

Amazon staff to return to office five days a week

19th September 2024



On the 23rd of May 2023, the WHO declared "with great hope" an end to COVID-19 as a public health emergency. Sixteen months later, many workers are still working from home. Retail giant Amazon has decided it is time to end its hybrid work policy. The company has told its employees they must return to a five-day week from the 2nd of January 2025. Amazon CEO Andy Jassy told staff in a memo that: "We've decided that we're going to return to being in the office the way we were before Covid." He said being with other staff would help workers collaborate, brainstorm, and invent. He added that teaching and learning from one another is "more seamless" in the office.

Some employees at Amazon are unhappy with the return-to-office rule. Staff have a history of telling Amazon about their concerns. In February 2023, Amazon required its employees to be in the office for three days a week. This caused many workers at the company's Seattle headquarters to protest. They walked out of their offices. The workers also complained about job cuts. Amazon cut 27,000 jobs globally in early 2023. Another complaint was about Amazon's contribution to climate change. The workers believe that asking people to commute to work will "accelerate the climate crisis". Mr Jassy has created a "bureaucracy mailbox" for staff to make complaints about company rules.

Sources: [usatoday.com](https://www.usatoday.com) / [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) / [geekwire.com](https://www.geekwire.com)

Writing

We should all be able to choose whether or not to work from home. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

WHO / hope / COVID-19 / working from home / Amazon / hybrid work policy / staff / employees / history / in the office / protest / job cuts / complaints / climate crisis

True / False

- 1) The WHO had great hope when it ended COVID-19 as an emergency. T / F
- 2) Amazon is about to start a new hybrid work policy. T / F
- 3) All employees must be in the office five days a week from January 2026. T / F
- 4) Amazon's CEO said collaboration was better in the office. T / F
- 5) In February 2023, Amazon staff had to be in the office 3 days a week. T / F
- 6) Amazon cut over a quarter of a million jobs in 2023. T / F
- 7) Some Amazon staff believe going to the office is bad for the climate. T / F
- 8) Amazon has a mailbox for staff to complain about the company's rules. T / F

Synonym Match

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

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|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. declared | a. dissatisfied |
| 2. emergency | b. red tape |
| 3. return | c. crisis |
| 4. collaborate | d. smooth |
| 5. seamless | e. worries |
| 6. unhappy | f. object |
| 7. concerns | g. stated |
| 8. protest | h. travel |
| 9. commute | i. work together |
| 10. bureaucracy | j. go back |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of working from home?
- b) What are the good things about working in offices?
- c) What do you know about Amazon?
- d) What's the best number of days to work in a week?
- e) Are you good at collaborating?
- f) Are you good at teaching people things?
- g) Is an office the best place to work?
- h) What advice do you have for Amazon's workers?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. an end to COVID-19 as a public | a. the climate crisis |
| 2. Retail giant | b. seamless in the office |
| 3. the way we were | c. before Covid |
| 4. being with other staff would help workers | d. complaints |
| 5. learning from one another is more | e. cuts |
| 6. be in the office for | f. health emergency |
| 7. The workers also complained about job | g. three days a week |
| 8. asking people to commute | h. collaborate |
| 9. accelerate | i. to work |
| 10. a "bureaucracy mailbox" for staff to make | j. Amazon |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What are the bad things about working in offices?
- What do you think about Amazon?
- Have you ever been unhappy at work?
- What would you protest about?
- How can companies change to help climate change?
- How important is Amazon in your life?
- What questions would you like to ask Amazon's boss?

Spelling

- the WHO arlddcee with great hope
- a public health eecgmenry
- end its hybrid work cliyop
- We've decided that we're going to tnrure
- staff would help workers etblaolcaor
- brainstorm and tevnin
- Some elsyeepmo at Amazon
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- Amazon's coobiuittrnrn to climate change
- omecumt to work
- ateeelrcca the climate crisis
- make onmaptlsic about company rules

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Role Play

Role A – The Office

You think the office is the worst thing about offices. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least bad of these (and why): meetings, co-workers or meetings.

Role B – Meetings

You think meetings is the worst thing about offices. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least bad of these (and why): the office, co-workers or meetings.

Role C – Co-workers

You think co-workers is the worst thing about offices. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least bad of these (and why): meetings, the office or meetings.

Role D – Meetings

You think meetings is the worst thing about offices. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least bad of these (and why): meetings, co-workers or the office.

Speaking – Offices

Rank these with your partner. Put the worst things about offices at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| • The office | • Co-workers |
| • Desks | • Lunch hours |
| • Bosses | • Starting time |
| • Meetings | • Furniture |

Answers – True False

1	T	2	F	3	F	4	T	5	T	6	F	7	T	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.