

## Lesson3: Unemployment & Pronunciation of Final -s

### Understanding Unemployment

Unemployment **occurs** when people cannot find work. The unemployment **rate** measures the percentage of the labor force that is jobless. Businesses **close factories** and **cut off** workers during recessions. Governments **sometimes increase** unemployment benefit\*\*s to support affected workers.

- **Pronunciation Focus – Final -s sounds**

Final -s pronunciation refers to the way the letter -s at the end of English words is pronounced in three different ways depending on the final sound that precedes it.

This rule applies to:

1. Regular plural nouns (e.g., jobs, contracts, wages)
2. Third person singular verbs (e.g., employs, increases, affects)
3. Possessive nouns (e.g., the company's, the worker's)

**The final-s in English has three different pronunciations:**

Pronunciation	IPA	When to Use	Business Examples
Voiceless	/s/	After voiceless consonants: p, t, k, f, th	contracts, hands (no → /z/), staffs
Voiced	/z/	After voiced consonants & vowels: b, d, g, v, th, m, n, l, r + all vowels	employees**, jobs, business(es)
Extra Syllable	/ɪz/	After hissing/sibilant sounds: s, z, sh, ch, ge, j	wages, changes, activities

**Memory Trick:** Say "sister zara is special" → /s/, /z/, /ɪz/

EXAMPLES:

/s/	/z/	/ɪz/
contracts	jobs	wages
markets	workers	businesses
cuts	companies	increases (noun)

<b>/s/</b>	<b>/z/</b>	<b>/ɪz/</b>
<b>staffs</b>	<b>employees</b>	<b>decreases (noun)</b>
<b>benefits</b>	<b>economies</b>	<b>advantages</b>

- Vocabulary – Unemployment Terms**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example Sentence</b>
<b>Jobless rate</b>	<b>Another term for unemployment rate</b>	<b>The jobless rates /ɪz/ increased last month.</b>
<b>Redundancy</b>	<b>Job elimination (UK English)</b>	<b>The factory announced 200 redundancy**s /ɪz/.</b>
<b>Layoffs</b>	<b>Temporary/permanent job termination</b>	<b>The company announced layoff**s /z/ next week.</b>
<b>Labor force</b>	<b>All employed + unemployed seeking work</b>	<b>The labor force include**s /z/ 5 million people.</b>
<b>Underemployment</b>	<b>Working below skill level</b>	<b>Underemployment affects /s/ many graduates /z/.</b>