NEWS LESSON

AI Did Not Take Their Jobs. They Left Anyway



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Which parts of your job could a machine do tomorrow?
2. Is job security more important to you than enjoying the work?
3. Have you been asked to use AI at work or school?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**white-collar**	☐	A	losing your job because your employer no longer needs you
2	**secure**	☐	B	people you work with
3	**redundancy**	☐	C	continues to exist after a difficult time
4	**layoffs**	☐	D	times when a company ends the jobs of some workers
5	**prediction**	☐	E	sudden strong fear that makes people act without thinking
6	**panic**	☐	F	a statement about what will happen in the future
7	**survives**	☐	G	connected with office work or professional jobs
8	**colleagues**	☐	H	safe and not likely to be lost

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

A report on workers quitting white-collar careers finds something stranger than job losses: people leaving jobs that still exist, because the work no longer feels like theirs.

1 When people discuss AI and employment, the question is usually simple. Will a machine replace me? There is a second question that gets asked far less often, and for some workers it has already been answered. What happens if the job survives, and the part of it you loved does not?

2 A Guardian report spoke to white-collar professionals who have left established careers. None of them was pushed out. They went voluntarily, into work they believed was either more secure or closer to what they actually valued.

3 Chris, who asked for a pseudonym, had spent more than a decade in software engineering. He said AI had removed much of the thinking and the enjoyment from coding, and that he expected to be displaced eventually. He now works as a police officer in a major east coast city, and describes a satisfaction in dealing with his community that engineering never gave him.

4 Kara, also using a different name, produced advertising. Her employer pushed the team towards AI video and voice tools, then warned them about the legal dangers in the same conversation. As producer, she was the one responsible for clearance at a moment when AI-generated likenesses remain a legal grey area. She left for acting, supported by shifts as a barista, and said the decision made her feel lighter.

5 Vanessa Hsia left public relations after nearly ten years to study comparative literature. She described an industry chasing quantity instead of quality and reaching for AI instead of thinking. The promise she had been sold, that working hard would bring respect and a fair wage, had stopped looking guaranteed to her.

6 The most useful observation came from Hanna Horvath, who left an editing job at a personal finance company. AI, she pointed out, does not have to replace your job in order to change your relationship with it. Her colleagues, she said, had turned into project managers for material the machine generated.

7 The evidence does not support panic, and the article is careful about this. The Economist counts roughly a million American jobs created by AI against about 200,000 losses attributed to it. There is no sign of mass redundancy. What has changed is expectation: 71% of Americans told the Pew Research Center they believe the technology will mean fewer jobs within twenty years.

8 Brendan Moore, an economist at the University of Notre Dame, suggests those fears come from the warnings of technology executives and from layoffs that companies blame on AI, some of which would probably have happened regardless.

9 A prediction does not need to come true to change a life. These workers acted on one.

Sources: The Guardian, Fearing AI disruption, white-collar workers are quitting their jobs. Picture: .

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Kara's employer encouraged AI tools but also warned about the legal risks. T F NG
2. The Economist's figures show AI has already caused far more job losses than new jobs. T F NG
3. The article says how old Chris is. T F NG
4. Chris spent longer in his field than Vanessa Hsia did. T F NG
5. Brendan Moore believes every layoff blamed on AI was caused by AI. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

attributed **clearance** **compulsory** **established** **fragile** **guaranteed** **quantity** **regardless**

1. Leaving a well- _____ career after ten years takes courage.
2. Before the advert could go out, a lawyer had to give _____ for the actor's voice.
3. Much of the fall in staff numbers was _____ to AI, although other causes were likely.
4. A job for life is no longer _____ in many industries.
5. Some managers care more about the _____ of work produced than its quality.
6. Workers may still feel unhappy _____ of how secure their position is.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. By the time Vanessa resigned, her employer _____ her twice. (PROMOTE)
2. Kara's team _____ to use AI tools by their employer. (TELL)
3. Employers should _____ their staff before introducing new tools. (CONSULT)
4. The report _____ by a journalist who spoke to former white-collar workers. (WRITE)
5. If I felt that way about my work, I _____ too. (LEAVE)

7 Language focus: phrasal verbs

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. The verb often changes with tense but the small word stays the same, so check the particle given in the sentence.

carry	cut	ended	look	pointed	put	sort

1. Hanna _____ out that AI does not have to replace a job to change it.
2. Kara _____ up working in a coffee shop while she trained as an actor.
3. Employers should _____ into the effects of AI on staff before they change anything.
4. Vanessa did not want to _____ off her decision any longer.
5. Some companies _____ back on staff and blamed AI.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Horvath says AI can change your job without replacing it. Has that happened to anyone you know?
2. Kara was told to use AI tools and warned about them at the same time. What should her employer have done?
3. Would you retrain for a completely different career at 30?

9 Role-play: the new AI tool

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the manager

Next month your team must start using a new AI tool. It will save time and money. Explain why it is a good idea. Ask your employee how they feel. Try to find a plan you both accept.

Student B · the employee

You love the creative part of your job, and the new AI tool will do most of it. You are worried. Say how you feel, ask to keep some of the work, and say what you might do if nothing changes.

Useful phrases

I'd like to talk about the new tool.

It's going to save us a lot of time.

I'm worried it'll take the best part of my job.

What's your biggest concern?

Couldn't I keep some of the work myself?

I'd hate to leave, but I might have to.

Afterwards, tell the class: did you find a plan, or did the employee decide to leave?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 G · 2 H · 3 A · 4 D · 5 F · 6 E · 7 C · 8 B

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 established · 2 clearance · 3 attributed · 4 guaranteed · 5 quantity · 6 regardless

6 Verb forms

1 had promoted · 2 were told · 3 consult · 4 was written · 5 would leave

7 Language focus

1 pointed · 2 ended · 3 look · 4 put · 5 cut

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