

B2-C1 Worksheet: Restaurants With Almost No Staff - 27 August 2026

Article

At Bullgogi, a 165-seat Korean barbecue restaurant in Manchester, diners can largely get by without speaking to a server. A Guardian review describes customers using table-top screens to order, while technology handles much of the routine interaction. Human staff have not disappeared completely: they can step in when someone has an allergy, a question or a problem. The model reflects a wider push in hospitality to cut down on labour-intensive tasks and speed things up through self-service screens and automated equipment.

Supporters argue that technology can take over repetitive work, reduce waiting and make ordering more consistent. A screen also lets customers keep an eye on what they have chosen and how much they are spending. Yet efficiency can come at a cost. The Guardian review praised much of Bullgogi's food but found the atmosphere less convincing. Technology cannot always make up for a warm welcome, a useful recommendation or a member of staff noticing that a customer looks uncertain. If the experience feels too mechanical, an otherwise clever concept can fall flat.

The debate may ultimately come down to what people believe a restaurant is for. Someone looking for a fast, affordable meal may be perfectly happy with minimal contact, while a customer celebrating a special occasion may value conversation and attentive service. Automation could also reshape restaurant jobs rather than simply eliminate them, with fewer people taking orders and more staff solving problems, preparing food or helping when needed. The future is therefore unlikely to be completely staff-free. Restaurants may instead offer different levels of human contact, leaving customers to decide how much service they actually want.

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

1. Customers at Bullgogi can order through screens at their tables.
2. The article says human staff have disappeared completely from Bullgogi.
3. Supporters believe automation can reduce waiting and make ordering more consistent.
4. The Guardian review found the restaurant's atmosphere more convincing than its food.
5. The article suggests technology cannot always replace a warm welcome or useful advice.
6. People celebrating special occasions may place more value on attentive service.
7. The writer predicts automation will eliminate every type of restaurant job.
8. The article suggests future restaurants may offer different levels of human contact.

Phrase Match

Match each phrase from the article with its meaning.

Phrases	Definitions
1. get by without	A. make a process happen faster
2. step in	B. watch or monitor carefully
3. cut down on	C. compensate for something missing or disappointing
4. speed things up	D. become involved to help when necessary
5. take over	E. involve a disadvantage or negative consequence
6. keep an eye on	F. fail to have the intended effect
7. come at a cost	G. manage successfully without something
8. make up for	H. ultimately depend on or be decided by something
9. fall flat	I. begin doing a task previously done by someone else
10. come down to	J. reduce the amount of something

Synonym Match

Match each word from the article with the closest synonym.

Words	Synonyms
1. routine	A. demanding
2. interaction	B. limited
3. labour-intensive	C. uniform
4. repetitive	D. remove
5. consistent	E. impersonal
6. uncertain	F. standard
7. mechanical	G. transform
8. minimal	H. repeated
9. reshape	I. unsure
10. eliminate	J. communication

Use the new language

Please choose 5 words or phrases and make your own sentence using the new word or phrase.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Discussion Questions

Student A	Student B
1. Which restaurant do you go to most often, and what keeps you going back?	1. Would you choose a largely automated restaurant if the food was excellent?
2. What is the best restaurant you have ever been to, and what made it memorable?	2. Does greater efficiency sometimes come at a cost to hospitality?
3. Have you ever had a bad experience in a restaurant? What went wrong?	3. If automation reduces labour costs, should customers expect lower prices?
4. Do you care more about the food, the service or the atmosphere?	4. Which parts of restaurant service should never be fully automated?
5. When do you prefer casual dining to a more formal restaurant?	5. How should a mostly automated restaurant handle allergies, complaints or mistakes?
6. How comfortable are you ordering from a screen or QR-code menu?	6. Could screen-based ordering make restaurants more accessible for some people but less accessible for others?
7. Have you ever complained or sent a dish back? What happened?	7. Will traditional table service eventually become a premium experience?
8. Which restaurant would you recommend to someone visiting your city?	8. Should choosing a restaurant ultimately come down to the food, or does the whole experience matter just as much?

Answer Key

True/False: 1=T, 2=F, 3=T, 4=F, 5=T, 6=T, 7=F, 8=T

Phrase Match: 1=G, 2=D, 3=J, 4=A, 5=I, 6=B, 7=E, 8=C, 9=F, 10=H

Synonym Match: 1=F, 2=J, 3=A, 4=H, 5=C, 6=I, 7=E, 8=B, 9=G, 10=D

Example sentences

1. Some small restaurants can get by without printed menus.
2. A manager should step in if a customer has a serious allergy.
3. Self-service systems may help restaurants cut down on waiting times.
4. Ordering at the table can speed things up during busy periods.
5. Machines may take over some repetitive tasks in the future.
6. Diners can keep an eye on their total while ordering from a screen.
7. Greater efficiency can come at a cost if the restaurant loses its atmosphere.
8. Good food can sometimes make up for slow service.
9. A clever restaurant idea can fall flat if customers find it confusing.
10. The best choice may come down to whether you value speed or personal service.