



BACK TO PORRIDGE, imaginary scenarios for role-plays

STUDENT A	STUDENT B
<p>SCENARIO 1A</p> <p>You are working in the marketing department of a large automotive corporation. You spent most of 2020 and 2021 working from home and you've got used to this way of working. However, the HR manager of your branch has told all employees to return to the office, effective in 10 days' time. You are on a Zoom call with the HR manager. Try to convince them to reconsider and explain why working from home is beneficial both for workers and for the company.</p>	<p>SCENARIO 1B</p> <p>You are the HR manager of a major branch of a large automotive corporation. Following a recent board meeting, it was decided that all employees will be required to return to work in the office, effective next Monday. In future, the company would like to bring in work-from-home Fridays, but only for the more productive employees and only those whose projects will not be affected by being out of the office. However, employees should not be told of this until the policy has been fully developed.</p> <p>You are fully behind your management's decision. However, since you sent out the email informing the staff of the need to prepare to return to work in 10 days' time, there has been an outcry from those who enjoyed working from home. You are speaking to one of those employees now. Defend the company's approach.</p>
<p>SCENARIO 2A</p> <p>You are the Chief People Officer of a large automotive corporation. Three weeks ago, the company instituted a hybrid working policy, to replace the work-from-home policy which was in place during the pandemic.</p> <p>Hybrid working means that employees can work from home 2 days per week. During the other days, they can also go home early once they have finished their scheduled meetings for the day. Employees are allowed to request morning meetings if they have personal reasons for wanting to be at home in the afternoon.</p> <p>One of the middle-managers comes to you to air concerns about the effectiveness of this policy. Listen to them and suggest solutions which they can implement on their team to make the policy work more effectively.</p>	<p>SCENARIO 2B</p> <p>You are in a middle-management role at a large automotive corporation. Three weeks ago, when everyone returned to the office, the senior management instituted a hybrid working policy. Employees can work from home 2 days per week. During the other days, they can also go home early once they have finished their scheduled meetings for the day. They are allowed to request morning meetings if they have personal reasons for wanting to be at home in the afternoon.</p> <p>In practice, this has caused administrative chaos, as well as resentment within teams. It's almost impossible to get the whole team together in person, because several people are always on their work-from-home day. Communication is taking too long. In addition, across the whole company, parents with young children have been expecting to take priority for the morning meetings, and now the single people and non-parents are complaining that the policy is unfair. That's not just on your team - it's across all the teams! You think the Chief People Officer needs to know.</p>

**SCENARIO 3A**

You are married to Student B.

You work for a large automotive corporation. You have spent most of 2020 and 2021 working from home and you've got used to this way of working. You had been hoping that you would be able to continue working from home part of the time. However, you recently got the long-dreaded email from the HR manager saying you have to return to working 5 days a week at the office, along with all of your colleagues.

Complain about this to your partner and try to get their sympathy. Do not accept any suggestion that you have been relaxing at home for the past two years: you have been busy caring for the kids while working full-time.

SCENARIO 3B

You are married to Student A.

You are a nurse at a very busy hospital. Your partner has been working from home for most of the past two years while you've had to continue getting up early each day to start your shift at the hospital, often dealing with stressed and worried patients during the pandemic.

Your partner is now complaining about having to go back to the office. Point out that many people, including you, are stuck in jobs where there is no possibility to work from home. Try to reassure your partner that they can handle the transition back to office work.

SCENARIO 4A

You are the Brand Development Officer of a successful clothing company, specialising in pyjamas - or 'loungewear', as you prefer to call it. 'Pyjamas' are just for night-time...

You have been invited on to a weekend TV programme to give your views on the future of working from home, and the effects that the pandemic has had on workers' lifestyle preferences.

Of course, your job role makes it imperative that you talk about the benefits of working from home, the necessity of having a comfortable place to sit and above all the advantages of being able to stay in lounge-wear all day while working, doing laundry, feeding the cat, doing yoga etcetera. You also need to try to mention the fact that your company has recently developed a new style of office-lounge-wear, suitable for most professional situations.

When you arrived at the TV studio you found out that you're sharing your 'slot' on the programme with a representative of a motor company, who is very determined and quite annoying. Don't let them interrupt or talk over you!

SCENARIO 4B

You are the Innovation Manager of a fashionable automotive company, responsible for the development of new, eco, 'green' cars, which are aimed at commuters and will drastically reduce carbon emissions.

You have been invited on to a weekend TV programme to give your views on the future of commuting, post-pandemic, and the reluctance of some workers to get back to the daily grind.

Of course, your job role makes it imperative that you talk about the benefits of getting people back to work, the positive economic effects of commuting and above all the fact that humans are social creatures who need to be around other people. You also need to try to mention the fact that your company is working on a greener type of car which will eventually be cleaner and less polluting than if the passengers took the train.

When you arrived at the TV studio you found out that you're sharing your 'slot' on the programme with a representative of a pyjama company, who seems very hostile and defensive. Try to keep the discussion civil but make sure you explain all of your points!