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Employee representation – lesson suggestions & activities (UNISON)

Learning outcomes

Students should...

- Know the different methods of employee representation (AO1) and give examples of how employees are represented in context (AO2)
- Analyse the advantages and disadvantages of employee representation for organisations (AO3)
- Understand the purpose of trade unions (AO1), give examples (AO2) and analyse their role

Starter activities

- **Hangman** of related employee representation terms such as trade union, participation, negotiation and collective bargaining
- **UNISON word search** of the key terms

Delivery ideas

- Use the **Employee Representation PowerPoint** to introduce the topic and apply theory in context (UNISON).
- GCSE . Using the **UNISON case study** for guidance, create an advertising flyer that could be used to inform young public sector workers embarking on apprenticeships about the benefits of joining a trade union.
- AqLevel . Using the **UNISON case study** and their knowledge of employee representation, students write a report to the management of the organisation in the following scenario, recommending ways that employer/employee relations can be improved. The organisation has had a number of complaints from its workers. The complaints follow two main themes:
 - The workers feel that they have no say in the way the organisation is run and that their ideas are never taken into account
 - The workers feel that the current production processes being used are outdated and unsafe. They have just consulted their union about this.
- Employee representation worksheet (*resource attached*)



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Plenary activities

- **Mini-plenary . role reversal.** Students take the role of the teacher and write a number of questions relating to their learning about employee representation. They either pair up to answer each other's questions or the questions can be opened up to the whole class.
- **What's next?** . a paragraph of text about employee representation is cut into incomplete sentences and then issued around the students at random, apart from the beginning of the first sentence which the teacher reads out. The student whose card completes this sentence reads out their card, and so on. This can be completed a number of times by taking the cards in, shuffling them and giving them out again (*resource attached*).
- **UNISON crossword**



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Employee representation – worksheet

What's in it for me?

I am learning...

- The purpose and role of trade unions
- The impact of trade unions on workers and employers

I am developing my skills as...

- A *self manager* by showing commitment and perseverance

Task 1

Read through the **UNISON case study**. Use the glossaries to help you learn the relevant terms and definitions.

Task 2

GCSE questions

Use the UNISON case study and your knowledge of trade unions to answer the following questions:

1. What is a trade union?

2. Explain what is meant by collective bargaining



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3. What are the possible benefits to workers of trade union membership?

4. Other than through collective bargaining, what other actions might trade unions and their members take?

5. Find examples from the case study of how young apprentices have benefited from the actions of the UNISON



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Employee representation 'What's next?'

Trade unions are organisations...

...that protect the interests of employees. The UK's largest public sector trade union...

... is called UNISON. Collective bargaining occurs when...

...trade unions negotiate on behalf of their members. They have more influence because...

... they are representing a large number of workers. They will negotiate on issues such as...

...pay, working conditions, redundancy and holiday entitlement. If negotiations are unsuccessful, trade unions may...

...encourage their workers to take industrial action. This may include...



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...striking, picketing, working-to-rule or going-slow. It is usually easier for firms to negotiate with...

...one trade union rather than many individual workers. Trade unions also provide other benefits to their members...

...such as education and training, legal and financial advice and discounts. Other forms of employee representation include...

...work councils, employee participation and worker directors. These allow the workers to...

...share their ideas with the management. This can result in more efficient workplaces and...

... more motivated workforces. However, sometimes it can lead to...

...slower decision making.