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The 4 page 60 minute ESL British English lesson – 10/03/14

## British banks cut thousands of jobs and hundreds of banking branches

British banks are to cut thousands of jobs and close hundreds of bank branches. The huge shake up is a result of them being allowed to get too big. The devastating 2008 financial crisis saw two of the biggest UK banks taken over by the government because of the losses they incurred.

The Royal Bank of Scotland Group (RBS), that is 81% owned by the government, is expected to axe 30,000 jobs this year. The bank will withdraw from risky business and severely cut its international division. Its new Chief Executive Ross McEwan aims to decrease the RBS Group headcount by a quarter over the next 3-5 years.

RBS Group will axe jobs in National Westminster Bank and Ulster Bank, as well as cutting 11,000 jobs in its investment division. Williams and Glyn's Bank will be separated from the group next year; freeing another 4,500 from the headcount. RBS Group will also sell its American subsidiary Citizen Bank, removing another 18,500 employees.

Barclays Bank is to cut 12,000 jobs this year including 1,700 branch jobs due to automation. It will also cut 400 jobs in its investment division. Its new boss is considering cutting a quarter of its High Street branches and is eyeing 40,000 job cuts in the coming years.

In the past three years Lloyds Bank has axed 15,000 jobs on top of another 30,000 roles lost when Lloyds rescued HBOS in the financial crisis of 2008. The latest round of job cuts saw 560 relationship managers go in its commercial arm. Last year Lloyds TSB split into two separate banks – Lloyds Bank and TSB Bank. Over time this will reduce the headcount from Lloyds.

### SPEAKING – WARM UP

Think of three reasons why British banks are cutting jobs and branches. Go round the room swapping details with others.

### LISTENING – WRITING - DICTATION

The teacher will read some lines of the article slowly to the class.

### READING

Students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

### SPEAKING - UNDERSTANDING

**1) The article** – Students check any unknown vocabulary or phrases with the teacher.

**2) The article** - Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- 1) What is the article about?
- 2) What do you think about the article?
- 3) Was this an easy or difficult article to understand?
- 4) Was this a boring or interesting article?
- 5) Discuss the article.

**3) Article quiz** - Students quiz each other in pairs. Score a point for each correct answer. Score half a point each time you have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

#### Student A questions

- 1) Name three British banks.
- 2) Name the American Bank to be sold.
- 3) What did Lloyds TSB do last year?
- 4) What does 'headcount' mean?
- 5) How many people work in the American bank?

#### Student B questions

- 1) Who is Ross McEwan?
- 2) How many jobs are Barclays cutting?
- 3) What does 'HBOS' stand for?
- 4) So far, how many jobs has Lloyds Banking Group axed?
- 5) What happened in 2008?

**Category: Business / Economics / Banking  
Intermediate / Upper Intermediate**

## British banks cut thousands of jobs... - 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014

### WRITING / SPEAKING

*In pairs.* On the board write as many words as you can to do with '**Banks**'. *One-two minutes.* Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

### WRITING / SPEAKING

*In pairs* – In pairs spend a few minutes on the internet. See what you can briefly find out about the following UK banks in regard to job cuts, banking branch closures, bank splits and amalgamations. Discuss together your results. What are your conclusions?

- 1) Williams and Glyn's Bank
- 2) TSB Bank
- 3) HBOS
- 4) National Westminster Bank
- 5) Barclays Bank
- 6) RBS

*The teacher* will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

### WRITING / SPEAKING

*In pairs,* explain the following:

*High Street bank / banking branch / 2008 financial crisis / job cuts / split into two / automation / international division / risky business / headcount / subsidiary / rescued HBOS - 5 mins.*

*The teacher* will choose some students to read out their findings to the class.

### DISCUSSION

#### Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Why are British banks cutting jobs and branches?
- 3) Are jobs in banks under threat in your country?
- 4) Is automation to blame for job cuts in banks?
- 5) Are small automated branches with limited facilities and reduced staff the way forward?
- 6) Did the Financial Crisis of 2008 create the current situation of over manning in banks?
- 7) Is splitting the Big 4 into smaller banks in the UK a good idea?
- 8) What will all the people who lose their jobs in banks do?

### SPEAKING – ROLEPLAY 1

*In groups.* One of you is the interviewer. There are up to four guests. You are in the CNN Money TV studio. Today's interview is: *British banks cut thousands of jobs and hundreds of bank branches. 10 mins.*

- 1) Ross McEwan.
- 2) A satisfied banking customer.
- 3) Someone who voted with their feet and switched banks.
- 4) A Board member from one of the mentioned banks in the article.

*The teacher* will choose some groups to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

### SPEAKING - ROLEPLAY 2

*In pairs* - *Student A* is a young person who prefers to do their banking online i.e. internet banking. *Student B* is an older person who prefers to go into a branch for assistance. *5 mins.*

### SPEAKING – DISCUSSION

*Allow 10 minutes* – As a class.

<p><i>British banks cut thousands of jobs and hundreds of branch closures</i></p>
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*The teacher* can moderate the session.

### DISCUSSION

#### Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you've read?
- 2) Why were the Big 4 UK banks allowed to dominate the sector for so long?
- 3) Can you think of any new banks in the UK that have emerged in the last few years?
- 4) Can you name two new banks in your country?
- 5) How has the financial crisis affected your job?
- 6) Will we see more job cuts in British banks?
- 7) How will the forthcoming referendum in Scotland affect jobs in UK banks?
- 8) Has this been a difficult lesson for you to understand?
- 9) Did you like this discussion?

**GAP FILL: READING**

**British banks cut thousands of jobs and hundreds of banking branches**

British banks are to (1)\_\_\_ thousands of jobs and close hundreds of bank branches. The huge (2)\_\_\_ is a result of them being allowed to get too big. The devastating 2008 financial crisis saw two of the biggest UK banks taken over by the government because of the (3)\_\_\_ they incurred.

The Royal Bank of Scotland Group (RBS), that is 81% owned by the government, is expected to axe 30,000 jobs this year. The bank will (4)\_\_\_ from risky business and (5)\_\_\_ cut its international division. Its new Chief Executive Ross McEwan aims to decrease the RBS Group headcount by a (6)\_\_\_ over the next 3-5 years.

RBS Group will (7)\_\_\_ jobs in National Westminster Bank and Ulster Bank, as well as cutting 11,000 jobs in its investment (8)\_\_\_.

**division / severely / withdraw / losses / shake up / axe / cut / quarter**

Williams and Glyn's Bank will be separated from the group next year; freeing another 4,500 from the headcount. RBS Group will also (1)\_\_\_ its American (2)\_\_\_ Citizen Bank, removing another 18,500 employees.

Barclays Bank is to cut 12,000 jobs this year including 1,700 branch jobs due to (3)\_\_\_. It will also cut 400 jobs in its investment division. Its new boss is considering cutting a quarter of its High Street (4)\_\_\_ and is eyeing 40,000 job cuts in the coming years.

In the past three years Lloyds Bank has axed 15,000 jobs on top of another 30,000 roles lost when Lloyds rescued HBOS in the financial crisis of 2008. The latest round of job cuts saw 560 relationship managers go in its commercial (5)\_\_\_. Last year Lloyds TSB (6)\_\_\_ into two separate banks - Lloyds Bank and TSB Bank. Over time this will (7)\_\_\_ the (8)\_\_\_ from Lloyds.

**reduce / automation / headcount / subsidiary / branches / arm / sell / split**

**GAP FILL: GRAMMAR**

**British banks cut thousands of jobs and hundreds of banking branches**

British banks are to cut thousands of jobs and close hundreds of bank branches. The huge shake up is a result of (1)\_\_\_ being allowed to get (2)\_\_\_ big. The devastating 2008 financial crisis saw two (3)\_\_\_the biggest UK banks taken over by the government because of the losses they incurred.

The Royal Bank of Scotland Group (RBS), (4)\_\_\_ is 81% owned by the government, is expected to axe 30,000 jobs this year. The bank will withdraw (5)\_\_\_ risky business and severely cut its international division. Its new Chief Executive Ross McEwan aims to decrease the RBS Group headcount (6)\_\_\_ a quarter (7)\_\_\_ the next 3-5 years.

RBS Group will axe jobs in National Westminster Bank and Ulster Bank, as well as cutting 11,000 jobs (8)\_\_\_ its investment division.

**by / in / of / over / them / from / that / too**

Williams and Glyn's Bank will be separated from the group next year; freeing another 4,500 from the headcount. RBS Group will (1)\_\_\_ sell (2)\_\_\_ American subsidiary Citizen Bank, removing another 18,500 employees.

Barclays Bank is to cut 12,000 jobs this year including 1,700 branch jobs (3)\_\_\_ to automation. It will also cut 400 jobs in its investment division. Its new boss is considering cutting a quarter of its High Street branches (4)\_\_\_ is eyeing 40,000 job cuts in the coming years. In the past three years Lloyds Bank has axed 15,000 jobs on top of (5)\_\_\_ 30,000 roles lost when Lloyds rescued HBOS in the financial crisis of 2008. The latest round of job cuts saw 560 relationship managers go in its commercial arm. Last year Lloyds TSB split (6)\_\_\_ two separate banks - Lloyds Bank and TSB Bank. Over time (7)\_\_\_ will reduce (8)\_\_\_ headcount from Lloyds.

**this / another / also / into / its / due / the / and**

## GAP FILL: LISTENING

### British banks cut thousands of jobs and hundreds of banking branches

\_\_\_\_\_ cut thousands of jobs and close hundreds of bank branches. The huge shake up is a result of them being allowed to get too big. The devastating 2008 \_\_\_\_\_ two of the biggest UK banks taken over by the government because of the losses they incurred.

The Royal Bank of Scotland Group (RBS), that is 81% owned by the government, is expected to axe 30,000 jobs this year. The bank will withdraw from risky business and severely cut its \_\_\_\_\_. Its new Chief Executive Ross McEwan aims to decrease the RBS Group \_\_\_\_\_ over the next 3-5 years.

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## WRITING/SPELLING

### WRITING / SPEAKING

**1) On the board** - In pairs, as a class - write down **the six biggest banks in your country**. Which is best? Which is most popular? Which offer the better products? Talk about them! Add your own ideas. 5-10 mins.

**2) Sentence starters** - Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- 1) Job cuts \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Branch closures \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) My favourite bank is \_\_\_\_\_

**3) Homework** - Write and send a 200 word email to your teacher about: **Banking job cuts and banking branch closures in my country**. Your email can be read out in class.

### GAP FILL READING

- 1) cut
- 2) shake up
- 3) losses
- 4) withdraw
- 5) severely
- 6) quarter
- 7) axe
- 8) division

### ANSWERS

- 1) sell
- 2) subsidiary
- 3) automation
- 4) branches
- 5) arm
- 6) split
- 7) reduce
- 8) headcount

### SPELLING

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards check your answers.

- 1) withdraw
- 2) government
- 3) axe
- 4) cut
- 5) risky
- 6) business
- 7) severely
- 8) headcount
- 9) decrease
- 10) investment

### SPELLING

Use the following ratings:

**Pass = 12**

**Good = 15**

**Very good = 18**

**Excellent = 20**

- 11) subsidiary
- 12) automation
- 13) division
- 14) quarter
- 15) commercial
- 16) relationship
- 17) arm
- 18) shake up
- 19) financial
- 20) losses

British banks cut thousands of jobs... - *10<sup>th</sup> March 2014*