

Labour-Market Trends and Their Drivers

60 minutes

Strand 1.2: Understanding my Progression Opportunities

Participating

Outcome LCW.M1.S2.WORK.7

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Read the labour market through a multi-year trend, plot CSO employment figures, and write why one trend matters for your generation.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
LCW.M1.S2.WORK.7	investigate trends in the labour market and employment opportunities on a local, national and international level.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Identify drivers of labour-market trends including economy, environment, technology and AI
- Interpret a national labour-market data series and, where used, a named secondary source
- Explain why one real trend matters for your generation

KEY TERMS

Term	What it means here	For example
Labour market	The meeting place of people who want work and employers who need workers: who is hiring, who is looking, what skills are in demand, and what pay and conditions look like.	A CSO Labour Force Survey release showing how many people in Ireland are employed, unemployed, or outside the labour force
Trend	A pattern of change over time, not a single snapshot. A trend is what you see when you line up several years of the same measure and ask what the shape is doing.	Employment falling sharply in 2020, then climbing for several years afterwards
Circular economy	An approach to making and using things that keeps materials in use for longer through repair, reuse, remanufacture and recycling, instead of take-make-dispose.	Green skills routes in Further Education and Training that feed repair, retrofit and waste-recovery work, alongside growth in reuse and recovery roles as environmental policy reshapes how goods are handled

BEFORE THE BELL

- Prepare a board display of the six CSO employment data points for the class to reference, with the classroom source note (CSO Labour Force Survey headline figures, rounded for plotting; live release on cso.ie).
- Create or confirm a blank dated Labour Market Trend document in each student's Strand 1.2 folder before the write block.
- Have printed copies of any trend line worksheets ready for students without device access.
- Treat Career Fields Shortlist as optional if not yet produced earlier in this strand.
- Confirm every student can open Strand 1.2. Create (or confirm) a blank dated Labour Market Trend document in each student's Strand 1.2 folder before the write block, so nobody spends the first minutes reverse-engineering the file. Career Fields Shortlist, where it exists, was produced earlier in this strand; treat the shortlist link as optional today. Have the six CSO-rounded points visible on the board as well as on the page so the room can plot together if devices lag. Be ready to defend the classroom figures: they are rounded CSO Labour Force Survey headline employment numbers for plotting pattern and drivers, not a verbatim reprint of one table cell (point students to cso.ie for the live release).
- On screen this lesson: trend line.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS		
5 min	introduction	Getting Started
5 min	content	Key Terms
35 min	activity	Plot the Trend, Then Write It
10 min	content	Think About It
5 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

5 min Getting Started

Open with a 60-second show of hands: who already has a part-time job, who has a career field shortlist from earlier in this strand, who has heard a parent or relative say their job 'did not exist when I left school'. That gives the class a reason to care about the figures without you having to lecture them on why trends matter.

Be clear with yourself about what the write-up later is: it is an exercise in reading real data and saying what it means for a school-leaver, not a reflective essay about how the figures make them feel. If a student starts writing about feelings, steer them back to the numbers on the screen.

5 min Key Terms

Keep this to five minutes. The circular economy term is the one most students have heard but cannot define; check one volunteer can say it back in plain English before you move on. Make clear they do not have to force it into the class CSO series write-up.

Stress the levels of analysis briefly: local (your county's employers), national (CSO, IBEC), international (OECD, or a named international talent-shortage report such as the ManpowerGroup Talent Shortage Survey). Students do not need all three in today's note, but they should know which level they are writing about.

35 min Plot the Trend, Then Write It On screen: trend line

SUGGESTED TIMING

- 12 minutes: whole-class plot on the trend line tool; pause on the 2019-2020 dip and the post-2020 climb before anyone writes.
- 5 minutes: quick share of drivers students name (economy, public health, technology, housing, sector demand).
- 18 minutes: silent or low-talk writing of the Labour Market Trend half-page inside the period.

TEACHING TIPS

The pedagogical point of the interactive is the **shape**, not a perfect redraw of official charts. Rounded classroom figures are intentional so students talk about pattern and drivers rather than arguing over a last digit.

If a student wants a sector series for their own field, they may swap in teacher-cleared figures from a named release. Do not send the class out to unvetted websites mid-lesson.

Look-fors in the half-page: a named source, at least two years or figures, a driver that is not just "change", and a generation-level consequence that connects to pathways or skills. Push back on vague closers such as "it will affect everyone". Circular economy is optional unless their chosen trend or sector actually points there.

DIFFERENTIATION

Students who stall can write only on the class CSO series. Students ready for stretch pick a sector trend linked to their Career Fields Shortlist (if they have one) and still hit every bullet in Part B.

10 min Think About It

Two to three minutes of pair talk on prompt 1, then two minutes on prompt 2. Cold-call two pairs. Listen for the idea that headline employment and skill shortages can sit side by side, and for students naming a second source (a job advert sample, a provider's intake, a local employer, a careers talk) rather than more of the same chart.

Optional portfolio reminder only: a single extra sentence under their Labour Market Trend document is enough, and if anything moves home it is only this optional sentence. Do not turn this step into a second essay. Part A and Part B stay inside the 60-minute period.

5 min What you covered

Sixty-second close: every student should have a dated Labour Market Trend document with a named source and a generation-level consequence completed in period. Spot-check three folders before dismissal. Flag anyone who wrote only opinions with no figures so they can finish before the next lesson.

TEACHING MOVES

- Model the plotting of the first employment point together with the class on the trend line tool.
- Circulate during the activity to support students in identifying relevant drivers for their chosen trend.
- Use whole-class discussion to review the discussion prompts after pair work.
- Circular economy is available as a driver when a student's trend or sector points there; it is not required for the class CSO series.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Students plot points but do not describe the overall shape; prompt them to note if the line is rising or falling.
- Confusing a shortage in one sector with overall employment trends; clarify that both can occur simultaneously.
- Failing to link the trend to a driver; ask guiding questions about technology or economy.
- Forcing circular economy into every half-page when the chosen series does not point there.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Allow students to work with a pre-plotted graph and focus on the written explanation.
- Support: Provide key vocabulary prompts for the half-page write-up.
- Extension: Challenge students to compare the national trend with an international example from a teacher-cleared named source.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEFT WITH

- Labour Market Trend: half-page on one real trend and why it matters for your generation