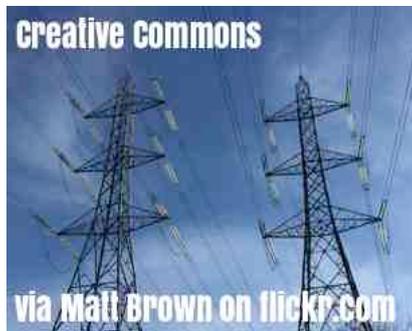


## Venezuela introduces 2-day working week

29th April, 2016



The government in Venezuela has taken a drastic step to try and deal with the country's growing energy problems. It has initiated a two-day working week for all state employees. Public

workers had already been working four days a week after officials made Fridays a no-work day two months ago. The country's 2.8 million public workers will now have five days off a week. President Nicolas Maduro addressed the nation in a televised statement, saying: "From tomorrow, for at least two weeks, we are going to have Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays as non-working days for the public sector." Employees were told they would still be paid in full, despite the greatly reduced working week.

The government is blaming the current energy crisis on droughts and El Nino weather patterns. Water levels in hydroelectric dams are dangerously low. Mr Maduro likened the Guri region, home to the nation's biggest dam, to a desert. Critics of the president say ineffective management, inadequate investment and corruption are behind the current mess. The country's 30 million people are facing daily disruptions to their lives. Women have been asked to use hair dryers less and shopping malls have to rely on their own electricity generators. Electricity is being rationed in most of the country. The president even turned the clocks back thirty minutes to provide half-an-hour of extra evening sunlight.

Sources: *TIME.com* / *telegraph.co.uk* / *bbc.com*

## Writing

A five-day working week is too long. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*government / drastic / energy / employees / statement / public sector / working week / blaming / crisis / weather patterns / dams / management / corruption / rationed*

## True / False

- An energy crisis has prompted a two-day working week in Venezuela. T / F
- All workers have been told they will now only work for two days. T / F
- There are over three million public sector workers in Venezuela. T / F
- Public employees will have to take a 20 per cent pay cut. T / F
- Venezuela's government is blaming El Nino for the energy crisis. T / F
- Venezuela's largest dam is now a desert. T / F
- The government has asked women to use hair dryers less. T / F
- Venezuela's government has turned the clocks back to save energy. T / F

## Synonym Match

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. step       | a. in spite of  |
| 2. initiated  | b. compared     |
| 3. addressed  | c. shortened    |
| 4. despite    | d. depend       |
| 5. reduced    | e. started      |
| 6. current    | f. insufficient |
| 7. likened    | g. measure      |
| 8. inadequate | h. additional   |
| 9. rely       | i. spoke to     |
| 10. extra     | j. present      |

## Discussion – Student A

- What do you think about what you read?
- What is the best number of days to work?
- What energy problems does your country have?
- Is a two-day working week a good idea?
- Do you think the two-day week will help solve the energy crisis?
- How can a country operate if the public sector is on two days a week?
- What advice do you have for Venezuela's president?
- Why do you think Venezuela decided on two days and not three?

## Phrase Match

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. taken a drastic                        | a. a televised statement      |
| 2. state                                  | b. in full                    |
| 3. addressed the nation in                | c. disruptions to their lives |
| 4. the public                             | d. step                       |
| 5. be paid                                | e. dangerously low            |
| 6. blaming the current energy crisis      | f. management                 |
| 7. Water levels in hydroelectric dams are | g. employees                  |
| 8. ineffective                            | h. clocks back                |
| 9. facing daily                           | i. sector                     |
| 10. turned the                            | j. on droughts                |

## Discussion – Student B

- If El Nino is to blame, why aren't neighbouring countries affected?
- What problems does an energy crisis create?
- What would you do if there was no power in your town?
- What do you think of asking women to reduce hair dryer use?
- What can Venezuela do to solve its crisis?
- Is turning the clock back 30 minutes a good idea?
- Should other countries follow Venezuela's example?
- What questions would you like to ask Venezuela's president?

## Spelling

- taken a saditrc step
- It has ttdaeinii a two-day working week
- all state epmleyose
- clfisaifo made Fridays a no-work day
- a televised ttmsntae
- the public rsocte
- blaming the current energy crisis on uhtrodsg
- the Guri enigor
- aqdiuatnee investment
- people are facing daily iuprtsdnoi
- their own electricity sgreanotre
- Electricity is being rnaodtie

### Answers – Synonym Match

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

## Role Play

### Role A – Solar

You think solar is the best form of power. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their forms aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): nuclear, biofuels or wind.

### Role B – Nuclear

You think nuclear is the best form of power. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their forms aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): solar, biofuels or wind.

### Role C – Biofuel

You think biofuel is the best form of power. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their forms aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): nuclear, solar or wind.

### Role D – Wind

You think wind is the best form of power. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their forms aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): nuclear, biofuels or solar.

## Speaking – Energy

Rank these with your partner. Put the best energy forms at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- coal
- hydroelectricity
- solar power
- wind power
- bio fuels
- wave power
- nuclear power
- hydrogen

### Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	T
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.