In full sentences, answer the following questions on this week’s material, to show your understanding.

1. **What is a trade union?** Trade unions are organisations of workers and employees, representing the interests of their members. Today, unions provide a range of services to their members, including legal advice, support and representation when there are problems at work, and negotiations over matters like wages and health and safety issues.

2. **Explain why trade unions are not connected to the European Union.** Trade unions have nothing to do with the European Union (EU). The EU is a group of different countries, joining together and trading (buying and selling) between themselves. Trade unions are groups of workers, often doing similar jobs or working in similar industries.

3. **What has happened to membership of trade unions over the last 40 years?** Trade union membership was at its peak at the beginning of the 1980s, and has been broadly in decline ever since. Today, around 23% of workers are in a trade union, although it is far more common in the public sector (taxpayer-funded roles) than it is in the private sector (businesses and manufacturing).

4. **What are strikes, and how have they changed over the last 50 years?** A strike happens when workers refuse to do their jobs because they are in some sort of disagreement with their employers. Strikes were very common in the 1970s and 1980s, with some years seeing tens of millions of working days being lost. These numbers have fallen dramatically since the 1980s.

5. **What was Mrs Thatcher’s view on strikes, and what changes were made as a result?** Mrs Thatcher saw unions as too powerful and disruptive. While strikes are still allowed under law, a union has to meet strict conditions for them to be legal. For example, union members must vote beforehand on whether or not to support a strike, and if 50% of all union members don’t take part in that decision, the strike cannot go ahead.