

Strike

A strike is when a group of workers agree to stop working because they want to protest against something they think is unfair where they work. Some of the most frequent reasons why workers go on strike are to get improvements where they work, for shorter working days, for more money or to stop their wages or salaries going down. Sometimes strikes are meant to affect political or social change. There are different forms of strike action and they can be analysed according to duration, extension and articulation.

A Below you can find different forms of strike action. Match the term with the definition.

1. Industrial action
 2. General strike
 3. Wildcat strike
 4. Work ban
 5. Go slow
 6. Picketing
 7. Secondary boycott
 8. Overtime ban
 9. Work-to-rule
 10. Sit-down strike
- a. when workers take their work responsibilities very literally, following safety and other regulations precisely and not doing more than the minimum required by their contracts
 - b. any measure taken by trade unions meant to reduce productivity in a workplace
 - c. when a trade union arranges with or forces a supplier, contracting party or financier to withhold its supply of goods until the union's demands are met
 - d. a sudden unofficial strike that is not organised by a trade union
 - e. when workers take possession of the workplace and refuse to leave their stations
 - f. when workers refuse to work for additional hours of work apart from their normal working hours
 - g. when workers refuse to do certain types of work or refuse to work with particular management, employees or other third parties
 - h. when workers stand at the entrance to their workplace and try to discourage or prevent people or things from entering or leaving
 - i. a strike characterised by the participation of workers in a multitude of workplaces
 - j. when workers deliberately work slower in order to delay production or work flow

Key: 1b, 2i, 3d, 4g, 5j, 6h, 7c, 8f, 9a, 10e

B Complete the following newspaper headlines with one of the following words: *out on strike, call for a strike, lost in strike, on strike, in a strike.*

1. Fire brigades to go _____ for non-emergency calls today
2. South Africa: _____ in the gold mines Friday
3. British MPs voted against joining America _____
4. 7,439 days _____
5. Transport workers are called _____

Key: 1. on strike, 2. call for a strike, 3. in a strike, 4. lost in strike, 5. out on strike

C Read the following guide to calling industrial actions in Britain and underline the word that best completes each sentence.

Calling industrial action

Industrial action happens when trade union members are in a (1) disadvantage/dispute with their employers that cannot be solved through (2) negotiations/negligence.

A trade union can only call for industrial action if a (3) majority/minority of its members involved support it in a properly organised postal (4) voucher/vote called a (5) balloon/ballot. Trade union members have the right to vote in (6) favourite/favour or against industrial action. They can also choose not to take part in industrial action and they cannot be (7) disciplined/disabled for their decision by their union.

Before organising a ballot, a union must determine which members are affected by a dispute and will therefore be asked to take industrial action. Trade union members and the employer must be informed by a trade union official or (8) cabinet/committee when and how this action will be taken.

Key: 1. dispute, 2. negotiations, 3. majority, 4. vote, 5. ballot, 6. favour, 7. disciplined, 8. committee