



Fach: Englisch

## Firms tag workers to improve efficiency

1 Some British supermarket companies are asking their warehouse workers to wear small computers, called "electronic tags". The companies say that these tags will help them to reduce costs and increase the efficient delivery of goods and food to stores. The system uses American satellite technology to send messages to the workers. In a report Professor Blakemore from the University of Durham said that the use of these tags was making some workplaces more  
5 like prisons.

The technology arrived from the US at the start of the year and more and more companies are using it. Trade unionists representing workers are worried that companies could use the technology to check what workers are doing. They are asking for special measures to make sure that this does not happen.

10 Under the system workers have to wear computers on their wrists, arms and fingers, and sometimes they have to wear a special vest containing a computer that instructs them where to go to collect goods from warehouse shelves. The system also allows the store to send orders to workers' computers. The computer can also check if workers are taking breaks without permission and can calculate the shortest time a worker needs to complete a job.

Britain already has more street security cameras than any other country in the world, and some experts are worried that this new system could make Britain the most watched country in the world.

15 In his report Professor Blakemore said there was a danger that computers were controlling humans rather than humans using computers.

But the companies say that the system makes the delivery of food more efficient. It also removes waste, reduces theft and can reorder goods more quickly. A spokeswoman for a supermarket said that the company was not using the technology to check what its staff were doing. She said it was making employees' work easier and reducing the need  
20 for paper.

(322 words, adapted from: *The Guardian Weekly* 10/06/2005, p. 9)

### **Words:**

headline: to tag – hier: mit einem Sender versehen

line 6: trade unionists – Gewerkschaftler

line 9: wrist – Handgelenk

line 10: vest – Weste

line 10: shelf – Regal

line 11: order – hier: Bestellung

line 12: permission – Erlaubnis

line 17. theft – Diebstahl



## Part A

### Questions on the text.

Write complete sentences.

- 1) What are electronic tags?  
(30-50 words) 4 credits
  
- 2) What do Professor Blakemore and trade unionists think about these tags?  
(30-50 words) 4 credits
  
- 3) What are these tags actually supposed to do?  
(30-50 words) 4 credits

### What do you think?

What do you think about this new technology?  
Explain how other innovations (e.g. computer, internet, etc.) have affected your life.  
What are the pros and cons of these new technologies for you?

(90-150 words) 12 credits

## Part B

### Translation

Translate the text from line 13 (**Britain already has ...**) to the end (**... need for paper.**).