

A2-B1 English Worksheet

Self-Service Technology: Self-Checkout, Automation and the Future of Customer Service

5 October 2026

Article

Self-service technology is now common in everyday life. A Washington Post article from 1 October describes mixed views of supermarket self-checkouts. Airports also have check-in machines, while restaurants use QR-code menus. These systems can be quick and convenient. Some customers prefer working independently, especially when they are in a hurry or only have a few items.

However, automation can also be frustrating. A machine may not recognise a product, an app may stop working, or a customer may need staff to assist with a problem. When no worker is available, a task can take longer. Some people want the choice to speak to a person instead of using a screen.

Businesses use self-service systems to speed up service and reduce routine work. Technology does not always replace employees; staff may move into different roles. The challenge is to make service efficient while keeping human support available when people need it.

True/False

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

No.	Statement	T / F
1	Self-service systems are now used in several kinds of everyday service.	
2	Some customers like self-service because they can complete tasks independently.	
3	The article says self-service technology is always slower than speaking to a worker.	
4	Customers may still need staff when a machine or app does not work properly.	
5	Automated systems are described as having no technical problems.	
6	Every customer would rather use a screen than speak to a person.	
7	Technology can change the kind of work employees do.	
8	The article argues that businesses should remove human support completely.	

Synonym Match

Match the words (1-10) to the correct synonyms (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. common	A. help
2. quick	B. favour
3. prefer	C. option
4. frustrating	D. usual
5. recognise	E. accessible
6. assist	F. identify
7. problem	G. decrease
8. available	H. fast
9. choice	I. difficulty
10. reduce	J. annoying

Use the New Language

Choose 5 words from the Synonym Match and write your own sentence with each one.

No.	Your sentence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Discussion Questions

Student A	Student B
1. Which self-service technology do you use most often?	1. Do companies introduce self-service because customers want it, or mainly to save money?
2. When shopping, when do you choose a self-checkout and when do you choose a cashier?	2. Should businesses always give customers the choice of speaking to a person?
3. Have you ever had a machine stop working when you were in a hurry?	3. Does self-service make life faster, or does it give customers more work to do?
4. Which services work better through apps or machines?	4. Can some people be left behind when services move to apps and screens?
5. Which services would you rather use with a person?	5. Can automated customer service make shops, banks or restaurants feel less friendly?
6. Do you like QR-code menus? What are their advantages and disadvantages?	6. What should happen when a machine makes a mistake and no worker is nearby?
7. When travelling, do you prefer check-in machines or speaking to airport staff?	7. Which jobs may change most as self-service technology becomes more common?
8. Have you ever stopped using a service because its automated system was too difficult?	8. In the future, which services should always have people working in them?

Answer Key

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

Example Sentences

No.	Example sentence
1	Self-service machines are common in large supermarkets.
2	A self-checkout can be quick when you only have a few items.
3	I prefer speaking to a person when there is a problem.
4	It is frustrating when a machine keeps asking you to repeat the same action.
5	Some machines cannot recognise unusual products.
6	A member of staff can assist when the screen stops working.
7	A technical problem can make a simple task take longer.
8	Human help should be available when customers need it.
9	I like having the choice between a cashier and self-checkout.
10	Shops may use technology to reduce routine work.