

**BESIG 2014**

# **Sink or swim?**

**Teaching tips to help pre-intermediates  
stay afloat**

**John Allison**

Language  
Learning



macmillan  
education

# Sink or swim?

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- **BE pre-intermediates:**
  - **pressure to perform**
  - **unaware of 'risks'**
  - **expectations**
  - **fear of failure**



# Sink or swim?

- **The teacher as lifeguard:**

- **motivate**
- **build confidence**
- **set achievable objectives**
- **transmit knowledge**
- **develop skills**
- **prevent “accidents”**



**“I don’t speak enough in a group!”**

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# Develop autonomy

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- Classroom language
  - How do you say “*commande*” in English?
  - What does “*invoice*” mean?
  - Can we listen again please?
  - I’m sorry, I didn’t catch that
  - Can you say that again please?

again please?

that again please?

Can you say

Can we listen

# Develop autonomy

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## Passing the ball

- **And you, Karen?**
- **What about you, Juan?**
- **What do you think?**
- **Does everyone agree?**
- **Bruno, help me out here!**
- **Lina, any comments?**



**“I don’t know what to say!”**

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# Structured speaking tasks

- oral drills

**2** Work with a partner. Practise the conversation using the prompts.

**A** S-A-G / help?

**B** Yes / speak / John Bird?

**A** afraid / not / office / now // can / message?

**B** Oh, dear! // urgent order / we / five hydraulic pumps / 22 June

**A** Just / minute // tell / name please?

**B** sorry // Elena Moretti / Stern Hydraulics / Switzerland

**A** Right / take down / details / get John / contact // say five units?

**B** Yes / referen

**A** SG 94321 /

**B** yes / right /

**A** not think /

**B** good / for /

**A** I see // whe

**B** yes / course

**A** you / welco

**B** goodbye

## ***just, yet, already***

**4** In groups, take turns to ask and answer questions about what you *have* or *haven't done* today.

**A:** *Have you listened to the radio today?*

**B:** *Yes, I've already listened to the news. Have you listened to the radio yet?*

**C:** *No, not yet. But I've already watched the news on TV.*

1 radio	3 newspaper	5 tweet/blog	7 sport
2 eat	4 email	6 coffee/tea	8 work

# Structured speaking tasks

- oral drills

## Adverbs of frequency

**5** With a partner, take turns to ask and answer questions about the people in the table below.

- Who is a good time manager? Why?  
*Marcus, because he always finishes on time.*
- Who is a perfectionist? Why?
- ... a good manager?
- ... a team player?
- ... a leader?
- ... a good communicator?
- ... a good problem-solver?
- ... a workaholic?

	finish on time	encourage the team	make mistakes	find solutions	set a good example	go on holiday	help colleagues	share information
Marcus	always	not often	often	sometimes	rarely	often	never	not often
Francesca	never	rarely	rarely	not often	sometimes	never	not often	rarely
Tina	usually	nearly always	often	sometimes	always	not often	nearly always	usually
Miroslav	sometimes	often	sometimes	usually	usually	not often	nearly always	usually

**6** Now ask and answer more questions about each person in Exercise 5.

A: *Is Marcus a good manager?*

B: *No, he isn't, because he doesn't often encourage his team.*



# Structured speaking tasks

- flow charts
- check lists

## Useful expressions: Meetings

### Suggestions

I suggest \_\_\_\_\_ some interesting combinat  
\_\_\_\_\_ about ham and banana?  
Let's \_\_\_\_\_ everything for the moment.  
What about \_\_\_\_\_ a different menu every  
\_\_\_\_\_ not change the menu every week?  
Why don't we \_\_\_\_\_ different types of bre  
week?

### Continuing after an interruption

As I was \_\_\_\_\_, we need a strategy.

## Problems and solutions

**6** With a partner, brainstorm solutions to these problems. Use the flow chart below and expressions from the checklist.

- 1 We need to choose a corporate colour for our sandwich bar.
- 2 We need to decide what kind of desserts to sell.
- 3 We need an original idea for staff uniforms.
- 4 We need to find €20,000 to start the business.
- 5 We need to decide how to package the sandwiches.
- 6 We need to decide what kind of drinks to sell.
- 7 We need to decide our opening and closing times.
- 8 We need to choose the background music.

### Student A

Explain the problem.

Ask for clarification.

Disagree.

Agree.

### Student B

Make a suggestion.

Clarify.

Make another suggestion.

### Interrupting

I'm \_\_\_\_\_ to interrupt, Tim, but ...  
\_\_\_\_\_ I interrupt?

# Structured speaking tasks

- warmers and coolers

**2** Customer satisfaction

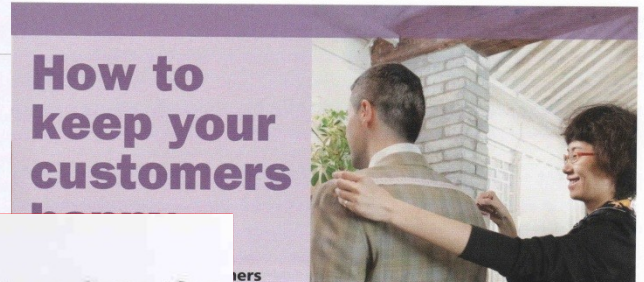
▶ keeping your customers  
▶ good customer service

**2.1 About business** Customer service

**Discussion**

**1** Think about your experiences of good and bad customer service. Complete the sentences. Then compare with a partner.

1 Every time I buy ...	5 I really don't like it if ...
2 When I eat at ...	6 The reasons for bad service are ...
3 If I travel by ...	7 When the service is very good, I feel ...
4 I really like it when ...	



## Discussion

**1** Think about your experiences of good and bad customer service. Complete the sentences. Then compare with a partner.

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 Every time I buy ...      | 5 I really don't like it if ...             |
| 2 When I eat at ...         | 6 The reasons for bad service are ...       |
| 3 If I travel by ...        | 7 When the service is very good, I feel ... |
| 4 I really like it when ... |   |

## Group A

Discuss what your chart shows. Find connections with the ideas in the article. Then present your chart to the class.



**Internet research**

Search for the keywords: how to keep customers happy. List the best tips. Compare with a partner.

**Glossary** PAGE 152

advocate  
ally  
consumer  
lead  
loyalty  
prospect  
referral  
upgrade

**Reading for detail**

**1** Read the first three paragraphs again and mark these statements T (true) or F (false).

1 It is more expensive to find new customers than to get repeat business. <input type="checkbox"/>
2 On average, 10% of a company's leads become customers. <input type="checkbox"/>
3 Companies ask customers for comments on Twitter and Facebook. <input type="checkbox"/>
4 CRM software helps companies make better long-term strategy decisions. <input type="checkbox"/>

**5** Read paragraphs 4-6 again and underline the best options in *italics*.

The article suggests:

1 companies spend too little / too much / enough on customer service training.
2 contacts customers when and how you want / when and how your boss asks them.
3 you don't need to share your customer's priorities / feelings / opinions.
4 people prefer not to buy from someone they look like / dislike / like.

**Discussion and presentation**

**1** Work in small groups. Discuss and present a chart to the class.

Group A: turn to page 123. Group B: turn to page 118. Group C: turn to page 112.

22 770 Business 2.0

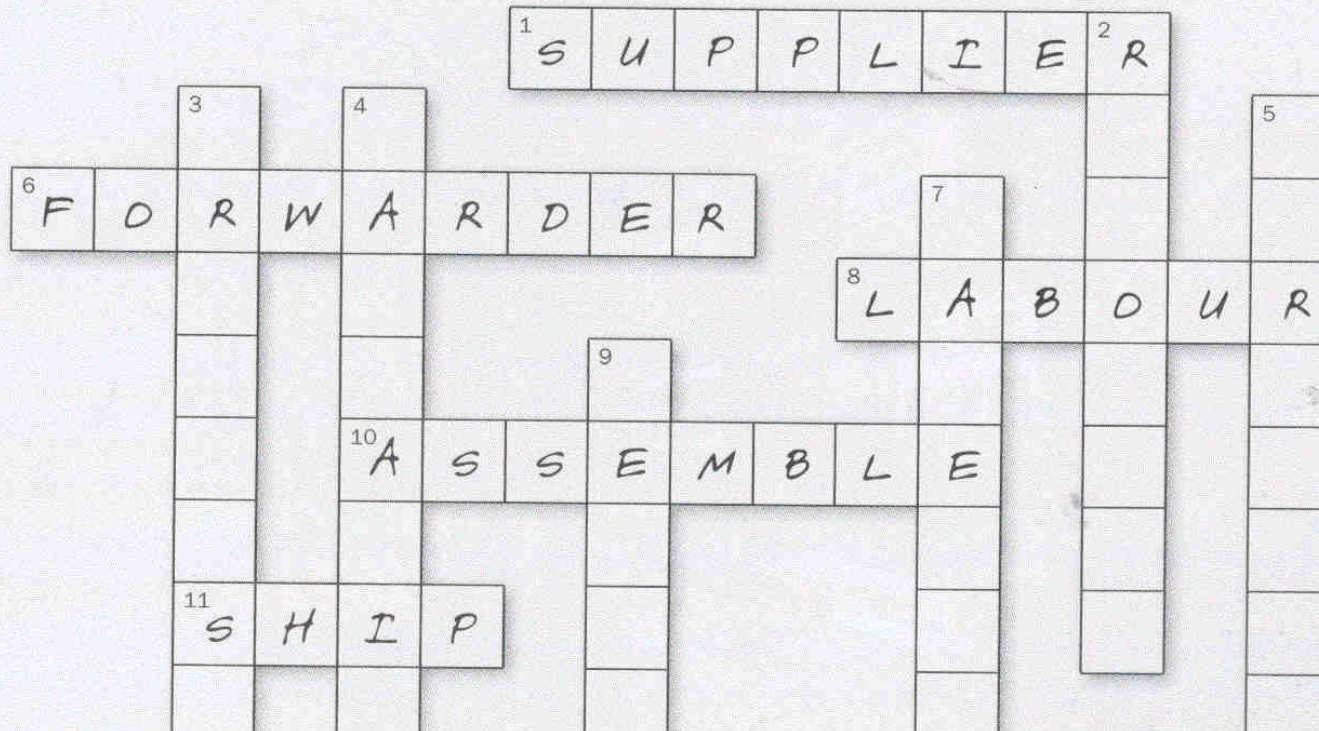


# Improvise explanations

**8** Work with a partner to complete your crossword. Take turns to give definitions for the words you have. Don't say the word itself. Write the missing words. Student A: use the crossword below. Student B: use the crossword on page 122.

B: *What's 1 across?*

A: *A person or a company that sells materials, parts or packaging to a manufacturer.*





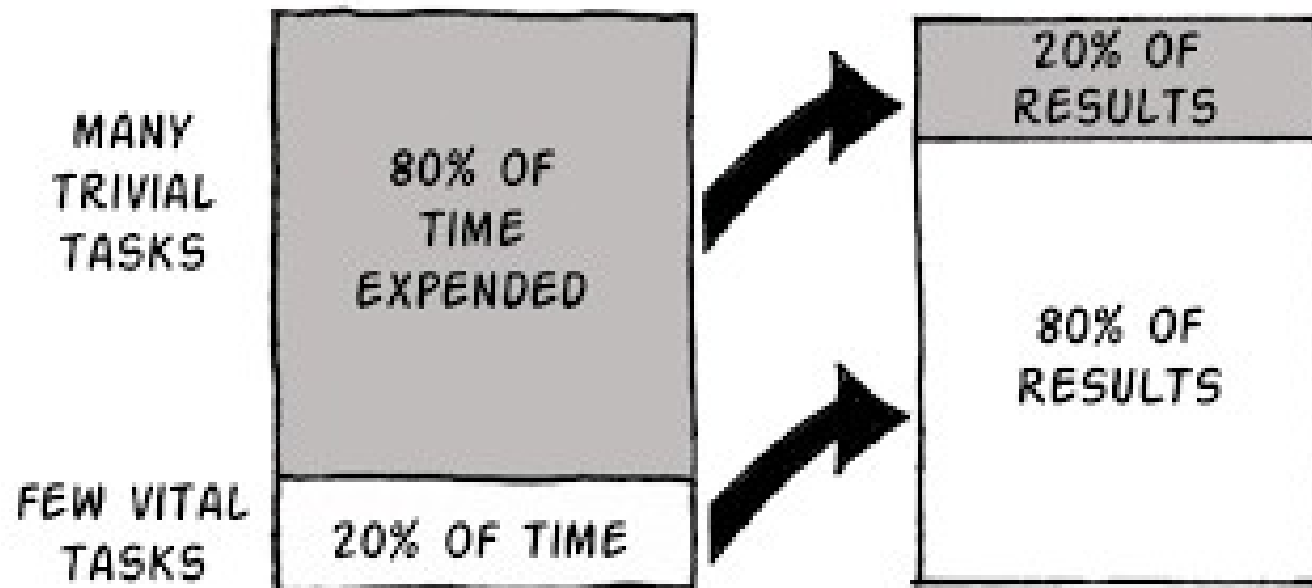
**“I make so many mistakes!”**

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# The 80/20 principle

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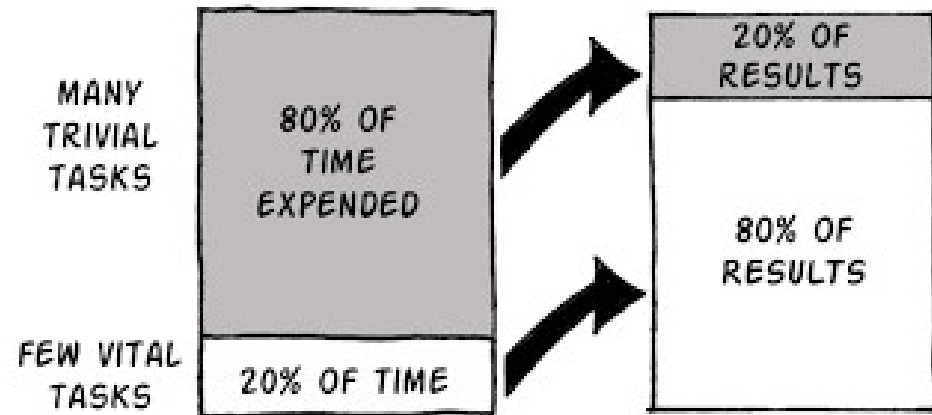
# Prioritize activities and correction

## “Vital”

- fluency
- vocabulary
- stress

## “Trivial”

- grammar
- phonemes



# **Correction: real time vs. batch processing**

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## **“Trivial” errors - real time**

- **echo correction**
- **non-verbal signals**

## **“Vital errors” - batch processing**

- **time out**
- **feedback at the board / by email**
- **sorting ‘right’ and ‘wrong’**

**“I’m French/Italian/Spanish/etc. and we’re bad at languages!”**

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# Pronunciation

## Word and sentence stress

- awareness


• • •  
John likes cake (3)

Je-re-my a-dores choc-(o)late (7)

- practice

assembly	customer	delivery	labour	packaged
processing	purchase	purchasing	recycling	supplier

•.	..	...

 Now listen to the words to confirm your answers.

**“I’m only a beginner!”**

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# Consolidate survival language

- numbers
- alphabet
- time
- dates

## 1.2 Vocabulary Personal details

### Numbers

**1** In small groups, practise counting.

- Count to 30 in twos.  
2 4 6 8 ...
- Count to 60 in threes.  
3 6 9 12 ...
- Count to 105 in sevens.  
7 14 21 ...

**2** **1:09** Say these numbers. Then listen and check.

- |           |       |             |       |
|-----------|-------|-------------|-------|
| • 99      | _____ | • 900,999   | _____ |
| • 101     | _____ | • 1,000,000 | _____ |
| • 1,000   | _____ | • 3.5m      | _____ |
| • 1,500   | _____ | • 2.5bn     | _____ |
| • 7,777   | _____ | • 2.575     | _____ |
| • 88,888  | _____ | • \$110     | _____ |
| • 100,000 | _____ | • €15.99    | _____ |

### Listening

**3** **1:10** Listen to three people playing the secret number game. What are the rules?  
In small groups, play the secret number game.

- eight o'clock sharp ☐
- thirteen forty-five ☐
- twelve thirty-five p.m. ☐

### Time

**7** Mark the time expressions A (analogue) the same.

- half past two in the afternoon ☒ A
- four twenty a.m. ☒ D
- twenty-five to one ☐
- (a) quarter past eight in the evening ☐
- 17.01 ☐
- (a) quarter to two ☐
- two thirty p.m. ☐
- 20.15 ☐

**8** Work with a partner. Take turns to ask what time you do the following:

get home get up go to bed go to sleep have dinner have lunch leave home wake up

What time do you wake up in the morning?

I usually wake up about half past seven. But on Saturdays, I wake up after ten o'clock.



ANALOGUE



DIGITAL



# Business fundamentals

- ▶ business activities and sectors

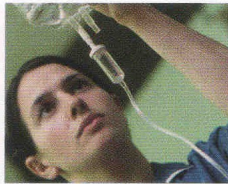
- ▶ collocations relating to business activities

## Business activities

### Discussion

- 1 With a partner, match the business activities to the pictures.

advertising agriculture civil engineering construction health care  
manufacturing mining oil and gas software transport



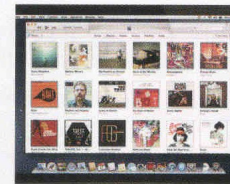
1 \_\_\_\_\_



2 \_\_\_\_\_



3 \_\_\_\_\_



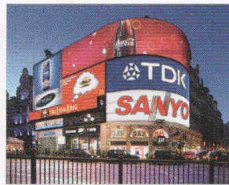
4 \_\_\_\_\_



5 \_\_\_\_\_



6 \_\_\_\_\_



7 \_\_\_\_\_



8 \_\_\_\_\_



9 \_\_\_\_\_



10 \_\_\_\_\_

### Listening

- 2 1:01 Put the activities in Exercise 1 into the correct sector. Then listen and check your answers.

primary sector (extracting raw materials) ☐ ☐ ☐  
secondary sector (manufacturing) ☐ ☐ ☐  
tertiary sector (commercial services) ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**“English grammar is too complicated!”**

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# Rules of thumb

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- **comparatives: short and long adjectives**
- **in: period, on: date, at: (special)time**
- **activities: ball: play, outdoors: go, indoors: do**
- **present simple vs continuous: CDI vs CDD**
- **no number with 'during'**
- **going to vs will: 'control' over the future**
- **simple past vs present perfect: 80/20, except just, ever/never, yet/already, since/for**

**“I couldn’t do the homework because...”**

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# User-friendly homework

- start it in class

## 02 Work-life balance

### Phrase bank: Talking about routines

We work (37) hours a week.

They work an average of (five) hours of overtime.

The average user saves (45) minutes a day by being able to check emails on the move.

I always go to work (by car).

I usually just have (a sandwich) for lunch.

I hardly ever send (text messages).

She sometimes has to work at the weekends.

It involves long hours.

It means a lot of travelling.

We get (three) weeks' holiday a year.

### Vocabulary

#### Work and routines

- 1 Complete the sentences with the pairs of words in the box.

check + emails    full-time + work    get + off    productive + day  
ratio + to    takes + hour    work + overtime

- a We only \_\_\_\_\_ half an hour \_\_\_\_\_ for lunch.  
b More than four million \_\_\_\_\_ employees \_\_\_\_\_ more than 48 hours a week.  
c I \_\_\_\_\_ an average of 6 hours \_\_\_\_\_

#### Do as an auxiliary

- 3 Complete the conversation using *do*, *does*, *don't* or *doesn't*.

- A (a) \_\_\_\_\_ you do a lot of exercise?  
B Yes, I suppose I (b) \_\_\_\_\_. Why do you ask?  
A Well, it's better if you (c) \_\_\_\_\_, according to a German scientist.  
B What (d) \_\_\_\_\_ he say about it?  
A He (e) \_\_\_\_\_ say that exercise is bad for you exactly, but that if you do too much, you use up



# User-friendly homework

- lead into speaking activities
- provide engaging digital tools

**Internet research**

Search for the keywords *top 100 franchises*. Choose a franchise to open in your city. Tell a partner why it will be a success.

Put the words into the correct order to make sentences about Adam's routine.

1. day up early get . I every
2. healthy I breakfast have always . a
3. twice . a London I week usually travel to
4. days most I . late until work
5. the work hardly I at weekends . ever
6. running . a week times go three I
7. I Saturday tennis every . play
8. my at . children weekend see the I
9. every a holiday six . I months have

1 2 >

Show correct answers Submit

# User-friendly homework

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- provide engaging digital tools



**“English people speak too fast!”**

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# Regular exposure

- **accessible but natural listening**



# Regular exposure

- little but often

## *The* Business 2.0

The screenshot shows the 'in company 3.0' website. The top navigation bar includes a home icon, 'Teacher help', 'Student help', and 'Contact us'. The main content area is divided into a left sidebar and a right main panel. The sidebar, under 'Teacher Resources', lists 'Starter', 'Elementary', 'Pre-intermediate', and 'Audio'. The 'Audio' section is expanded, showing a list of units: 'Unit 1', 'Unit 2', 'Unit 3', 'Unit 4', and 'Unit 5'. The main panel, titled 'Unit 1', contains a section for 'Audio' with a play button icon. Below this, it says 'Track 1.01' and provides a 'Play / Download mp3' button (3 MB) and a 'Description' link.

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# Regular exposure

**Raise awareness of contractions, stress, weak forms, linking**

- **listen and repeat**
- **how many words?**
- **dictation**



**1.32**

**1 A:** Did you ever hitchhike when you were a student?

**B:** Yes, but it was a long time ago, and I hated waiting in the rain, so if I could, I took a train ...

**2 A:** Have you ever had a car accident?

**B:** No, I'm glad to say, but I nearly had one this morning! I pulled out and didn't see a motorbike. It was too close for comfort.

**3 A:** Have you ever been to Rome?

**B:** No, but I'd love to see the Coliseum one day. I once spent a few days in the north of Italy.

**“I don’t like reading in English because...”**

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# Bridge the gap

- digestible chunks

## Reading

**3** Read the article opposite and match the headings below with the paragraphs in the text.

- ☐ How to find the money
- ☐ The advantages of buying a business
- ☐ Three ways to become a boss
- ☐ Why not buy a small business?
- ☐ The risks of starting a business
- ☐ The disadvantages of being an employee
- ☐ How much will it cost?

**4** Read the article again and mark the statements *T* (true) or *F* (false).

- 1 A lot of people think starting a company is cheaper than buying an established business. ☐
- 2 Finding a job in a big firm is the quickest way to become a top manager. ☐
- 3 Between 50% and 70% of new businesses are successful after five years. ☐
- 4 Normally, an existing business continues to make a profit after it is sold. ☐
- 5 The selling price of a business usually depends on how profitable it is. ☐
- 6 It is often easier and cheaper to borrow money from a bank than from the seller. ☐
- 7 In seller financing, the buyer promises to use future profits to pay for part of the business. ☐
- 8 It is difficult to find a small business to buy. ☐



## Why not buy into business?

**Most new businesses are failures.**

**An existing business is already profitable.**

- 1 So, you want to be your own boss? Basically, you have three options: one, find a job and get promoted; two, start your own company; or three, buy an existing business. Perhaps you think buying companies is only for millionaires? Well, let's look at some of the advantages of buying an established business and the disadvantages of the other options.
- 2 Your safest option is to start as an employee in a big firm. The only investment is your own time and hard work. But it can take many years to get to the top. If you really have entrepreneurial spirit, working for someone else can be an extremely frustrating experience.
- 3 And what about starting your own business? Being the next Richard Branson or Cher Wang is a nice idea but, in reality, most new businesses are failures. 50% don't survive the first three years. That figure rises to 70% after five years. Even a well-known franchise offers no guarantee of success.
- 4 On the other hand, an existing business has many advantages. First of all, it is already profitable. It already has a customer base, regular cash flow, equipment, employees, a list of suppliers, and established business processes. In a start-up, you have to build all of those from nothing. If you choose carefully, an established business has every chance of continuing to be profitable.
- 5 As far as price is concerned, it's a question of negotiation. The calculation is a little complex, but the starting price often equals three to five years' profits, depending on the type and size of business. The better your negotiating skills, the better the deal.
- 6 Finally, there are three main sources of funding. First, your own personal funds; secondly, bank loans; thirdly, seller financing. Seller financing is more and more common as it becomes more difficult to borrow money from banks. The seller agrees to wait for payment of between 50 and 75% of the agreed price, plus interest, over a period of three to five years. Both the buyer and the seller hope that, in that time, the business produces enough profit to pay the seller back.
- 7 The choice is yours. You can spend thirty years working your way to the top, or you can take a risk and start a business. But if you like the idea of managing a successful company right now, why not start looking for a business to buy? In every city in the world, there are hundreds of small businesses for sale, all waiting for your talent to help them grow!

businesses  
for sale...



# Bridge the gap

## • pre-teach and preview

**7** Match the words and phrases (a–g) to the definitions (1–7). These all appear in an article you are going to read about stress.

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>a</b> linked to               | <b>1</b> doing too much work                  |
| <b>b</b> root cause of           | <b>2</b> is good for the company              |
| <b>c</b> overwork                | <b>3</b> principal reason for                 |
| <b>d</b> performance-related pay | <b>4</b> connected to                         |
| <b>e</b> staff turnover          | <b>5</b> money for getting better results     |
| <b>f</b> makes business sense    | <b>6</b> people joining and leaving a company |
| <b>g</b> morale                  | <b>7</b> positive or negative attitude        |

a ☒ 4    b ☐    c ☐    d ☐    e ☐    f ☐    g ☐

**8** In your opinion, are the sentences below true or false? Discuss with a partner.

<b>a</b>	Stress is always a bad thing.	true <input type="checkbox"/>	false <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>b</b>	Work-related stress can cause health problems.	true <input type="checkbox"/>	false <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>c</b>	Bad management is the main cause of stress.	true <input type="checkbox"/>	false <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>d</b>	Reducing stress costs companies money.	true <input type="checkbox"/>	false <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>e</b>	It's easy for companies to reduce stress.	true <input type="checkbox"/>	false <input type="checkbox"/>

**9** Now read this article about stress. Does the writer agree with your opinions in 8?

### *Stressed to the limit*

Deborah Houlding of BMG online magazine explores the problem of work-related stress and examines ways in which it can be avoided.

...a negative condition. Pressure brings out the best in us. In times of stress, there is a sensation of mental concentration.

...negative. It is bad for the health of the employee and the employing organization. Stress-related illness is the cause

...is linked to heart disease, high blood pressure, job dissatisfaction, depression, asthma, hay fever, and many other medical and

...root cause of work-related stress is overwork. Too much pressure, time pressure, and distraction are the main factors. The principal cause of stress is the techniques designed to

'improve performance'. Policies such as 'performance-related pay' increase stress and demotivate a workforce.

Many legal and medical experts are advising companies to consider the costs and legal implications of stress-related illness. They emphasize the benefits of reducing stress as:

- better health
- reduced sickness absence
- increased performance and output
- better relationships with clients and colleagues
- lower staff turnover.

Taking the decision to reduce stress makes sound business sense. It's better for profits and better for staff morale.

Managers should learn to motivate but not exhaust employees. There is a balance between obtaining maximum efficiency, and a worker's need to rest and recuperate their creative energies.

**“Write in English? I don’t know where to start!”**

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# Structure

- model
- analysis
- language focus
- practice
- output



## 1.5 Writing Informal emails

### Discussion

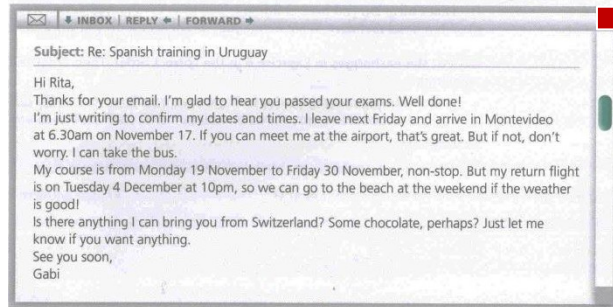
1 In small groups, discuss the questions.

- 1 How many emails do you receive each day? Who are they from?
- 2 Do you prefer to write a letter, an email or a text message? Why?
- 3 In English, is it easier to write an email or make a phone call? Why?

### Model

2 Read the email and underline the correct answers.

- 1 The reason for Gabi's email is to thank Rita / to inform Rita / to ask Rita for help.
- 2 Gabi wrote the email a day / a week / two weeks before the trip.
- 3 Gabi plans to travel by car / train / plane.
- 4 Gabi's Spanish course in Uruguay lasts 10 days / 12 days / 16 days.



### Analysis

3 Answer these questions about the email.

- 1 Rita and Gabi are probably a) sisters b) good friends c) business contacts.
- 2 Which of the following sentences were probably in Rita's last email to Gabi?
  - a) My test scores arrived today – everything is OK!
  - b) Thanks for confirming your arrival date.
  - c) Let me know if you want me to pick you up when you arrive.
  - d) I hope we can spend some time together while you're here.
  - e) Can you bring me some Swiss chocolate, please?

### Language focus

4 Decide which hellos and goodbyes are appropriate to use in emails to:

- 1 people you know very well: a family member, a close friend ☐☐☐☐
- 2 people you know: a teacher, a work colleague, a manager, a customer, a supplier ☐☐☐☐
- 3 people you *don't* know: a teacher, a work colleague, a manager, a customer, a supplier ☐☐☐☐

#### Hellos

- a) Hello John./Hi John./John./Hi,
- b) Dear Mr Jackson./Dear Sam./Hello Sam,

#### Goodbyes

- c) Regards./Best regards./Kind regards./Best wishes,
- d) Thanks./See you on Friday./All the best,
- e) Love,

5 Complete the email openings with the words in the box.

about because to with

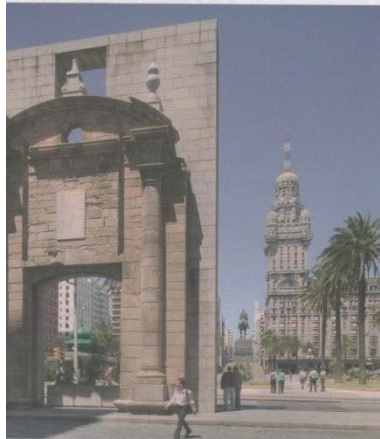
- 1 I'm writing \_\_\_\_\_ confirm my dates and times.
- 2 I'm writing \_\_\_\_\_ more information about your visit.
- 3 I'm writing \_\_\_\_\_ my English course in Canterbury.
- 4 I'm writing \_\_\_\_\_ ask you a favour.
- 5 I'm writing \_\_\_\_\_ my phone is out of order.
- 6 I'm writing \_\_\_\_\_ details of the next team-building day.
- 7 I'm writing \_\_\_\_\_ your computer problem.
- 8 I'm writing \_\_\_\_\_ tell you I can't come to the seminar.

6 Match these sentences from emails with the writer.

- 1 Just let me know if you have any more problems with your product.
  - 2 Just let me know when you can ship the order.
  - 3 Just let us know if you'd like to come bowling with us.
  - 4 Just let me know if you need any additional support while Sam's off sick.
  - 5 Just let me know if you need somewhere to stay.
  - 6 Just let me know when Mum wants me to pick her up.
- a) a colleague
  - b) a close friend
  - c) a manager
  - d) a family member
  - e) a regular customer
  - f) a regular supplier

### Output

7 Imagine you are Gabi's friend, Rita. Write these emails.



- 1 Write to Josie, another close friend. You won't be in Montevideo on November 17<sup>th</sup>. Explain why. Ask Josie if she can meet Gabi at the airport.
- 2 Write to Raquel, the friendly manager of the pizza restaurant where you sometimes work at weekends. Tell her you can't work the weekend of 1-2 December. Offer to work during the week instead.
- 3 Write to your uncle Manuel, who lives on the Gold Coast near the beach. Ask if you and Gabi can stay in his house for the weekend of 1-2 December. Tell him the good news about your exams, too.
- 4 Write a reply to Gabi's email to explain the arrangements you have made.



**“We never speak English at work!”**

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# Case studies

## Simulate the business environment

### 3 Product and process

identifying workflow problems at a factory  
presenting ideas for improving workflow

#### 3.6 Case study Digidisc Ltd

##### Discussion

**1** In small groups, answer the questions.

- 1 Is the room where you are working now practical and well-designed? Why? Why not?
- 2 What changes or improvements can you suggest?



##### Listening and reading

**2** 1:50 Digidisc Ltd is a small electronics company. It makes the Digidisc, a music player that can store your CD collection on a hard disk. Noah Evans is the site manager. He is showing Lily round the factory. It is Lily's first day. Listen and read their conversation. Match the areas on the factory plan with the words from the box.

assembly coffee machine loading bay order processing painting store testing

**Noah:** So, the first thing you see when you arrive in front of the building is the loading bay, on the left. This is where all the parts are delivered, and where the finished products are loaded onto trucks.

**Lily:** Oh, all in the same place?

**Noah:** Yes. But the logistics department is just behind the loading bay, and it's divided into two sections, IN on the left, and OUT on the right. OK, let's go inside. Now, as we come through the main entrance, the packaging department is straight in front of you and logistics is on your left, just round the corner.

**Lily:** Oh, yes, I see.

**Noah:** When the parts arrive from the loading bay,



### Discussion

**3** With a partner, describe the workflow (how parts and products move around the factory) at Digidisc. Can you see any problems?

- 1 Parts to loading bay  
First of all the parts are delivered to the loading bay. This can be a problem when the finished products are ready for shipping.
- 2 Loading bay to logistics
- 3 Logistics to store
- 4 Store to painting
- 5 Painting to assembly
- 6 Assembly to testing and packaging
- 7 Packaging to warehouse
- 8 Warehouse to loading bay

### Listening

**4** 1:51 Noah calls a meeting to discuss the problems. Listen and write the problems. Compare them with your ideas from Exercise 3.

Area	Problems
1 Store	
2 Order processing	
3 Packaging	
4 Warehouse	
5 Coffee machine	

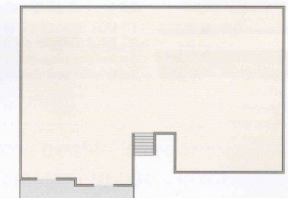


### Discussion

**5** With a partner, discuss how to reorganize the factory to make it more efficient. Prepare a presentation of your new organization and workflow. Use the blank site map to make your plan.

### Presentation

**6** Present your ideas to the class. Vote for the best solution.



# Scenarios & soft skills

## Language choices reflect attitudes and behaviour

**WORKPLACE SCENARIO**

# B


**in someone's shoes**  
imagining yourself in the situation that someone else is in

*I'm having trouble with my boss. What would you do if you were in my shoes?*

**Learning objectives:**  
**Workplace Scenario B**  
**Business communication skills** Discussing complaints; Identifying strategies for dealing with complaints; Roleplay: Expressing concern and dealing with complaints  
**Reading** Website about complaints  
**In company in action**  
B1: An unsuccessful complaint; B2: Expressing concern and dealing with complaints

**In company in action**

### In my shoes



**1** Read the business advice below and discuss the questions with a partner.

**a** When was the last time that you complained about something? What happened and how was your complaint dealt with? Were you happy with the outcome?

**b** Do you ever have to deal with complaints from customers or colleagues? What kind of things do people in your company complain about?

Blog

Articles

Forum

### Keeping people happy

In business you can't keep everyone happy all the time. Sooner or later, something will go wrong and you will have to deal with the consequences. Customers will get angry about mistakes that have been made and employees will complain about being unfairly treated or their working conditions. How you deal with these complaints may be crucial to your business. Do it badly, and the problem will get worse. Do it well, and you can often turn the situation into a positive one. Studies show that the level of satisfaction when a problem has been sorted out successfully can be even higher than if the problem had not occurred at all.

**2** Claudia López works in Marketing at Lenz Furniture Designs. She is having trouble with her computer and complains to the IT helpdesk. Watch video B1 and answer the questions.

**a** What is the complaint about?

**b** Eric, the IT technician, does not deal with the complaint successfully. What does he do wrong?

Blog

Articles

Forum

The following four-step strategy will help you to take the heat out of a difficult situation and deal with a complaint effectively.

- 1. Listen with an open mind**  
Hear what the person has to say. Let the person speak without interruption. Listen carefully so you fully understand what has happened and why the person is upset.
- 2. Repeat the problem back**  
Once you see what the complaint is about, repeat it back in your own words to check that you have understood correctly. Ask questions if you are unsure of anything.
- 3. Be sympathetic and fair**  
Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes and be sympathetic. Reassure them that something will be done. Don't blame anyone, but show understanding and be fair and reasonable – this will help the person you are dealing with feel their complaint is being handled effectively.
- 4. Follow up promptly**  
As soon as possible, follow up with a report on what went wrong and the steps you plan to take to overcome the problem and stop it from happening again.

**4** Here are some useful phrases for dealing with complaints. Match each phrase to the correct step in the strategy above. Add more phrases of your own if you can.

Are you referring to ...? Can you describe the problem you had?  
Could you give me your mobile number / email address so I can get back to you?  
Do you mean that ...? Have I understood that correctly?  
I can see there may have been a misunderstanding. Let me see what I can do.  
I'll get back to you by the end of the week.  
I'm really sorry to hear that you have had a problem. Can you tell me what happened?  
I'll look into this and get back to you as soon as possible. So, you are saying that ...  
Tell me what happened. The way you've described this, I can see why you are unhappy.

Dealing with complaints	Useful phrases
1 Listen with an open mind	
2 Repeat the problem back	
3 Be sympathetic and fair	
4 Follow up promptly	

**5** When Claudia does not get a satisfactory solution to her IT problems, she decides to speak to David McCann, the Production and Operations Manager. Work with a partner and roleplay their conversation.

Speaker A: Look at page 135.  
Speaker B: Look at page 130.

**6** Evaluate your performance using the form on page 143.

**7** Now watch video B2 to see what happened when Claudia spoke to David. Repeat your roleplay, but this time swap roles. Use the notes from your evaluation form and as many of the useful phrases from 4 as you can.

**8** With a partner, think of three other situations where you would make a complaint or use the examples below. Roleplay the conversations, taking turns to complain and using the four-step strategy and the phrases from 5.

- You are away on business and you overslept because you didn't get your wake-up call from the hotel. You missed an important meeting.
- You receive a telephone bill and you have been overcharged.
- You just got your payslip and you think you have been paid incorrectly for the second

# Summary

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- **Develop autonomy:** classroom language, passing the ball
- **Speaking:** structured tasks, oral drills, flow charts, warmers
- **Prioritize activities and correction:** 80/20, real time vs batch
- **Prioritize pronunciation:** stress, weak forms, linking
- **Consolidate survival language & business fundamentals**



# Summary

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- **Grammar:** provide rules of thumb
- **Homework:** user-friendly, attractive, digital
- **Listening:** regular exposure to 'normal' speech
- **Reading:** bridge the gap to authentic texts
- **Writing:** structure and stage tasks
- **Simulate the business environment:** case studies, video scenarios



For more information  
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**Thank you**

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Learning



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