

## MORE PROBLEMS FOR MUSK

### ELON MUSK APOLOGIZES AFTER INSENSITIVE TWEETS TOWARDS DISABLED TWITTER EMPLOYEE



#### Elon Musk Apologizes After Inensitive Tweets

Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk has apologized for his public **mocking** of a Twitter employee's disability and uncertainty over their employment status in a recent series of tweets. The incident occurred on Monday evening when Haraldur Thorleifsson, a senior director at Twitter, tweeted at Musk to say that his computer access had been cut off since the company's recent round of **layoffs**. Thorleifsson went on to say that Twitter's head of HR was unable to confirm his employment status.

Musk responded to Thorleifsson's tweet by questioning the work he had been doing and asking for evidence. In a separate tweet, Musk claimed that Thorleifsson "did no actual work" and cited his disability as an excuse for not being able to type. Thorleifsson later clarified that he has muscular dystrophy, a degenerative disease that puts him in a wheelchair and makes typing difficult.

Musk subsequently apologized, saying that he had misunderstood the situation and that some of the information he had been given was incorrect. He also stated that Thorleifsson was considering remaining at Twitter. This is not the first time Musk has publicly mocked Twitter employees. The incident highlights the unique corporate culture at Twitter over the past year, which has seen Musk threaten to bail on the deal and complete the acquisition of the company, followed by multiple rounds of layoffs. The platform has also faced technical difficulties, with Monday's **outage** being the third major technical glitch in less than a month.

#### " Twitter employees are taking legal action against the company"

The incident has drawn attention to the treatment of disabled employees in the workplace. Thorleifsson, who founded a digital branding company acquired by Twitter in 2021, has been recognized for his charitable work in creating wheelchair ramps to improve accessibility in Reykjavik. Meanwhile, hundreds of former Twitter employees are taking legal action against the company, alleging broken severance promises and discrimination, including against disabled employees.

The incident has been widely reported in the media, with some commentators calling for greater awareness of disability in the workplace. It is hoped that Musk's apology will help to address this issue and raise awareness of the need for greater **inclusivity** in the workplace.

# Lesson 41: Elon Musk Apologizes After Insensitive Tweets Towards Disabled Twitter Employee

**Part 1: Comprehension - Read and summarize the article thinking of who, what, when, where & why.**

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## **Part 2: True or False Questions**

a) True or False - Elon Musk hasn't apologized yet for mocking a Twitter employee's uncertainty over their employment status.

T/F

b) True or False - Twitter's HR told Thorleifsson that he would be fired. T/F

c) True or False - Musk has previously threatened to back out of the deal. T/F

d) True or False - Thorleifsson founded a digital branding company which was bought by Twitter. T/F

## **Part 3a: Guess the meaning of unknown vocabulary/phrases.**

a) "Mocking" \_\_\_\_\_

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b) "Layoffs" \_\_\_\_\_

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c) "Outage" \_\_\_\_\_

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d) "Inclusivity" \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Part 3b: Vocabulary in Use - Write an example sentence using the words from 3a.**

a) Mocking:

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b) Layoffs:

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c) Outage:

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d) Inclusivity:

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## Part 5: Talking Points

1. What kind of workplace culture do you prefer to work in? Do you prefer a more relaxed or more formal work environment?
2. How do you think disability is treated in your workplace? Are there any improvements that could be made?
3. Do you think it's appropriate for a boss to publicly mock an employee's disability? Why or why not?
4. In what ways do you think companies can improve the treatment of disabled employees?
5. How important is inclusivity in the workplace, and why?
6. Do you think public apologies are effective in addressing issues of discrimination or mistreatment in the workplace? Why or why not?
7. What would you do if you witnessed a coworker being mistreated or discriminated against in the workplace?
8. Have you ever experienced discrimination in the workplace? How did you handle the situation?
9. How can companies create a more inclusive and diverse work environment?
10. What does your company or school do to prevent discrimination, are there any specific policies related to this?

## Part 6: Role play Scenarios

1. **Twitter Employee's Computer Access:**  
Two students act out a conversation between a Twitter employee and their boss. The employee explains that their computer access has been cut off, and their employment status is uncertain. The boss expresses sympathy and promises to look into the issue.
2. **Disability in the Workplace:**  
Two students act out a conversation between two co-workers discussing the treatment of disabled employees in the workplace. One co-worker expresses concern about discrimination and calls for greater inclusivity in the workplace. The other co-worker is unsure about how to address the issue and asks for advice.
3. **Musk's Apology:**  
Two students act out a conversation between two colleagues discussing Elon Musk's recent apology for mocking a disabled Twitter employee. One colleague applauds Musk's apology and hopes it will raise awareness of the need for greater inclusivity in the workplace. The other colleague is skeptical of Musk's sincerity and questions whether he will change his behavior in the future.

## Part 7: Writing Activity Past Tense - Tell me about a time you faced a problem at work or in school, how did you overcome it?

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## Part 8: Critical Thinking - Inclusivity in the workplace

In groups create a presentation outlining ways in which your company or school promotes Inclusivity. Then propose ways that it can make the environment more Inclusive.

After each presentation have a Q&A session where the proposals are challenged by the listeners.

Finally, as a class reach a consensus on a 3 point policy that everyone can follow to ensure a more inclusive workplace or school.

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**Part 9: a) Below are some articles/videos for additional reading, read/watch and see if you can find similar grammar points or vocabulary.**

1. Elon Musk publicly criticizes Twitter employee with a disability: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L56BdeQgd3g>
2. Elon Musk publicly mocks laid-off Twitter employee with a disability. Then apologizes: <https://abcnews.go.com/Business/elon-musk-publicly-mocks-laid-off-twitter-employee/story?id=97708515>

**Answers:**

## **Part 1: Comprehension**

The main idea of this article is that billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk has publicly apologized for mocking a Twitter employee's disability and uncertainty over their employment status. The incident highlights the unique corporate culture at Twitter over the past year, which has seen Musk threaten to bail on the deal and complete the acquisition of the company, followed by multiple rounds of layoffs. The incident has drawn attention to the treatment of disabled employees in the workplace and has been widely reported in the media, with some commentators calling for greater awareness of disability in the workplace. The article was likely written to report on the incident and its implications for the treatment of disabled employees in the workplace, as well as to discuss the response to Musk's apology and the broader context of Twitter's corporate culture.

## **Part 2: True or False**

A: False B: False C: True D: True

**Part 3a: Guess the meaning of unknown vocabulary or phrases.**

### **a) "Mocking"**

Answer: This means to imitate or make fun of someone in a mean way. In the context of the article, Elon Musk publicly mocked a Twitter employee's disability, which drew attention to the treatment of disabled employees in the workplace.

### **b) "Layoffs"**

Answer: This means the termination of employment of an employee or group of employees by an employer for business reasons. In the context of the article, the company had recently undergone a round of layoffs, which caused the Twitter employee's computer access to be cut off.

### **c) "Outage"**

Answer: I think this means a period of time during which a service, system, or utility is unavailable or disrupted, often due to technical issues or maintenance, because in the article they talk about how the Twitter service was down for a period of time.

### **d) "Inclusivity"**

Answer: This is the practice or policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. In the context of the article, the incident highlights the need for greater inclusivity in the workplace, especially towards disabled employees.

**Part 3b: Vocabulary in Use - Write an example sentence using the words from 3a. (examples)**

### **a) Mocking:**

He was mocking his friend's impression of a famous actor.

### **b) Layoffs:**

The company announced layoffs to cut costs and restructure the organization.

### **c) Outage:**

The power outage left the entire neighborhood in darkness.

### **d) Inclusivity:**

My company's commitment to inclusivity is reflected in its diverse workforce and accessible workplace policies.

## **Part 7: Writing (example)**

As an office worker in an engineering company, I once faced a communication problem while working on a project with a cross-functional team. To overcome it, I organized a team meeting to clarify project specifications and encouraged open dialogue. We created a shared document for questions and comments and established a communication protocol with defined roles, regular check-ins, and project management tools. This proactive approach resolved the issue, improved project efficiency, and ensured the project's successful completion, emphasizing the importance of clear communication in engineering projects.