

Convenience stores

Convenience stores are handy when we need somewhere to pop into if we have forgotten to buy something. They also provide part-time jobs for thousands of people. A new report from Japan suggests that some stores are not so convenient for their workers. Japan's national broadcaster NHK says many part-time workers are given unrealistic sales quotas. Labour rights experts want stores to stop what they call an exploitative practice. There are reports of workers having hundreds of dollars deducted from salaries and having to buy unsold stock for not meeting their quotas.

An expert on Japanese labour law said deducting money from salaries for unmet quotas was against the law. He questioned why so many part-timers felt they had to buy unsold stock. He suggested it was because of pressure from stores. The expert asked the bosses of convenience stores to tackle this problem so that part-timers are not exploited. One worker said he was "drowning in quotas". Another said that he can lose up to 30% of his monthly salary. The biggest losses come with quotas for unsold seasonal items like Valentine's goods and special sushi rolls.



Ex.1 Match the Polish words to their English equivalents from the text:

1. przydatny	• broadcaster
2. dogodny	• convenient
3. narodowy	• exploited
4. nadawca	• handy
5. nierealny	• loss
6. wyeksploatowany	• national
7. strata	• unrealistic

Ex.2 Match these words from the two boxes to form 8 collocations:

convenience / exploitative / labour / monthly / part-time / sales / seasonal / unsold
+
items / job / law / quotas / practice / salary / stock / store

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Ex.3 Say these sentences in English using some expressions from the previous exercises:

1. Gdy masz pracę na część etatu, nie możesz oczekiwać wysokich miesięcznych zarobków.
2. Pracownicy sklepów często są eksploatowani.
3. Wielu sprzedawców (*shop assistant*) narzeka (*complain*) na nierealne kwoty sprzedaży.

I know English idioms!

This lesson's text deals with the issue of convenience stores – those where we can buy most useful items, especially food stuffs. But English also recognizes such an expression:

- convenience food = *food that is almost ready to eat when it is bought and can be prepared quickly and easily (gotowe dania)*
- Convenience food may be quick and easy but if its's healthy is another matter.

Phrasals, phrasals...

We can find out from this lesson's reading text that "Convenience stores are handy when we need somewhere to pop into if we have forgotten to buy something." But what does it actually mean?

- to pop in(to) = *to visit (a place) quickly, usually for some purpose (wpaść, wstąpić):*
- Why don't you pop in and see us this afternoon?
- All I have to do on the way home is pop into the drugstore.

Grammar corner

"There are reports of workers having hundreds of dollars deducted from salaries..." reads a sentence from our text. What the underlined fragment communicates is that somebody deducted hundreds of dollars from salaries of workers. It is expressed thanks to the structure "have something done". Let's observe it in a few more examples:

- I have my salary transferred to my account every month.
- We are going to have our office reorganized by an interior decoration company.
- Do you have your car serviced in an authorized station?

GLOSSARY	
convenience store	sklep z podstawowymi artykułami
handy	przydatny
to pop into	wpaść, wstąpić
to provide	zapewniać
part-time job	praca w niepełnym wymiarze
convenient	dogodny
national	narodowy
broadcaster	nadawca
unrealistic	nierzeczywisty, nierealny tu: niewykonalny
sales quota	kwota sprzedaży
labour rights	prawa w pracy
exploitative practice	praktyki wyciskujące/eksploatacyjne
to deduct	odjąć, potrącić
salary	pensja
unsold stock	niesprzedane zapasy
to meet	zrealizować (np. cele sprzedażowe)
labour law	prawo pracy
unmet	niezrealizowany
against the law	wbrew prawu
to question	kwestionować
part-timer	osoba pracująca w niepełnym wymiarze
pressure	ciśnienie, presja
to tackle	zajmować się
to drown in sth	tonąć w czymś
to lose	stracić
up to	do (jakiejś kwoty)
loss	strata
seasonal	sezonowe
item	sztuka
Valentine's goods	towary walentynkowe

ANSWER KEY

Ex.1

1. handy
2. convenient
3. national
4. broadcaster
5. unrealistic
6. exploited
7. loss

Ex.2

1. convenience store
2. exploitative practice
3. labour law
4. monthly salary
5. part-time job
6. sales quotas
7. seasonal items
8. unsold stock

Ex.3

1. When you have a part-time job you can't expect high monthly earnings.
2. Shop workers/employees are often exploited.
3. Many shop assistants complain about unrealistic sales quotas.