

# A bright future for electricians

## ■ Electricians wanted!

Today, electricians enjoy excellent job **prospects** due to an acute **shortage** of skilled workers who take care of installing and maintaining all of the electrical appliances and equipment that make our lives and jobs more comfortable and easier. Smart technology has increased demand for electricians trained in installing and maintaining these complex and integrated systems. The latest generation of home devices includes everything from **keyless door locks** opened with **fingerprint** scanners, to internet-connected light bulbs that turn on and off by voice command – all controlled remotely by smartphone or computer. As this equipment becomes more **affordable**, the demand for skilled installers is expected to increase as well.

## ■ Causes of the electrician shortage

A recent **survey** of the American Bureau of Labor Statistics, predicts that employment of electricians will grow by up to 8% by 2029, much faster than the average for all other occupations. The shortage of electricians is not limited to the United States, but it also affects some countries in Europe, such as Austria, Belgium, Finland and the United Kingdom.

This is mainly caused by the high number of electricians retiring **outpacing** the arrival of

new ones, but it is also the result of a negative perception of the job as involving **gruelling** work with long hours and no career advancement. In the US, many think that one of the causes might be the fact that students prefer a college education to trade schools, even though they have to pay high fees and accumulate debts to attend college.

## ■ Attempts to resolve the problem

Due to the shortage in electricians, many American companies, trade organisations and **labour unions** are trying to create attractive incentives: some give high-school students the opportunity to attend apprenticeships that guarantee jobs upon completion; others have increased their training programs to help provide tools and scholarships for apprentices.

However, the most attractive incentive that could persuade young students to choose a career as an electrician is certainly represented by the **income** prospects offered by this job. As a consequence of the shortage of electricians, annual salaries for this position have increased: some even believe that electricians **owning** a business have the potential to earn a **six-figure** annual salary.

Unfortunately, the majority of young people lack awareness of these important aspects and still base their decisions on inaccurate information or on **mere** prejudices: parents should be more involved in the matter and be persuaded that their children could make a good living in this field.



Adapted from: <https://www.payscale.com/career-news/2019/10/shortage-of-electricians-leads-to-shockingly-high-salary-potential-and-opportunities>



**affordable:** *abbordabile, a buon mercato*  
**fingerprint:** *impronta digitale*  
**gruelling:** *estenuante, esigente*  
**income:** *reddito, guadagno*  
**keyless door lock:** *serratura senza chiave*  
**labour union:** *sindacato*  
**mere:** *vero e proprio*  
**to outpace:** *superare*  
**to own:** *possedere*  
**prospect:** *prospettiva*  
**shortage:** *carezza*  
**six-figure:** *a cinque zeri*  
**survey:** *indagine, sondaggio*

**1**  Choose the correct option to complete the sentences.

1. The use of smart technology has caused...
  - a. higher salaries.
  - b. a higher demand for skilled installers.
  - c. a lack of home devices.
2. Most up-to-date homes are opened...
  - a. with keys.
  - b. with scanners.
  - c. with voice command.
3. Experts say that the job outlook for electricians...
  - a. is gloomy.
  - b. is optimistic.
  - c. is worrying.
4. Most people think that working as an electrician is...
  - a. exciting.
  - b. challenging.
  - c. exhausting.
5. Young people prefer to...
  - a. go to college.
  - b. complete an apprenticeship.
  - c. join a labour union.
6. Many American companies hope to persuade young people by...
  - a. giving them money to start their business.
  - b. hiring them with a permanent employment contract.
  - c. increasing awareness of the benefits of working as an electrician.

**2**   **PAIR WORK** Complete the summary of the article with suitable words. Refer to the text to find them.

In the article "A bright future for electricians" the writer wants to inform the readers about the good opportunities for

**1.** ..... workers offered by the job **2.** ..... at present. The writer says that the **3.** ..... for this kind of worker is growing not only because people rely more and more on **4.** ..... in their daily life, but also because lots of old electricians have **5.** ..... and have not been replaced by young ones. The writer reports that experts think there is a general unawareness regarding the

real opportunities such jobs may offer:

**6.** ..... students prefer to go to **7.** ..... rather than work as electricians, because they think this job is exhausting and with no career **8.** ..... They do not even know about the high **9.** ..... this job can offer. This is the reason why, in the writer's opinion, parents should be made aware of this possibility, so that they can **10.** ..... their children that this could be a real chance to make their own living.

**3**  **Read the text, answer the question below and complete the sentences.**

“Hi, my name is Kevin and I have been working as an electrician for 6 years now. I’ve worked in the residential, commercial, agricultural and industrial sector; there are lots of opportunities to earn good money in this field and also to do all kinds of different work.

As an electrician you are certainly expected to be able to wire any sort of electrical circuit, but the final application will be different. For instance, as a residential electrician you are going to be wiring houses throughout your community; as a commercial electrician, you’re going to be working on buildings such as huge skyscrapers or large commercial buildings; as an industrial electrician you can expect to work in mines, on ships, or off-shore oil rigs. You can also find good opportunities to work as a maintenance electrician for power lines, at digital substations, for example, or at power plants. One of the aspects that persuaded me to start this career is the job security: the economy isn’t always going well, I have friends who have been fired without warning, but I am sure our society is always going to need electricians to take care of their heating or cooling systems, for example. What’s more, the pay is good and can give you the opportunity to be independent. And that’s cool, isn’t it?”

Does Kevin have a positive attitude towards his job?

1. Kevin started working as an electrician .....
2. He thinks there are good opportunities to .....
3. Electricians are expected to .....
4. If an electrician works in the residential sector, he has to .....
5. If an electrician works in the commercial sector, he has to .....
6. If an electrician works in the industrial sector, he is expected to .....
7. Kevin thinks that people are always .....
8. This is why Kevin thinks that electricians don’t run the risk of .....

**4**  **PAIR WORK** Which of the sectors mentioned by Kevin would you like to work in? Why?