

Bank of England staff to go on strike

5th July, 2017



Workers at the United Kingdom's central bank, the Bank of England, have voted to stage a four-day strike in support of a pay claim. It will be the first walkout by staff from the bank in over five

decades. Over 95 per cent of bankers who voted opted for strike action over what they deem to be an unacceptable pay rise offer. The Bank offered its workers a collective one per cent pay rise for its staff. The deal means that a third of staff could get no pay increase at all. The union that represents the Bank's workers said: "The result of the Bank's unwillingness to negotiate fair pay will be that the Bank's sites, including the iconic Threadneedle Street [premises] in the City of London, will effectively be inoperable."

The Bank of England was established in 1694. It is the second oldest central bank in operation today. Workers at the bank are suffering along with millions more public sector staff in the UK who have had their annual salary increase capped at one per cent. This is below the level of inflation, which currently stands at 2.9 per cent. A union spokeswoman said workers would be taking action, "because of the bank's total refusal to accept that its workforce is struggling to meet their costs of living". She added: "It is nothing short of shameful that the iconic symbol of financial services in the UK is choosing to ride roughshod over the concerns of its dedicated and hardworking staff and impose this derisory pay deal."

Sources: bbc.com / ft.com / ibtimes.co.uk

Writing

Pay rises should always be above the rate of inflation. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

central bank / strike / decades / pay rise / unacceptable / union / iconic / negotiate / established / suffering / annual / salary / inflation / costs of living / financial services

True / False

- Bank of England staff will strike for four days. T / F
- It will be the first ever time for Bank of England staff to go on strike. T / F
- The Bank offered its staff a one per cent pay rise. T / F
- The workers' union said the bank will be inoperable during the strike. T / F
- The Bank of England was set up in 1649. T / F
- Millions of UK workers have had their pay rises capped. T / F
- The union said the Bank accepted its workers were struggling financially. T / F
- A union spokeswoman called the pay deal deserving. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. stage | a. unworkable |
| 2. walkout | b. talk |
| 3. collective | c. limited |
| 4. negotiate | d. pitiful |
| 5. inoperable | e. industrial action |
| 6. established | f. staff |
| 7. capped | g. join in |
| 8. workforce | h. disgraceful |
| 9. shameful | i. set up |
| 10. derisory | j. combined |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you know about central banks?
- Should workers go on strike for more pay?
- What happens to a bank if the workers go on strike?
- What do you think of a 1% pay rise?
- Do you think a bank can afford more than a 1% pay rise?
- How important are banks?
- Do you think strikes are effective for workers?
- Do workers go on strike in your country?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. voted to stage | a. symbol |
| 2. in support | b. opted for strike action |
| 3. bankers who voted | c. their costs of living |
| 4. a third of staff could get no | d. to negotiate fair pay |
| 5. the Bank's unwillingness | e. public sector staff |
| 6. Workers at the bank are | f. a four-day strike |
| 7. millions more | g. pay increase at all |
| 8. its workforce is struggling to meet | h. hardworking staff |
| 9. the iconic | i. of a pay claim |
| 10. dedicated and | j. suffering |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you think of the Bank of England?
- What happens when salary rises are lower than inflation?
- Is it shameful that a central bank sticks to a 1% pay rise?
- What is the cost of living like in your country?
- Do you think the Bank of England's pay offer is shameful?
- What advice do you have for the bank's workers?
- What questions would you like to ask the head of the Bank of England?

Spelling

- in over five ddecase
- teodp for strike action
- a tvcolcilee one per cent
- The union that erpsnreets the Bank's workers
- gnieotate fair pay
- ...will viefcfetlye be inoperable
- ebslseidtha in 1694
- public oesrtc staff
- It is nothing short of uelfahms
- the occiin symbol
- cdetiedad and hardworking staff
- impose this soerdriy pay deal

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Role Play

Role A – Good Pay

You think good pay is the most important requirement in a job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): a nice boss, long holidays or job satisfaction.

Role B – Nice Boss

You think a nice boss is the most important requirement in a job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): good pay, long holidays or job satisfaction.

Role C – Long Holidays

You think long holidays is the most important requirement in a job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): a nice boss, good pay or job satisfaction.

Role D – Job Satisfaction

You think job satisfaction is the most important requirement in a job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): a nice boss, long holidays or good pay.

Speaking – Workers

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important things at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| • great colleagues | • good pay |
| • long holidays | • good boss |
| • job satisfaction | • chances for promotion |
| • good place of work | • interesting work |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.