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Chrysler cars announces huge job losses

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27th October, 2008

THE ARTICLE

The global economic slowdown is hitting the auto industry hard. Demand for cars is down and car makers are having to cut costs. The latest casualty in this crisis is the U.S. giant Chrysler. It has just announced it will slash its white-collar workforce by a quarter. This means 5,000 employees will lose their jobs. Chrysler's CEO Bob Nardelli e-mailed his workers with a very gloomy message: "These are truly unimaginable times for our industry. Never before have auto industry sales [fallen] at such a fast rate," he wrote. Mr. Nardelli also had bad news for his blue-collar workers. Chrysler will also axe 1,825 workers at two of its assembly plants. This news will send a worrying message to other auto manufacturers around the world.

Worse could be to come for American car workers. There is a deal brewing that could see a merger between Chrysler and one of its rivals General Motors. This could lead to tens of thousands more job losses as the new company makes deep cost cuts. Mr. Nardelli suggested that more structural changes are in the pipeline. "We cannot operate as we have in the past," he warned. Chrysler is not in a position to restructure quickly. Ninety per cent of its market is in the USA and consumers are having huge problems getting car loans in the credit crunch. The company also depends on sales of its gas-guzzling sports utility vehicles. American car buyers today are choosing to buy smaller, more fuel-efficient cars.

WARM-UPS

1. JOBS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about jobs. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

economic slowdown / cutting costs / casualties / white-collar workers / gloom / worrying messages / mergers / structural changes / credit crunch / fuel-efficient cars

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. CUTTING COSTS: Where would you cut costs if you had to? Complete the table below. Share what you wrote with your partner(s).

Item	Cut x%	How this would change my life
Food		
Mobile phone		
Entertainment		
Transport		
English lessons		
Hobby		

4. CAR INDUSTRY: Students A **strongly** believe the car industry will change forever; Students B **strongly** believe the car industry won't change at all. Change partners again and talk about your roles and conversations.

5. SLOWDOWN: With your partner(s), discuss whether and how the global economic slowdown is affecting these industries. Share your conclusions with other students and see if you agree. Agree on a class conclusion for each item below.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English lessons Fast food Fashion Tobacco / cigarettes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Leisure Gambling Music
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6. GLOOMY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'gloomy'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. The world financial crisis is having a bad effect on the car industry. T / F
- b. Chrysler will cut twenty-five percent of its white-collar workers. T / F
- c. An industry insider said this is the tenth times sales have fallen so fast. T / F
- d. Chrysler will give axes to 1,850 workers to do different jobs. T / F
- e. Chrysler has merged with another auto giant General Motors. T / F
- f. The CEO of Chrysler said there are plans for many structural changes. T / F
- g. Chrysler is in trouble in part because it produces big cars. T / F
- h. Consumers today are more interested in cars that do more to the litre. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. slowdown | a. cut |
| 2. casualty | b. happening |
| 3. slash | c. petrol |
| 4. gloomy | d. car |
| 5. plants | e. being planned |
| 6. auto | f. recession |
| 7. brewing | g. victim |
| 8. in the pipeline | h. grim |
| 9. gas | i. opting |
| 10. choosing | j. factories |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. The global economic slowdown is hitting | a. workforce by a quarter |
| 2. The latest casualty | b. in the credit crunch |
| 3. it will slash its white-collar | c. in this crisis |
| 4. These are truly unimaginable | d. be to come |
| 5. Nardelli also had bad news for his | e. brewing |
| 6. Worse could | f. times for our industry |
| 7. There is a deal | g. sports utility vehicles |
| 8. more structural changes are in | h. the auto industry hard |
| 9. problems getting car loans | i. blue-collar workers |
| 10. gas-guzzling | j. the pipeline |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The global economic slowdown is _____ the auto industry hard. Demand for cars is down and car makers are _____ to cut costs. The latest casualty in this crisis is the U.S. giant Chrysler. It has just announced it will slash its white-collar workforce by a _____. This means 5,000 employees will lose their jobs. Chrysler's CEO Bob Nardelli e-mailed his workers with a very _____ message: "These are truly unimaginable times for our industry. Never before have _____ industry sales [fallen] at such a fast rate," he wrote. Mr. Nardelli also had bad _____ for his blue-collar workers. Chrysler will also _____ 1,825 workers at two of its assembly plants. This news will send a worrying _____ to other auto manufacturers around the world.

news
quarter
auto
hitting
message
having
axe
gloomy

Worse could be to _____ for American car workers. There is a deal brewing that could _____ a merger between Chrysler and one of its rivals General Motors. This could lead to tens of thousands more job losses as the new company makes _____ cost cuts. Mr. Nardelli suggested that more structural changes are in the _____. "We cannot operate as we have in the past," he warned. Chrysler is not in a _____ to restructure quickly. Ninety per cent of its market is in the USA and consumers are having _____ problems getting car loans in the credit crunch. The company also _____ on sales of its gas-guzzling sports utility vehicles. American car buyers today are choosing to buy smaller, more _____-efficient cars.

depends
deep
position
see
fuel
come
huge
pipeline

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

The global economic slowdown _____ industry hard. Demand for cars is down and car makers are having to cut costs. The latest casualty _____ U.S. giant Chrysler. It has just announced it will slash its white-collar workforce _____. This means 5,000 employees will lose their jobs. Chrysler's CEO Bob Nardelli e-mailed his workers _____ message: "These are truly unimaginable times for our industry. Never before have auto industry sales [fallen] at such a fast rate," he wrote. Mr. Nardelli also had bad news _____ workers. Chrysler will _____ workers at two of its assembly plants. This news will send a worrying message to other auto manufacturers around the world.

Worse could be to come for American car workers. There _____ that could see a merger between Chrysler and one of its rivals General Motors. This _____ of thousands more job losses as the new company makes deep cost cuts. Mr. Nardelli suggested that more structural changes _____. "We cannot operate as we have in the past," he warned. Chrysler is not in a position to restructure quickly. Ninety per cent _____ in the USA and consumers are having huge problems getting car loans in the credit crunch. The company also depends on sales _____ sports utility vehicles. American car buyers today are choosing to buy smaller, more _____.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**job**' and '**loss**'.

job	loss
------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• hard• casualty• slash• rate• axe• plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• worse• brewing• deep• operate• depends• fuel
---	---

STUDENT JOB LOSSES SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about job losses in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

JOB LOSSES DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the term 'job losses'?
- c) Have you ever or a family member ever lost a job?
- d) What do you think of the global economic slowdown?
- e) Are you having to cut costs?
- f) How serious is losing your job?
- g) Are there many job losses in your country?
- h) Have you ever sent or received a gloomy message?
- i) Why does Mr. Nardelli say these are "truly unimaginable times"?
- j) Do you think losing a job is different for white-collar and blue-collar workers?

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JOB LOSSES DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think other automakers around the world are suffering?
- c) Has your country ever experienced high rates of unemployment?
- d) Do you think any car makers will go out of business?
- e) Should governments rescue car makers like they rescued banks?
- f) Has the car industry changed forever?
- g) Do you have any plans in the pipeline or any new ideas brewing?
- h) Have you adapted to big changes in your life?
- i) Do you think this is the end for gas-guzzling SUVs?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Chrysler's CEO Bob Nardelli?

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LANGUAGE

The global economic slowdown is (1) _____ the auto industry hard. Demand for cars is down and car makers are having to cut costs. The latest (2) _____ in this crisis is the U.S. giant Chrysler. It has just announced it will slash its (3) _____-collar workforce by a quarter. This means 5,000 employees will lose their jobs. Chrysler's CEO Bob Nardelli e-mailed his workers with a very (4) _____ message: "These are truly unimaginable times for our industry. Never before have auto industry sales [fallen] at (5) _____ a fast rate," he wrote. Mr. Nardelli also had bad news for his blue-collar workers. Chrysler will also axe 1,825 workers at two of its assembly plants. (6) _____ news will send a worrying message to other auto manufacturers around the world.

Worse could (7) _____ to come for American car workers. There is a deal brewing that could see a merger (8) _____ Chrysler and one of its rivals General Motors. This could lead to tens of thousands more job losses as the new company makes deep cost (9) _____. Mr. Nardelli suggested that more structural changes are in the pipeline. "We cannot operate as we (10) _____ in the past," he warned. Chrysler is not in a position to restructure quickly. Ninety per cent of its market is in the USA and consumers are having huge problems getting car loans (11) _____ the credit crunch. The company also depends on sales of its (12) _____ -guzzling sports utility vehicles. American car buyers today are choosing to buy smaller, more fuel-efficient cars.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. | (a) hitter | (b) hits | (c) hit | (d) hitting |
| 2. | (a) casualty | (b) cause | (c) casual | (d) casualties |
| 3. | (a) pink | (b) white | (c) yellow | (d) black |
| 4. | (a) gloom | (b) groom | (c) gloomy | (d) gloomily |
| 5. | (a) much | (b) so | (c) such | (d) quick |
| 6. | (a) Breaking | (b) This | (c) Flash | (d) What's |
| 7. | (a) being | (b) are | (c) is | (d) be |
| 8. | (a) between | (b) amongst | (c) opposite | (d) middle |
| 9. | (a) cut | (b) cuts | (c) cutting | (d) cuttings |
| 10. | (a) get | (b) make | (c) do | (d) have |
| 11. | (a) for | (b) an | (c) in | (d) on |
| 12. | (a) gas | (b) oil | (c) diesel | (d) jet-fuel |

WRITING:

Write about **job losses** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about the car industry in the USA. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. FUTURE CAR: Make a poster about the car of the future. Make sure you include all the things that will make people buy it. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. AXED: Write a magazine article about a car worker who has just been axed and the CEO who made the decision to cut jobs. Include imaginary interviews with the two.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. DIARY / JOURNAL: You have just lost your job. Write about your first jobless day. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson.

6. LETTER: Write a letter to the CEO of one of America's car giants. Ask him/her three questions about his/her vision for the future. Give him/her three suggestions on what he/she should focus on to make his/her car company successful. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. slowdown | a. recession |
| 2. casualty | b. victim |
| 3. slash | c. cut |
| 4. gloomy | d. grim |
| 5. plants | e. factories |
| 6. auto | f. car |
| 7. brewing | g. happening |
| 8. in the pipeline | h. being planned |
| 9. gas | i. petrol |
| 10. choosing | j. opting |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. The global economic slowdown is hitting | a. the auto industry hard |
| 2. The latest casualty | b. in this crisis |
| 3. it will slash its white-collar | c. workforce by a quarter |
| 4. These are truly unimaginable | d. times for our industry |
| 5. Nardelli also had bad news for his | e. blue-collar workers |
| 6. Worse could | f. be to come |
| 7. There is a deal | g. brewing |
| 8. more structural changes are in | h. the pipeline |
| 9. problems getting car loans | i. in the credit crunch |
| 10. gas-guzzling | j. sports utility vehicles |

GAP FILL:

Chrysler cars announces huge job losses

The global economic slowdown is **hitting** the auto industry hard. Demand for cars is down and car makers are **having** to cut costs. The latest casualty in this crisis is the U.S. giant Chrysler. It has just announced it will slash its white-collar workforce by a **quarter**. This means 5,000 employees will lose their jobs. Chrysler's CEO Bob Nardelli e-mailed his workers with a very **gloomy** message: "These are truly unimaginable times for our industry. Never before have **auto** industry sales [fallen] at such a fast rate," he wrote. Mr. Nardelli also had bad **news** for his blue-collar workers. Chrysler will also **axe** 1,825 workers at two of its assembly plants. This news will send a worrying **message** to other auto manufacturers around the world.

Worse could be to **come** for American car workers. There is a deal brewing that could **see** a merger between Chrysler and one of its rivals General Motors. This could lead to tens of thousands more job losses as the new company makes **deep** cost cuts. Mr. Nardelli suggested that more structural changes are in the **pipeline**. "We cannot operate as we have in the past," he warned. Chrysler is not in a **position** to restructure quickly. Ninety per cent of its market is in the USA and consumers are having **huge** problems getting car loans in the credit crunch. The company also **depends** on sales of its gas-guzzling sports utility vehicles. American car buyers today are choosing to buy smaller, more **fuel**-efficient cars.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - a 3 - b 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - d 8 - a 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a