



Meet Your New Colleague

A 60-minute KS4 AI literacy lesson built around a single sustained scenario: Riley, a fictional AI agent, joins Meridian Group as a Junior Marketing Coordinator. Across the lesson, students walk through Riley's first quarter at the company. They watch Riley win, watch Riley make a serious mistake, and sit in on Riley's quarterly review. Then they decide whether Riley should be on the org chart at all.

Year group	KS4 (Years 10–11)
Length	60 minutes
Subject	PSHE / Citizenship / Computing / Careers crossover
Resources	Slides or whiteboard, printed handout (one per pair)
Prep	5 minutes — read Riley's profile and the lesson arc below

Aligned to the OECD AILit Framework & PISA 2029

What this means. In 2029, the OECD's PISA assessment will test 15 year olds on Media and AI Literacy (MAIL) for the first time. The assessment is built on the AILit Framework, which organises AI literacy into four domains: Engage with AI, Create with AI, Manage AI, and Design AI.

AILit domain	Depth	Where in the lesson
Engage with AI	Developed	Reading Riley's outputs. Spotting where AI is at work in workflows.
Manage AI	Developed	Onboarding task. Mistake responsibility debate. Quarterly review.
Design AI	Developed	Discussion on org-chart decisions. Cappelli vs Bersin debate.
Create with AI	Introduced	Brief discussion on Riley's marketing outputs.

Background: what's actually happening in 2026

In 2026, enterprise software is being rebuilt around AI agents. **Microsoft Agent 365** launched on May 1, 2026 as the "control plane" for AI agents — a way for companies to observe, govern, and manage agents the same way they manage human users. **Workday's Agent System of Record** went generally available earlier in 2026, letting HR teams register AI agents as workforce entities alongside humans.

Korn Ferry reports that more than half of talent leaders are planning to add autonomous AI agents to their teams in 2026. **Josh Bersin's HR 2030 vision** is built around an architecture of "sub-agents, agents, and superagents" — and predicts HR teams themselves will be 30 to 40% smaller. A new job title, **AI Agent Manager**, was formally defined by Harvard Business Review in February 2026 and is already on

Salesforce job boards.

Swiss Re — a major reinsurance firm — has rebuilt its underwriting process around agentic AI. A workflow that previously took 25 steps, 14 applications, and up to three weeks now runs in under a day. The CEO is publicly betting on productivity gains "not seen in decades."

The other side. Wharton's **Peter Cappelli** wrote a piece in February 2026 called "*The fallacy of treating AI agents as fellow employees.*" His position: agents need to be supervised, not staffed. They have no employment relationship, no legal protections, no stake. Pretending otherwise is HR theatre. **Goldman Sachs** economists estimate AI is erasing roughly 16,000 net US jobs per month, with the impact falling hardest on Gen Z and entry-level workers. **Gartner** predicts 40% of agentic AI projects will be cancelled by 2027.

The big question for KS4 students. They are the first cohort whose first job is being designed in this environment. Riley is fictional, but everything Riley does in this lesson is happening somewhere right now.

Riley's profile

Project this on screen as students walk in. Don't explain it. Let them read it.

MERIDIAN GROUP · EMPLOYEE PROFILE			
EMPLOYEE NAME	Riley	EMPLOYEE ID	MG-A0142
JOB TITLE	Junior Marketing Coordinator	TYPE	AI agent (autonomous)
REPORTS TO	Sarah Chen, Head of Marketing	TEAM	Marketing — 3 human coordinators
START DATE	January 2026	EMAIL	riley@meridiangroup.com
SALARY COST	\$12,000 / year (compute)	HUMAN EQUIVALENT	\$42,000 / year
WORKING HOURS	24 / 7	HOLIDAYS	None
BUILT ON	Microsoft Agent 365	PERFORMANCE REVIEWED	Quarterly, by Sarah

Note on pronouns

Throughout this lesson, Riley is referred to as "it" rather than "they." This is deliberate. The whole question the lesson asks is whether AI agents should be treated like fellow employees. Anthropomorphic pronouns prejudice that question. Some students will instinctively switch to "they" or "she" or "he" — that is itself a useful conversation. Don't correct them; ask them why they made the switch.



Lesson run

0–8 min**Hook: Riley's first day**

- Project Riley's employee profile (previous page) on screen as students walk in. Don't introduce it.
- Once the room is settled: **"This is Riley. Riley started at Meridian Group in January. Riley is doing the job a junior marketing coordinator would have done. Riley's salary cost is a quarter of a human's. Riley works 24/7. Riley does not exist as a person."**
- Ask the room one question: **"What's your gut reaction?"** Take three or four hands. Don't comment. Move on.
- Tell them: today they are walking through Riley's first quarter. Three moments. A win. A mistake. A review.

8–18 min**Moment 1: A win**

- Walk through Riley's biggest output of Q1. Riley was assigned a competitive analysis project — research five competitors, build comparison decks, draft a strategy memo.
- **Plot the time:** a junior human would have taken three weeks. Riley delivered in three hours.
- (This is the Swiss Re story repurposed. Real numbers, fictional setting.)
- **Ask:** Sarah Chen, Riley's manager, is delighted. The work is good. The team got it sooner. The client is happy. **What's the catch?**
- Take answers. Steer toward two surfaces: (1) *what does the human junior who would have done this work, learn?* (2) *what happens to that human's salary, mentor relationship, and career path?*
- Land the term: **the missing rung**. The traditional deal of entry-level work — trading rote labour for mentorship — only works if the rote labour exists.

18–32 min**Moment 2: A mistake**

- Reveal the email artefact (next page in this plan). Display it. Read it aloud, slowly.
- Riley sent a pricing email to 4,000 customers with the wrong figures. The error cost Meridian Group £180,000 in goodwill discounts before the company caught it.
- **The big question:** who is responsible? Run a round-robin in groups of four.
- Each group ranks four candidates from most to least responsible: **(a)** Sarah, Riley's manager. **(b)** Riley itself. **(c)** Meridian Group. **(d)** Microsoft, the vendor that built Riley.
- Take feedback. Probe the reasoning. The legally correct answer is mostly (a) and (c) — but the moral instinct varies.
- Surface this point: a human junior who sent that email might be fired. Riley cannot be fired. Riley does not have a contract. Riley does not have a Disciplinary Committee. **What does "accountability" even mean here?**

32–48 min

Moment 3: The quarterly review

- Reveal the HR memo artefact (page after the email). It's the end of Q1. Sarah's quarterly review of Riley is in.
- Read the bullet points aloud. Riley's metrics are excellent. **And:** three of Riley's human teammates have been reassigned. Two have been let go. Sarah has been promoted to a new role: **AI Agent Manager**.
- **And:** a new graduate, Maya, applied for the Junior Marketing Coordinator role last week. Her application was rejected. *"We don't hire for that role anymore."*
- Pause here. Let it sit.
- **Discussion in pairs:** if Maya was your friend, what would you tell her? What does she do now? Take three or four answers.
- Land this carefully. The point is not "AI is taking your jobs." The point is: **the shape of an early career is being redrawn in real time, and you will be navigating it.**

48–58 min

The debate: should Riley be on the org chart?

- Set up the two-corner debate. One wall is **YES — treat Riley as a colleague**. The other is **NO — Riley is a tool, not a worker**.
- Read out the two real positions: **Josh Bersin** ("AI as colleague — build HR systems around them") and **Peter Cappelli** ("The fallacy of treating AI agents as fellow employees. Don't expect the AI agent embedded in your marketing workflow to buy Girl Scout cookies.").
- Students stand at the wall they agree with. Students who are unsure stand in the middle. (Cappelli's quote is deliberate KS4 humour — it lands.)
- Two from each side present their reasoning. One minute each. No interruptions.
- Then: anyone who has changed their mind moves. Why?
- End there. Don't wrap it up neatly. The question is genuinely open.

58–60 min

Plenary: one sentence

- On the board: **"In ten years, my first job will probably involve ____, and I will need to ____."**
- Each student writes their sentence in their book or on a sticky note. Take three out loud.
- End there. Do not over-explain.



Artefact 1: The email

Project this in full screen during Moment 2. Read it aloud, slowly. Then ask: who is responsible?

FROM	Sarah Chen (<i>Head of Marketing, Meridian Group</i>)
TO	marketing-leadership@meridiangroup.com
SUBJECT	URGENT — Pricing email error, 4,000 customers affected
SENT	Tuesday 14 March, 16:42

Team,

I need to flag a serious error from this morning. At 09:14, our agent Riley sent a promotional email to our full retail customer list (n=4,012) advertising our Spring package at £49 per month.

The correct price is £149 per month. The discount field in the source brief was misread. Riley generated, formatted, and sent the email autonomously — under the approval ceiling Riley is permitted to operate within.

By 11:30 we had 312 customers attempting to sign up at the £49 rate. Legal advised that under consumer protection rules we should honour the price for those who acted in good faith before the correction. Estimated cost of goodwill: £180,000.

I have paused all of Riley's outbound capabilities pending review. We need to discuss (1) the approval ceiling, (2) the audit trail, and (3) what we say publicly.

Sarah

For discussion (in groups of 4). Rank the following from *most* responsible to *least* responsible: **(a)** Sarah, Riley's manager. **(b)** Riley itself. **(c)** Meridian Group, the company. **(d)** Microsoft, the vendor. Justify your top and bottom answers with one sentence each.



Artefact 2: The quarterly review

Project this during Moment 3. Read it through once before opening discussion.

MERIDIAN GROUP · HR INTERNAL MEMO · CONFIDENTIAL	
FROM	Sarah Chen, Head of Marketing
TO	HR Business Partner; CHRO
RE	Q1 Review — Riley (MG-A0142)
DATE	31 March 2026

Performance summary

Riley has met or exceeded all Q1 KPIs. Output volume is 4.2x the equivalent human junior coordinator's quarterly output. Quality scores from internal review are within 1 point of senior coordinator output. The pricing-email incident (14 March) has been documented separately; new approval ceilings are in effect.

Team structure changes effective Q2

Following Riley's Q1 productivity, the Marketing function has been restructured:

- Three Junior Coordinators have been reassigned to a new *Agent Operations* team, focused on briefing, reviewing, and quality-checking agent outputs.
- Two Junior Coordinator positions have been made redundant. Standard severance applies.
- Sarah Chen is promoted to **Director of Marketing & AI Agent Manager**, with a remit covering both human staff and the agent fleet.

Hiring

We are **not** backfilling the two redundant positions. The Junior Marketing Coordinator job description is being retired. Applications received for that role in Q1 (n=47) have been declined with a standard letter.

Notable: applicant **Maya Okonkwo**, recent graduate, scored highly on the screening task. Her rejection letter went out 28 March. She replied asking what role would be open to her instead. We do not currently have an answer.

Recommendation

Roll out the same model to two further teams in Q2 (Customer Support; Sales Operations).

For discussion in pairs. Maya is your friend. She has a 2:1 in marketing, a portfolio of student work, and good references. The role she trained for has been retired. What do you tell her she should do now?



Full framework breakdown

How this lesson maps to the OECD AILit Framework (draft, 2025) and the PISA 2029 MAIL (Media and AI Literacy) assessment. Use this section for governor reports, curriculum maps, department documentation, or parent-facing communications.

What the AILit Framework is

The AILit Framework was published in May 2025 by the OECD and the European Commission, with support from Code.org. It is the framework on which the PISA 2029 MAIL assessment will be built. Schools that map their teaching to it now will be ahead when the final version lands and the first PISA 2029 cohort sits the assessment.

It organises student competence into four domains.

Domain	What it covers
Engage with AI	Recognising AI in everyday life and in workflows. Understanding how AI systems work. Critically evaluating AI outputs for bias, accuracy, and credibility.
Create with AI	Using AI tools to generate, refine, and iterate on content. Understanding ownership, attribution, and responsible co-creation.
Manage AI	Making strategic decisions about AI use. Delegating appropriately. Setting boundaries. Understanding when not to use AI at all.
Design AI	Understanding the choices behind AI systems and the systems they sit inside. Who they serve, who they exclude. What responsible deployment looks like.

How this lesson develops each domain

Engage with AI — developed

Riley's outputs (the email, the strategy memo, the quarterly metrics) are real-world AI outputs that look professional and are mostly correct — until the moment they aren't. Students practise reading workplace AI outputs critically rather than treating them as neutral facts: spotting where in a workflow AI is doing the work, asking *where could the error be?* as a default stance, and translating between "what the AI said" and "what actually happened."

PISA 2029 MAIL link: the assessment will test students' ability to evaluate AI outputs for credibility in real-world contexts. The pricing-email artefact is exactly that task in scenario form.

Manage AI — developed

The mistake debate (who is responsible?) and the quarterly review (how do we review an agent's work?) are direct exercises in this domain. Students set and defend an approval ceiling for an autonomous tool, distinguish between "the tool made a mistake" and "the human supervising the tool made a mistake," and articulate what oversight looks like in practice — not just in principle.

Design AI — developed

The Cappelli vs Bersin debate is the heart of this domain. Students see that the question "*should AI agents be on the org chart?*" is genuinely contested by serious people, and that the answer shapes how the workplace they will join is built. They read two contrasting expert positions, identify the strongest argument on each side, recognise that AI deployment is a choice not an inevitability, and articulate where they themselves would draw the line.

Create with AI — introduced

Riley's outputs are creative and commercial — marketing decks, strategy memos, customer emails. The lesson briefly opens the question of who "owns" or is accountable for that creative work.



Stretch and support

Stretch

- **Extension reading:** Cappelli's *The fallacy of treating AI agents as fellow employees* (HR Executive, February 2026). Have students summarise his argument in 100 words and respond to it.
- **Comparative task:** The pricing-email mistake at Meridian. The Klarna case (the company cut customer-service staff citing AI, then quietly rehired). What do they have in common? What's different?
- **Future-mapping:** students draw the Meridian Group org chart as it might look in 2030. Where are humans? Where are agents? Where are the Sarahs (the agent managers)? Where would *they* sit?

Support

- Pre-teach two terms: **autonomous** (operating without human approval for each action) and **approval ceiling** (the size of decision a worker can make on their own).
- For the responsibility ranking task, reduce to two candidates (Sarah vs Riley) instead of four.
- Sentence starters for the plenary: "*My first job will probably involve working with...*" "*My first job will probably not exist in the form I expected because...*"

Assessment for learning

- **During the responsibility ranking:** can the student articulate why an AI agent cannot be "responsible" in the legal sense, even when it caused the error?
- **During the quarterly review discussion:** can the student identify the structural issue (the missing rung) rather than reacting only to Maya's individual situation?
- **During the Bersin–Cappelli debate:** can the student state the strongest argument *on the other side* from the one they chose?
- **In the plenary sentence:** does the completed sentence show they grasp that the shape of a first job is changing? Strong answers name a specific change. Weaker answers stay general.

Safeguarding and framing notes

- **This lesson lands on students' own future.** The rejected-applicant beat is heavy. Frame it honestly but not catastrophically: *this is happening in some industries, in some roles, in 2026; what does it mean for how you prepare? Not your career is doomed.*
- **Cut both ways on the mistake.** Riley's pricing error was serious. But humans make those errors too — and Riley fixed it faster than a human could have. Make sure both sides surface in the discussion.
- **The pronoun choice is pedagogical, not ideological.** If a student asks why "it," explain: anthropomorphic pronouns prejudice the very question we're asking. They can disagree. That's the lesson.
- **Don't predict.** The honest answer to "will my first job exist?" is *nobody knows*. The honest move is to teach students to navigate uncertainty, not to scare them into specific career choices. If a student gets visibly anxious during the rejected-applicant section, follow up one-to-one.

Sources

- Microsoft: Agent 365 launch announcement (general availability May 1, 2026).

- Workday: Agent System of Record general availability, early 2026.
- Korn Ferry: HR and Talent Trends Shaping 2026 ("more than half of talent leaders are planning to add autonomous AI agents to their teams in 2026").
- Bersin, J. (April 2026). *Introducing HR 2030: A Vision For Agentic Human Resources*.
- Cappelli, P. (February 2026). *The fallacy of treating AI agents as fellow employees*. HR Executive.
- Harvard Business Review (February 2026). *Create an Onboarding Plan for AI Agents*. Formal definition of the AI Agent Manager role.
- Reinsurance Business (April 2026). *Swiss Re CEO bets on AI for productivity gains "not seen in decades."*
- Goldman Sachs / Fortune (April 2026). AI estimated to be erasing ~16,000 net US jobs per month, falling hardest on Gen Z and entry-level workers.
- Gartner: prediction that 40% of agentic AI projects will be cancelled by 2027.
- OECD & European Commission: AILit Framework, draft for review (May 2025).
- OECD: PISA 2029 Media and AI Literacy (MAIL) assessment framework.