debate is experiencing a third wave. Governments in Switzerland, Finland, India, and Canada have tried or have considered _____ basic income programs.
3. The _____ decline of the job market due to technological advances, such as machine learning and artificial intelligence, is forcing governments to weigh their options. Driverless cars alone are expected to drastically _____ unemployment rates. At the 2017 World Government Summit in Dubai, Tesla CEO Elon Musk predicted that some form of basic income will be a _____ in the near future. Despite this recognition, Musk voiced concerns about the lack of self-worth people might have when they're no longer defined by their jobs.
4. Perhaps the greatest concern about basic income is affordability. Offering financial security to every citizen comes at a much higher cost than current _____ systems where people have to apply and _____ for aid. Could Bill Gates be onto something? Instead of taxing the rich, Gates suggests taxing companies that replace employees with robots.

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students read about the concept of universal basic income and discuss the modern definition of “work” and the future of automation. This lesson includes a grammar review of the third conditional.

TEACHING TIPS:

See *Discussion Starters Teaching Guide* (<https://esllibrary.com/courses/72/lessons/>) for a variety of ways to use the reading.

LEVEL: High Int – Adv

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, basic income, universal basic income, UBI, work, entrepreneur, technology, automation, third conditional, Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Facebook

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class. Answers will vary.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. c | 3. a | 5. b | 7. i | 9. h | 11. d |
| 2. l | 4. k | 6. j | 8. f | 10. g | 12. e |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Find out if anyone knows the meaning of the subtitle, “No strings attached” (*having no special conditions or requirements*). Discuss the quote. Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 8. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

- The author wants readers to think about what they would do with a basic income benefit from the government.
- Paragraph two is mainly about how different generations of people have considered the idea of a universal basic income program and why this idea is experiencing a third wave now.
- The reading mentions driverless cars as an example of automation that will cause serious job loss. Basic income may become a necessity if unemployment rates rise as high as expected.

- Elon Musk believes a basic income program will be necessary, but he is worried about how this will affect people’s well-being if their jobs don’t define their worth anymore.
- The reading ends with one proposed solution by Bill Gates regarding the huge costs of implementing a UBI program.

Vocabulary Review

A. CHUNKING

Example sentences will vary.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. weigh the options | 4. basic income |
| 2. welfare system | 5. voice concerns |
| 3. lump sum | 6. unemployment rates |

B. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. necessities | 5. weighing the options |
| 2. looming | 6. lump sum |
| 3. welfare / UBI | 7. qualify |
| 4. voiced concerns | 8. idleness |

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Third Conditional

A. REFERENCE

Review our editor's tips for teaching conditionals:
<http://blog.esllibrary.com/2013/03/14/an-easy-way-to-teach-conditionals/>

We also have a Grammar Practice Worksheets lesson on the Third Conditional:
<https://esllibrary.com/courses/88/lessons/1604>

B. PRACTICE

1. b 2. c 3. a 4. e 5. d

C. CASE STUDY

Review the case study summary with your students and have them work in pairs or small groups to practice using the third conditional with each scenario. If your students want to read more about this program and its cancellation, you can share an article such as this one: <https://www.businessinsider.com/ontario-basic-income-recipients-react-to-program-cancellation-2018-8>

Discussion

Answers will vary.
Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Critical Thinking

Share the Wall Street Journal video about wealth redistribution with your students: *Universal Basic Income: Two Contrasting Views on Free Money*. You can find this video, called "Basic Income," on ESL Library's YouTube channel:
<http://www.youtube.com/user/ESLlibrary>

After watching the video, have students share their own opinions about why technical entrepreneurs might be advocating for UBI.

Selfie Video Challenge

After you watch the video, invite your students to create a selfie video about the concept of "work" by completing and expanding on this sentence: "To me, work is..." Students should discuss the topic for one to two minutes and share whether or not they think UBI redefines "work" as being something optional.

For tips on assigning and submitting selfie videos in the ELL classroom, check out our blog post:
<http://blog.esllibrary.com/2016/04/18/selfie-videos-ell/>

Listening

1. lump sum, make ends meet
2. poverty, automation, piloting
3. looming, affect, necessity
4. welfare, qualify

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Check*, *Paycheck*, and *Canceled*. Most other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Cheque*, *Paycheque*, and *Cancelled*. Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.