

Get ready!

- 1 Before you read the passage, talk about these questions.
- Why should manufacturers monitor the quality of their goods?
 - What are some ways to inspect product quality?

Quality Control on the Assembly Line

At Drive Right Car Parts, **quality control** begins with you. We want every product to meet **quality standards**. Even tiny **flaws** and **blemishes** reduce product value. Our car parts are in millions of vehicles. Flaws can result in safety problems. This can lead to costly product **recalls**.

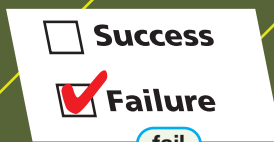
A quality control team **inspects** all parts thoroughly. Most parts **pass**. But a few **fail**. When this happens, production essentially stops. We want to prevent delays. Every employee on the assembly line can help. Learn the standards for the parts you handle. Do a quick **visual inspection** of each one. If you see **defects**, notify your supervisor immediately. This way output and quality levels stay high.



visual inspection



pass



fail



defect



blemish

Reading

- 2 Read the employee manual. Then, choose the correct answers.
- What is the passage mostly about?
 - the causes of product recalls
 - the importance of quality control
 - the most common product defects
 - what to look for in a visual inspection
 - Which of the following is NOT listed as a potential effect of a product flaw?
 - changes in assembly line methods
 - safety issues in vehicles
 - delays in manufacturing
 - a decrease in product value
 - What do employees need to do when they suspect a flaw?
 - tell their managers right away
 - perform a visual inspection
 - stop assembly line production
 - notify the quality control team

Vocabulary

- 3 Fill in the blanks with the correct words or phrases from the word bank.

word BANK

quality standards defect recall
passes inspect fail

- The manufacturer found the _____ in thousands of items.
- If the car _____ the safety tests, it will go into mass production.
- The company issued a(n) _____ for an unsafe toy.
- Four people _____ every item that the factory produces very closely.
- All of the items meet the company's strict _____.
- If products _____ the quality tests, there are production delays.

4 Read the sentence pairs. Choose the sentence that uses the underlined part correctly.

- 1 **A** There's a small blemish on the surface of the material.
B The recalls are kept in the excess inventory room.
- 2 **A** The company discards products that pass inspections.
B Quality control ensures that all products function properly.
- 3 **A** Workers discovered the flaw quickly.
B Rick fails items closely as they come off the assembly line.
- 4 **A** Sometimes, a visual inspection doesn't catch all problems.
B The defect really adds to the product's overall value.

5  **Listen and read the employee manual again. Why does Drive Right Car Parts ask assembly line employees to do visual inspections?**

Listening

6  **Listen to a conversation between a factory owner and a factory manager. Mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).**

- 1 The company had to issue a recall.
- 2 The man would prefer not to hire any more employees.
- 3 The woman suggests training existing employees on inspection techniques.

7  **Listen again and complete the conversation.**

Owner: We need to look at our **1** _____.

Manager: Yeah, our products have too many **2** _____. We want to avoid a recall.

Owner: You're the factory manager. What **3** _____ we should do?

Manager: Well, we could **4** _____ our production process.

Owner: I agree. Find where the **5** _____ are happening.

Manager: Right. What's **6** _____ on the problem?

Speaking

8 With a partner, act out the roles below based on Task 7. Then, switch roles.

USE LANGUAGE SUCH AS:

What do you think ...?
What's your take on ...?
In my opinion, we need to ...

Student A: You are a factory owner. Talk to Student B about:

- problems with your factory's products
- his or her suggestions for improvement
- what you think about the problem

Student B: You are a factory manager. Talk to Student A about quality control improvements.

Writing

9 Use the conversation from Task 8 to fill out the employee suggestion form.

Fun Toys, Inc

Employee Suggestion Form

What problems have you seen?

What are your suggestions for improvement?

1. Do more visual inspections. We need to hire more people for quality control.

2. _____

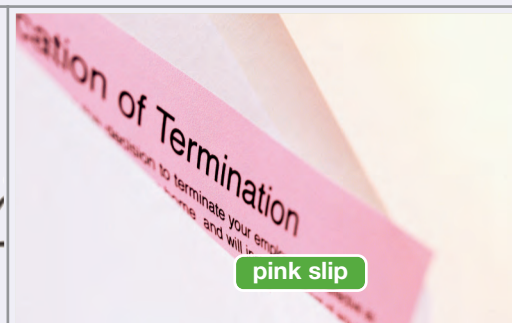
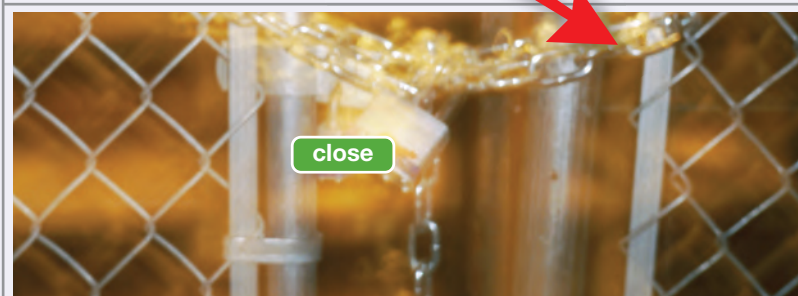
3. _____

Lana Corp. Responds to Recession

Yesterday Lana Corp. announced that it will **close** six **plants**. It's yet another effect of the most recent economic **downturn**. CEO Richard Wilbur said, "Unfortunately, our effort to **stave off** bankruptcy requires us to **contract** the scope of our operations." He assured reporters that workers terminated due to **downsizing** will receive generous **severance** packages.

Lana Corp. is not the only major manufacturer to **slash** its budget in response to the recent economic pressures. Many companies are tightening their belts. Thus, opportunities for the manufacturing **workforce** continue to **shrink** nationwide. Production workers in the automobile industry have been particularly hard hit. Charles Evans is a machinist at a tire production facility. He seemed shocked at his employer's response. He said, "I couldn't believe it when they handed me that **pink slip**. I've been here fifteen years. I didn't think they would **axe** me." Mr. Evans says he hopes to be rehired soon. In the meantime, he will have to look for other work.

Economic analysts predict that this recession will be short lived. Lana Corp. and other manufacturers remain hopeful that they will be able to reopen the closed plants in the near future.



Get ready!

1 Before you read the passage, talk about these questions.

- 1 What are some factors that cause companies to downsize?
- 2 What are some downsizing strategies that companies use?

Reading

2 Read the article. Then, mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).

- 1 ___ The CEO of Lana Corp. will be offered generous severance.
- 2 ___ The manufacturing workforce is shrinking because of the recession.
- 3 ___ The company reopened one of its plants.

Vocabulary

3 Match the words or phrases (1-7) with the definitions (A-G).

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 ___ plant | 5 ___ pink slip |
| 2 ___ slash | 6 ___ stave off |
| 3 ___ downsize | 7 ___ downturn |
| 4 ___ workforce | |

- A to decrease or lower something
 B to stop something from occurring
 C a slight decline in an economy
 D the location where a product is made
 E to decrease a business's operations
 F the collective pool of laborers
 G notification that one has been fired

4 Read the sentence pairs. Choose which word best fits each blank.

1 recession / severance

- A The _____ hit the automobile industry hard.
 B The company offered _____ to terminated employees.

2 shrink / close

- A If we _____ our production budget, we can increase profit.
 B The factory had to _____ for two months during the downturn.

3 contract / axe

- A The recession led us to _____ the scope of our operations.
 B The company had to _____ the entire marketing department.

5 Listen and read the article again. How does downsizing affect the relationship between a company and its employees?

Listening

6 Listen to a conversation between an owner and a manager. Choose the correct answers.

- 1 What is the main subject of the conversation?
 A the effects of downsizing on employees
 B how to avoid downsizing
 C the pros and cons of downsizing
 D different approaches to downsizing
- 2 Which option does the man prefer?
 A restructuring the training department
 B shutting down the East Side branch
 C eliminating the training department
 D shutting down a large department



7 Listen again and complete the conversation.

Owner: If this recession doesn't end soon, we're going to **1** _____ consider downsizing.

Manager: That's a frightening prospect. We're already **2** _____ a very tight budget.

Owner: I think there are a few places we could cut spending.

Manager: What are you thinking?

Owner: I think we should eliminate the training department. That would **3** _____ of people we'll have to let go.

Manager: Cutting our training staff could hurt us in the **4** _____.

Owner: I know, but **5** _____ do that than eliminate any larger departments.

Manager: Do you think that will be necessary?

Owner: We **6** _____ slash our costs.

Manager: I hope that won't mean closing any branches.

Speaking

8 With a partner, act out the roles below based on Task 7. Then, switch roles.

USE LANGUAGE SUCH AS:

*We're going to ... / I think we could ...
 We need to ...*

Student A: You are a business owner. Talk to Student B about:

- the possibility of downsizing
- the kind of changes the company might make
- changes you want to avoid

Student B: You are a manager. Talk to Student A about downsizing options.

Writing

9 Use the article and conversation to write a petition to your employer. Include: why you think the company should avoid downsizing and how downsizing would negatively affect you.

Glossary

- forgery** [N-UNCOUNT-U7] **Forgery** is the act of creating a false copy of something like a document or a work of art.
- fraud** [N-UNCOUNT-U7] **Fraud** is the act of deceiving others for the purpose of personal gain.
- fraudulent** [ADJ-U8] If something is **fraudulent**, it is false or involves deception.
- friendly takeover** [N-COUNT-U1] A **friendly takeover** is the purchase that is welcomed by the management of the target company.
- fullest extent** [N-UNCOUNT-U9] The **fullest extent** is the greatest possible range or amount of something.
- Gantt chart** [N-COUNT-U5] A **Gantt chart** is a type of chart that uses a bar graph to show a project timeline and progress toward completion.
- go bankrupt** [V PHRASE-U10] To **go bankrupt** is to become unable to pay one's debts.
- gossip** [V-I-U15] To **gossip** is to spread rumors or discuss the private lives of others.
- grade** [V-T-U12] To **grade** something is to evaluate and rank it.
- grievance** [N-COUNT-U14] A **grievance** is a complaint of injustice or unfairness.
- grounds for** [N-UNCOUNT-U15] If an action has **grounds for** something else to happen, that action is an acceptable reason for the second event to occur.
- hold accountable** [V PHRASE-T-U9] To **hold** someone **accountable** is to consider that person responsible for his or her actions and the consequences of those actions.
- hostile takeover** [N-COUNT-U1] A **hostile takeover** is the purchase that is resisted by the management of the target company.
- human rights** [N-COUNT-U13] **Human rights** are the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled.
- illegal** [ADJ-U8] If something is **illegal**, it is against the law.
- impact** [N-COUNT-U13] An **impact** is an effect or result.
- individual** [N-COUNT-U8] An **individual** is a single person.
- industry** [N-COUNT-U8] An **industry** is a particular sector or branch of commercial activity.
- insider trading** [N-UNCOUNT-U7] **Insider trading** is the act of making stock market trades based on information that is not available to the general public.
- insubordinate** [ADJ-U15] If someone is **insubordinate**, he or she does not respect or acknowledge the authority of another.
- insurance** [N-UNCOUNT-U6] **Insurance** is guaranteed protection against a loss or harm.
- intellectual property** [N-UNCOUNT-U8] **Intellectual property** is a creative work, often intangible, to which one person owns the rights.
- internal** [ADJ-U9] If something is **internal**, it is inside of something.
- intervene** [V-I-U14] To **intervene** in a situation is to step in and take action.
- job performance** [N-UNCOUNT-U12] **Job performance** is the overall quality of a person's execution of their work duties.
- last resort** [N-COUNT-U10] A **last resort** is a final, desperate effort to accomplish something.
- launder** [V-T-U7] To **launder** money is to process it for the purpose of concealing its illegal source.
- liquidate** [V-T-U10] To **liquidate** assets is to sell them for money to pay debts.
- lock out** [V-T-U2] To **lock** someone **out** of their account is to deny them access to it.
- log in** [PHRASAL V-U2] To **log in** is to provide a username and password in order to access a website or other service.
- lose-lose** [ADJ-U14] If a situation is **lose-lose**, it does not benefit or satisfy any of the parties involved.
- mediate** [V-I-U14] To **mediate** between people is to help them resolve their conflict.
- mediator** [N-COUNT-U14] A **mediator** is someone who helps others resolve their conflicts.
- meet** [V-T-U12] To **meet** a goal or requirement is to reach it or comply with it.