

EASY **E**

CEF level A2

MEDIUM **M**

CEF levels B1-B2

ADVANCED **A**

CEF levels C1-C2

CEF: European Framework of Reference for Languages

INTRODUCTION

[1] Let's get started!

David Ingram: Welcome to *Business Spotlight Audio* 6/2020. I'm David Ingram from England.

Erin Perry: And I'm Erin Perry from the United States. We're glad you could join us! In this recording, you can listen to articles and interviews from the world of business English. We also offer lots of exercises to help you to improve your language and communication skills.

Ingram: This time, we have a special focus on the topic of critical thinking and, in particular, how it can help you to take better decisions at work.

Perry: We'll also be discussing technical problems with videoconferences, how to support colleagues who need help — and lots more.

Ingram: As always, you can find all the texts, dialogues and exercises in your audio booklet. OK, let's get started!

NAMES & NEWS

[2] Introduction (I)

Erin Perry: We'll begin with our Names & News section and a story from the US about what a word means.

David Ingram: What a word means, Erin? Surely, we have dictionaries to tell us that.

Perry: Well, that's precisely the problem, David. Because, in this case, a woman in the US wasn't happy with the definition in a dictionary and so decided to provide an alternative definition.

Ingram: And what was the word?

Perry: Let's listen now and find out.

[3] Putting it right **A** US

An e-mail from a 22-year-old black woman, Kennedy Mitchum, has prompted the American dictionary Merriam-Webster to update its definition of the term "racism." In her e-mail, sent in May, Mitchum wrote that racism is "prejudice combined with social and institutional power. It is a system of advantage based on skin color." The dictionary's current entry does not mention systemic oppression.

Mitchum told BBC News that someone had challenged one of her social media posts on racism by copying and posting Merriam-Webster's explanation of the word into their message. "Some troll was messaging me trying to say, 'You don't understand what racism truly is.'"

message sb.

► jmdm. eine Nachricht senden

oppression

► Unterdrückung

paste sth.

► etw. einfügen

prejudice ► Vorurteil(e)**prompt sb./sth. to do sth.**

► jmdn./etw. veranlassen, etw. zu tun

troll ► Troll, Provokateur(in)

in Onlinemedien

Mitchum's e-mail got a response the following day. Merriam-Webster said the "issue needed to be addressed sooner rather than later" and agreed to change the definition. Merriam-Webster's editorial manager, Peter Sokolowski, said that experts in black studies would be consulted and that the entry "could be expanded ... to include the term systemic, and it will certainly have one or two example sentences, at least." The new definition should give people like Mitchum somewhere to send their detractors.

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[4] Introduction (II)

David Ingram: Our next story is also about language — though in this case, it's not about words.

Erin Perry: Not about words? Then it must be about symbols of some sort. Am I on the right track?

Ingram: You certainly are. We're talking about emojis and the fact that the coronavirus crisis has forced the Unicode Consortium to delay the official release of next year's batch.

Perry: Oh, what a shame!

Ingram: Right! But, as we'll hear, there's a solution for those who are too impatient to wait for the official launch. And as you listen to our story, try to answer this question: what is the new planned release date for next year's emojis? Ready? Listen now.

[5] Please 🐻 with us 🇺🇸

If you have been waiting anxiously for the cooking pot emoji to appear on your smartphone, you will have to wait a little bit longer. The coronavirus pandemic has forced the Unicode Consortium to push back the release date of next year's new emojis six months, from March to September 2021. The California-based organization sets the standards for the world's character coding system.

The delay is a setback for smartphone developers, who use new emojis to persuade users to install software updates. It may also be a disappointment for members of marginalized communities, many of whom find validation in representative emojis.

But there is hope. Programmers can create what look like new emojis by combining existing ones. These are called sequences.

"People might not be interested in the technical difference between an emoji like 🚔 (police officer) and an emoji sequence like 🚔🚒 (man + fire engine = firefighter), as they both look

anxiously

↳ gespannt

based: ...-~ ↳ mit Sitz in ...

detractor

↳ Kritiker(in), Gegner(in)

editorial manager

↳ Redaktionsleiter(in)

emoji ↳ Emoji, Bildschriftzeichen

marginalized

↳ marginalisiert, Rand-

Please (bear) with us

↳ Bitte haben Sie Geduld mit uns

release date

↳ Erscheinungsdatum

setback ↳ Rückschlag

validation ↳ Bestätigung

like normal emojis,” Emojipedia’s [chief emoji officer](#) Jeremy Burge told *The Guardian*. But sequences will make it possible for a number of new emojis to be [rolled out](#) before the Consortium’s official 2021 release date, giving people something to play with until the brand-new emojis come out.

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Ingram: OK? Did you get the answer to our question? What is the new planned release date for next year’s emojis?

► The answer is September 2021.

“The coronavirus pandemic has forced the Unicode Consortium to push back the release date of next year’s new emojis six months, from March to September 2021.”

Ingram: If you didn’t get the answer the first time, go back and listen to the text again.

BUSINESS SKILLS

Ken Taylor on critical thinking

[6] Introduction

Erin Perry: David, how do you go about making important decisions?

David Ingram: Hmm. Well, I just, um, you know, think about...

Perry: Yes, think about what, David? Come on, I’m interested in what your thought processes are? I mean, is it all just gut instinct or do you

like to collect lots of information, weigh up the situation carefully and then decide?

Ingram: Now you’ve put me on the spot, Erin. I’ll have to think about this a bit more.

Perry: Well, you do that. Because thinking critically is the topic of Bob Dignen’s latest Business Skills article in *Business Spotlight*. Bob looks at what we mean by critical thinking and how it can help to improve our decision-making processes. And to look at this topic in more detail, Ken Taylor joins us again from his home studio in London with some tips and exercises.

[7] Exercise: Vocabulary

Ken: Hello. This is Ken Taylor from London. In his latest Business Skills article, Bob Dignen stresses the importance of critical thinking. In this first exercise, we’ll look at some of the expressions Bob uses in his article. First, you will hear an expression and then two explanations, **a)** and **b)**. In the pause, decide which explanation best matches the expression. Then you will hear the correct answer and a comment based on the article, with a pause for you to repeat it. OK? Ready?

1. **To jump to conclusions.** What does this mean?

[chief emoji officer](#)

► Emoji-Chef(in)

[roll sth. out](#)

► etw. einführen

- a) To get to the end of a process more quickly than expected.
- b) To guess the facts about a situation without having enough information.
- b) is correct. To “jump to conclusions” is to guess the facts about a situation without having enough information. Listen and repeat.
“We often jump to conclusions about each other based on very limited data.”
2. OK, next expression. **Highly questionable.** What does this mean?
- a) Extremely doubtful or uncertain.
- b) Extremely thought-provoking.
- a) is correct. If something is “highly questionable”, it is extremely doubtful or uncertain. Listen and repeat.
“His professionalism and reliability are highly questionable.”
3. Next expression. **Breeding grounds.** What are these?
- a) Places where things develop.
- b) Places where you can easily find what you need.
- a) is correct. “Breeding grounds” are places where things develop. Listen and repeat.
“Organizational cultures are often poor breeding grounds for alternative thinking processes.”
4. OK, next one. A **retrospective analysis**. What does this mean?
- a) A detailed programme of past events.
- b) A careful study of what happened in the past.
- b) is correct. A “retrospective analysis” is a careful study of what happened in the past. Listen and repeat.
“A retrospective analysis of the effectiveness of your data collection is essential.”
5. Next expression. **Logical deduction.** What is this?
- a) Using reason to come to a decision based on facts.
- b) Making a step-by-step approach to reducing an amount of something.
- a) is correct. “Logical deduction” is using reason to come to a decision based on facts. Listen and repeat.
“Logical deduction depends on examining the data carefully.”
6. OK, next expression. **Emotional temperament.** What does this mean?
- a) The feeling of becoming angry or irritated.
- b) The strength of feelings.

approach

• Herangehensweise

irritated • verärgertreliability • Zuverlässigkeitthought-provoking

• zum Nachdenken anregend

► **b)** is correct. “Emotional temperature” means “the strength of feelings”. Listen and repeat. “Be mindful of the group’s emotional temperature.”

7. Here’s the next expression. **A core dilemma.** What is this?

a) The most important priority.

b) A key problem.

► **b)** is correct. A “core dilemma” is a key problem. Listen and repeat. “A core dilemma of modern leadership is how to balance risks and opportunities.”

8. OK, and the last expression. **A sixth sense.** What is this?

a) A keen intuitive power.

b) The ability to read someone’s mind.

► **a)** is correct. A “sixth sense” is a keen intuitive power. Listen and repeat. “We need to develop a sixth sense that tells us that something is wrong.”

Taylor: How was that? Did you know all these expressions? If you didn’t, go back and practise them again.

[8] Exercise: Asking questions **M**

Ken Taylor: Bob Dignen suggests that one of the key elements of critical thinking is what he calls “the interrogation of reality”. He sug-

gests that we should continually ask questions of each other in order to clarify the situation and to challenge each other’s ways of thinking. Let’s try this now. Imagine you are in a virtual meeting. First, you will hear a colleague make a statement. I’ll then suggest how you can question that statement. You ask the question in the pause. Then you will hear a model version. OK? Good. Here’s the first statement.

1. Sales should increase in the next quarter.

■ Ask how safe it is to assume that sales will increase then.

► How safe is it to assume that sales will increase then?

2. Next statement. It’s really good quality.

■ Ask what the speaker means by “good quality”.

► What do you mean by “good quality”?

3. And the next statement. Delivery delays are one problem we are facing.

■ Ask what other issues you should be considering.

► What other issues should we be considering?

assume sth.

► etw. annehmen

issue ► Sachverhalt

mind ► hier: Gedanken

mindful: be ~ of sth. ► auf

etw. achten, etw. berücksichtigen

quarter ► Quartal

4. Here's the next statement. **This is the latest data we have.**

- Ask how reliable the data is.
- How reliable is the data?

5. The next statement. **This is the data from sales.**

- Ask if there are any other data sources you can use.
- Are there any other data sources we can use?

6. Here's another statement. **That's about a 15 per cent increase.**

- Ask how sure they are that the figure is correct.
- How sure are you that the figure is correct?

7. The next statement. **It's a problem for us.**

- Ask if there is an alternative way of looking at this.
- Is there an alternative way of looking at this?

8. OK. Here's the final statement. **That's my suggestion for how we should proceed.**

- Ask how comfortable people feel about this approach.
- How comfortable do people feel about this approach?

Taylor: Well done. According to Bob Dignen, asking questions allows us to make the right

connections and better deductions. The interrogation of our business reality is an important part of our critical thinking.

[9] Exercise: Free speaking **A**

Ken Taylor: In this next exercise, we will practise some free speaking on the subject of critical thinking. I'll ask you a question. You answer in the pause based on your own experience and situation. Right. Let's start.

- When was the last time you said to yourself, "I wish I could stop thinking about..." and what were you thinking about?
- What do you think are the key qualities of a critical thinker?
- Do you think you possess good critical thinking skills? Give reasons for your answer.
- What are the dangers of jumping too quickly to conclusions? Have you done that recently?

approach

➤ Vorgehensweise, Methode

comfortable:

feel - about sth.

➤ mit etw. zufrieden sein

jump too quickly to a

conclusion ➤ viel zu schnell einen Schluss ziehen

proceed ➤ vorgehen

reliable ➤ zuverlässig

source ➤ Quelle

- How easy is it for you or your colleagues to ask critical questions of each other at work? Give reasons for your answer.
- Do you suffer from information overload at work? If so, how do you deal with it?
- Are all your decisions at work based on pure logic? If not, why do you answer in the way you do?

Taylor: Good. Were you able to answer all the questions? You might want to go back to do that exercise again.

Critical thinking helps you to take better decisions, makes you better informed and helps you solve problems. So, read Bob Dignen's article to find out more about how you can become a good critical thinker.

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PERSONAL TRAINER

The language used in meetings

[10] Introduction

David Ingram: We'll stay with Ken Taylor now and move on to the Personal Trainer section in *Business Spotlight*.

Erin Perry: Yes, this is the section in which Ken has a discussion with somebody from the business world about the challenges they face at

work. Here's Ken now to tell us more about his latest interview partner.

[11] Interview: Ken Taylor **E**

Erin Perry: Welcome, Ken. Tell us, who was your guest this time?

Ken Taylor: Sylvia Böhm. Sylvia is senior user experience manager at BurdaForward GmbH where she has worked for more than 10 years. She has been involved in projects designing enjoyable and easy-to-use products. Her company, which is based in Munich, is known for brands such as FOCUS Online or Chip — and for its use of the latest technology.

Perry: And which topics did you discuss with Sylvia?

Taylor: We talked about managing meetings where most of the participants speak German and where a small minority only speak English. We also talked about the increasing demands for German speakers to improve their English language skills.

Perry: What were some of the key points that came out of your discussion?

based: be ~ in...
 ► seinen Sitz in ... haben
brand ► Marke

senior ► leitend
topic ► Thema

Taylor: We discussed several solutions to the problems of running mixed German-English language meetings. For example, if everyone has a reasonable passive understanding of each other's language, people could use either English or German actively in the meeting. In that way, no one would feel inhibited by their poor active skills in the second language. We also discussed breaking up large meetings into small groups to help lower the communication barriers and the use of external communication skills consultants to help facilitate the meetings. Finally, we talked about the importance of continually practising and improving your English language communication skills. Anyway, you can read the full interview in the latest issue of *Business Spotlight*.

Perry: And what can listeners do if they would like to ask you questions related to their work?

Taylor: All they need do is write to us, and the email address is: business.trainer@spotlight-verlag.de

Perry: Thank you very much, Ken.

Taylor: Thank you.

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SKILL UP!

The language of trends

[12] Introduction

David Ingram: Let's "skill up" now on our language, with some terms relating to trends.

Erin Perry: What, you mean, like the latest music trends, fashion trends, food trends, architectural trends...?

Ingram: It could relate to any of those things, Erin. But specifically, we'll be looking at the language needed to discuss the latest developments in the economy or for a particular business.

Perry: OK, you know me — always up for anything trendy. So, let's start the exercise.

[13] Exercise: Idioms for describing trends **M**

Erin Perry: In this exercise, we'd like you to form some idioms. First, you'll hear a description of a situation and then two suggestions, a) and b), for the idiom relating to this situation. In the pause, choose the correct suggestion. Then you'll hear the right answer. OK? Here's the first one.

break sth. up

- etw. unterteilen

consultant

- Berater(in)

facilitate sth.

- etw. moderieren

inhibited

- gehemmt

issue

- Ausgabe

run sth.

- hier: etw. durchführen

1. If a company's shares lose value suddenly and steeply, do they...

- a) take a nosedive?
b) fall into a deep hole?

➤ a) is correct. "Take a nosedive" means "suffer a sudden, steep fall". The phrase is based on the idea of an aircraft descending rapidly towards the ground, nose first. OK, Next one.

2. If something develops in a way that is different to what is normal elsewhere, does it...

- a) reject the trend?
b) buck the trend?

➤ b) is correct. If something develops in a way that is different to what is normal elsewhere, it "bucks the trend". Next one.

3. If someone loses the energy and enthusiasm that they need to continue doing something, do they...

- a) run out of juice?
b) run out of steam?

➤ b) is correct. If someone loses the energy and enthusiasm that they need to continue doing something, they "run out of steam". OK, last one.

4. If a share price recovers temporarily after a steep fall, is this called...

- a) a dead-cat bounce?
b) a cat's revival?

➤ a) is correct. A temporary increase in a share price after a steep fall is called a "dead-cat bounce".

Perry: Well done! Did you get all those idioms right? If not, go back and practise them again.

Skill Up!, no. 65, pp. 18-19

TRICKY TRANSLATIONS

[14] Exercise: Translation A

David Ingram: Let's continue "skilling up" on our vocabulary. Here, we'll look at the German term *Konjunktur*, which is translated in different ways into English, depending on the context in which it's used. In this exercise, we'd like you to translate a German sentence that includes the term *Konjunktur*. First, you'll hear the German sentence. In the pause, translate it into English. Then you'll hear the correct translation. OK? Here's the first one.

German: Kennst du die jüngsten Konjunkturdaten?

English: Do you know the latest economic figures?

Ingram: The adjective "economic" is often used in compound nouns that include the term *Konjunktur*.

compound noun

➤ zusammengesetztes Substantiv

share ➤ Aktie

share price ➤ Aktienkurs

steeply ➤ steil

German: Der Konjunkturabschwung ist im ersten Quartal gestoppt worden.

English: The economic downturn was stopped in the first quarter.

Ingram: Instead of “economic downturn”, you can also say “economic slowdown” or, simply, “downturn” or “slowdown”.

German: Erwartest du bald wieder eine Hochkonjunktur?

English: Do you expect a boom again soon?

Ingram: “Upward trend” or “upswing” can also be used here.

German: Aktien nachhaltiger Unternehmen haben Hochkonjunktur.

English: Shares of sustainable companies are in high demand.

Ingram: If *Hochkonjunktur haben* refer to economic or business matters, it’s translated as “be in high demand” or “be very popular”.

German: Kleidung aus Naturfasern hat in diesem Jahr Hochkonjunktur.

English: Clothes made of natural fibres are all the rage this year.

Ingram: For things other than the economy, *Hochkonjunktur haben* is translated as “be all the rage” or “be in fashion”.

Ingram: Well done! Did you get all those translations of *Konjunktur* right? If not, go back and do this translation exercise again.

Skill Up!, no. 65, p. 15

EASY ENGLISH

Ken Taylor on supporting a colleague [15] Introduction

Erin Perry: Hey, David. Is everything OK with you?

David Ingram: Yeah, yeah, I guess so.

Perry: I guess not, the way you sound.

Ingram: No, seriously, it’s OK. It’s nothing.

Perry: No, seriously, it’s not nothing, David. I know you too well, and something’s not right.

Ingram: Well, it’s just that I’ve got too much going on at the moment, both at work and at home.

Perry: So, why don’t we have a chat about things once we’ve finished this recording and see if there’s anything I can do to help you?

Ingram: Thanks, Erin! That’s very kind of you.

Perry: Not at all. You know, colleagues need our support more often than we think — and this is the topic of Mike Hogan’s latest Easy English section in *Business Spotlight*. Here’s Ken Taylor again with some exercises and advice. But afterwards, don’t forget to come and have that chat with me.

Ingram: I won’t. Much appreciated!

[16] Exercise: Dialogue E

Ken Taylor: In these difficult times, some of us are better able to manage the challenges than others. So, some of your colleagues might appreciate getting your help and support. In his latest Easy English article in *Business Spotlight*, Mike Hogan gives some suggestions on how we can best do this. First, listen to this short telephone call between Jean and Robert, who are members of the same remote working team. Listen in particular for the things that Jean says to support Robert.

Jean: You sound a bit down in the mouth. Is anything wrong? Are you OK?

Robert: Not really. It's this darn report on how our distributors are managing their online sales. It's so time-consuming! And it's not as if I haven't got enough to do otherwise. I've got two or three deadlines coming up and I know I won't meet them.

Jean: That sounds tough. It's not always easy to get things done remotely. I know how you feel. Is there anything I can do to help?

Robert: Could you make a few calls to some distributors for me to get their sales figures? I could send you a list by mail.

Jean: Sure. Would that solve your time issues?

Robert: Not all of them, to be honest. I've also run into problems with the reorganization of our logistics.

Jean: Why don't you explain the situation to Mark? I'm sure he would give you some more time. Or how about giving Karen a call? I'm pretty certain she would be able to help out.

Robert: Good idea. I'll do both of those things. Thanks for that.

Jean: Send me over the telephone list and I can get on with it tomorrow. I'll get back to you on Friday to see how you are doing.

Robert: Thanks, Jean. You've been a big help. I feel a bit better already.

Taylor: OK, good. Let's now look closely at the way that Jean followed Mike Hogan's advice on how to support colleagues.

1. Mike's first tip is not to ignore the issue if you feel a colleague needs support. He says that you should be proactive and speak to them. Listen to how Jean does this. After each of her comments, there is a pause for

darn *ifml.*

• verdammt

distributor

• Vertriebshändler(in)

down in the mouth *ifml.*

• niedergeschlagen

get back to sb.

• sich wieder bei jmdm. melden

get on with sth.

• mit etw. fortfahren

issue • Problem

remotely • entfernt;

hier: von zu Hause aus

run into problems

• Probleme bekommen

sales figures

• Verkaufszahlen

you to repeat her words. Try to copy her pronunciation and intonation.

Jean: You sound a bit down in the mouth.

Jean: Is anything wrong? Are you OK?

2. Mike then suggests that you should listen and show empathy. But don't judge others. Again, let's hear how Jean does this. Listen and repeat each comment.

Jean: That sounds tough.

Jean: It's not always easy to get things done remotely.

Jean: I know how you feel.

3. Mike's third tip is that you should offer support with your time, knowledge or connections. Listen to how Jean does this and repeat.

Jean: Is there anything I can do to help?

4. Mike then suggests that you ask questions to guide the other person towards finding a solution that works for them. Listen to Jean and repeat.

Jean: Would that solve your time issues?

Jean: Why don't you explain the situation to Mark?

Jean: Or how about giving Karen a call?

5. Finally, Mike proposes that you offer follow-up conversations and support. Listen to Jean again and repeat.

Jean: I'll get back to you on Friday to see how you are doing.

Taylor: Great. Well done. You can't always solve other people's problems. But showing empathy and just being there for them can really be a big help.

[17] Exercise: Offering support

Ken Taylor: OK, let's practise this support process again. In this exercise, you will play the part of Jean and use the phrases that we've just practised. I'll tell you what to say. You speak in the pause. Then you will hear Jean again. Don't worry if your words are not exactly the same as Jean's as long as you get the right message across. OK? We'll start.

- Say that Robert sounds unhappy and ask him if anything is wrong.

Jean: You sound a bit down in the mouth. Is anything wrong? Are you OK?

- Empathize with Robert.

Jean: That sounds tough.

- Ask if you can do anything to help.

Jean: Is there anything I can do to help?

follow-up

• Folge-, Anschluss-

work ▶ hier: sich eignen

- Suggest he explains the situation to Mark.

Jean: Why don't you explain the situation to Mark?

- Suggest he calls Karen.

Jean: Or how about giving Karen a call?

- Ask him to send you the telephone list of distributors and say you can get on with it tomorrow.

Jean: Send me over the telephone list and I can get on with it tomorrow.

- Say you'll get back to him on Friday to see how he's doing.

Jean: I'll get back to you on Friday to see how you are doing.

Taylor: Excellent. This positive approach to supporting a colleague is certainly the right way to manage the situation. If you had problems with that exercise, go back and try it again. Your colleagues will no doubt be very grateful for your help.

Business Spotlight 6/2020, pp. 46–47

WORK & RELAX

In the Zone: Not safe for work

[18] Introduction

David Ingram: Erin, Erin! What are you doing?

Erin Perry: Oh, just looking for a flight for my holiday while you're getting ready to introduce the next item.

Ingram: You're doing what? And on company equipment? That could get you into serious trouble.

Perry: Whoops! You're right. I just didn't think that anyone would mind if I just quickly...

Ingram: Well, if I were you, I'd just quickly stop doing that before anyone notices. Using company computers for non-work matters is a very sensitive topic and is the subject of our latest In the Zone section. *Business Spotlight* editor Tenley van den Berg is here now to tell us more about the dangers.

[19] Interview: Tenley van den Berg

David Ingram: Hi, Tenley. The last time we spoke, you were working from home. Is that still the case?

Tenley van den Berg: No, it's not. I am pleased to be back in the office now.

Ingram: Why do you say you're pleased to be back?

van den Berg: At the office, I turn on my computer, work and that's it. At home, I get distracted and start surfing the internet — for holiday accommodation, for example. I'm not supposed to be doing that on my work computer.

Ingram: Doesn't everybody search for something online at work now and then?

van den Berg: Many people do. According to *PersonnelToday.com*, 47 per cent of UK employees think it's OK to use the internet for personal affairs during work hours. Using a work computer for anything except work, however, can expose an organization to legal liability — or worse. I could get into big trouble!

Ingram: Just for searching for accommodation?

van den Berg: Yes. Earlier this year, a lady who had worked at a UK law firm for 24 years got fired for browsing sites like Shoeholics and EasyJet. Computer misuse isn't limited to browsing the internet, however. Some offences are fairly obvious such as viewing pornographic material or cyberbullying. Others are less so.

Ingram: Let me guess some other offences: sending derogatory comments about work through email or using your work computer for your side business.

van den Berg: That's right. And there's one type of misuse that I bet you wouldn't guess: using

a removable data-storage device or memory stick. Most organizations view that as the biggest single threat to their IT security.

Ingram: True, I wouldn't have guessed that. Are there more ways to avoid misusing your work computer?

van den Berg: There are quite a few. And you can find them discussed in this issue's In the Zone section.

Ingram: I'll check it out. It was nice to chat with you, Tenley. Be sure to stay out of trouble!

van den Berg: Thanks, David. It will certainly be easier now that I'm back at the office.

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accommodation

• Unterkunft

bet • wetten

browse sites

• Websites durchsuchen, auf Websites surfen

cyberbullying

• Mobbing im Internet

derogatory

• abfällig

device • Gerät

get distracted

• abgelenkt werden

issue • Ausgabe

law firm

• Anwaltskanzlei

legal liability: expose sb./sth. to ~ • hier: jmdn./etw. haftbar machen

offence

• Vergehen

side business

• Nebengeschäft(e)

LANGUAGE TEST

Writing skills

[20] Introduction

David Ingram: OK, now it's time to improve your writing skills.

Erin Perry: Improve my writing skills, David? Seriously?

Ingram: Not *your* writing skills, Erin. I'm talking to our listeners.

Perry: Oh, sorry!

Ingram: No problem. Anyway, we're going to practise some of the typical words and phrases that are used in written business communication — the topic of our language test in the current issue of *Business Spotlight*. Let's do an exercise on this now. And hey, Erin, who knows? You might even learn something, too.

Perry: Very funny. But you're right, I might.

[21] Exercise: Vocabulary

David Ingram: In this exercise, I'll give you two terms, one of which you will need to complete a sentence used in written business communication. Then you'll hear the sentence with the correct term beeped out. In the pause, choose the right term to complete the sentence. Then, you'll hear the correct answer and an explanation. OK? Let's get started. Here's the first one.

1. grateful / thankful

- We'd be [beep] if you could send us your latest catalogue.
- ▶ We'd be grateful if you could send us your latest catalogue.

Both words are translated as *dankbar* in German, but “grateful” is the correct term to use in business communication. OK, next one.

2. enjoy / look forward

- We [beep] to receiving your feedback.
- ▶ We look forward to receiving your feedback. “Look forward” is right. If you “look forward to sth.,” you are thinking positively about something that is going to happen. Next one.

3. attracted / attached

- Please find our terms and conditions [beep].
 - ▶ Please find our terms and conditions attached.
- “Attached” is the right word here. If you send someone a document together with an email, you “attach” the document. OK, next one.

4. regret / are sad

- We [beep] to inform you that the spare parts for your lawnmower are no longer available.
- ▶ We regret to inform you that the spare parts for your lawnmower are no longer available.

The verb you need here is “regret”. The expression “we regret to inform you that...” is often

used in business communication to say that you are sorry about something. Next one.

5. estimate / appreciate

- We would [beep] receiving your offer by the end of next week.
- We would appreciate receiving your offer by the end of next week.

“Appreciate” is correct here. To “appreciate” something is to be grateful for it. It can be translated as *etw. begreifen* or *etw. schätzen*. Note that the verb “estimate” is also translated as *schätzen*. But it means something very different: “do an approximate calculation of something”. OK, last one.

6. apologize / regret

- We [beep] for sending you the wrong sizes and colours.
- We apologize for sending you the wrong sizes and colours.

Both verbs, “apologize” and “regret”, can be used to say that you are sorry about something. Here, however, the structure of the sentence requires “apologize”, as you “apologize for sth.”. Using “regret”, the sentence would be: “we regret sending you...” or “we regret having sent you...”.

Ingram: Well done! If you didn’t get all the sentences right, go back and do this exercise again.

Business Spotlight 6/2020, pp. 28–32

ENGLISH ON THE MOVE

Ken Taylor on videoconferences

[22] Introduction

Ken Perry: David, how are your videoconferencing skills?

David Ingram: Funny you should ask, Erin. I was just talking to a colleague about this the other day. One of the positive things that has come out of the coronavirus crisis is that we’ve all had to “skill up” on our digital communication skills. So, yes, I’m pretty good now with videoconferences and using the technology. Although things still do go wrong from time to time.

Perry: Don’t they just! And it’s important to be able to deal with technical problems efficiently when they occur. Here’s Ken Taylor again with some advice and exercises on this topic.

[23] Exercise: Vocabulary

Ken Taylor: Videoconferences are now an important part of our working life. But if technical problems occur, it can be very frustrating. When that happens, you need the necessary vocabulary to deal with the situation. Let’s practise some words and phrases now.

First, you will hear a description of a situation. Then you will hear two words or phrases, a) and b). In the pause, choose the one that best matches the description. You will then hear the correct answer and an example of the word or

phrase used in a sentence. This is followed by a pause for you to repeat the sentence. OK?

1. A small problem that prevents something from working. What is this?

a) A twitch.

b) A glitch.

➤ **b)** is correct. A “glitch” is a small problem that prevents something from working. Listen and repeat.

“The failure was due to a glitch in the software.”

2. OK, next one. A person who dislikes new technology and cannot use it properly. What do we call such a person?

a) A technophobe.

b) A technocrat.

➤ **a)** is correct. A “technophobe” is someone who dislikes new technology and cannot use it properly. Listen and repeat.

“Even technophobes will find this new software easy to use.”

3. Next one. To deal successfully with a problem. What is this?

a) To sort out a problem.

b) To clean up a problem.

➤ **a)** is correct. To “sort out a problem” is to deal with it successfully. Listen and repeat.

“John will sort out the problem with your computer.”

4. Good, next one. A plan for dealing with a future emergency. What is this?

a) A game plan.

b) A contingency plan.

➤ **b)** is correct. A “contingency plan” is a plan for dealing with a future emergency. Listen and repeat.

“We had a contingency plan for dealing with the lockdown.”

5. Next one. Your computer does not respond to any input. In such cases, we say your computer is...

a) stuck.

b) frozen.

➤ **b)** is correct. If your computer is “frozen”, it doesn’t respond to any input. Listen and repeat.

“I couldn’t complete the report because my computer was frozen.”

6. OK, last one. To take control of a videoconference uninvited and share inappropriate material. Is this?

due to: be - sth.

➤ auf etw. zurückzuführen sein

emergency

➤ Notfall, - situation

inappropriate

➤ unpassend

input

➤ Eingabe(n)

- a) To burst a videoconference.
 b) To bomb a videoconference.
 ➤ **b)** is correct. To “bomb a videoconference” is to take control of it uninvited and share inappropriate material. Listen and repeat.
 “Our videoconference was bombed by a hacker last week.”

Taylor: How did you get on? Did you know all of those words and phrases? If not, go back and learn any that you were not familiar with.

[24] Exercise: Dialogue and vocabulary

Ken Taylor: In this next exercise, we’ll practise talking about technical problems in a videoconference. Listen to this conversation between Alan, an IT specialist, and Tina, who will be facilitating a videoconference for the first time. Listen in particular to the language that Alan uses to describe problems that can occur.

Alan: So, that’s how you set up the conference.

Tina: Ah, that’s great. Thanks, Alan.

Alan: Is there anything else you need to know?

Tina: I’d like to know how to deal with the most common glitches during a conference?

Alan: Always click the “join with video” icon before entering the conference.

Tina: Why is that?

Alan: Otherwise, your webcam won’t show up. You’ll enter the meeting without your camera feed.

Tina: Do you have any other tips?

Alan: You can sometimes get audio echo or feedback in meetings.

Tina: Hmm. What can you do to solve that?

Alan: People can mute the audio on their devices when not speaking.

Tina: Good. Anything else?

Alan: If you are screen-sharing, make sure you have a solid internet connection. Screen-sharing takes up a lot of bandwidth.

Tina: One problem I’ve had is not getting notification emails from the conferencing platform.

Alan: You need to make sure your email is configured properly. Ask us to make sure your conference platform’s email is whitelisted.

Taylor: OK, let’s practise some of the language that Alan used to talk about possible problems. First, you will hear a sentence from Alan. I’ll then repeat a key word or phrase and ask you to

bandwidth

➤ Bandbreite

device ➤ Gerät

feed ➤ hier: Einspielung

glitch *ifml.* ➤ Störung, Panne

icon ➤ Symbol

mute sth.

➤ etw. stummschalten

notification

➤ Benachrichtigung

screen-sharing: be ~

➤ den Bildschirm teilen

whitelisted: be ~

➤ auf einer Positivliste stehen, freigegeben sein

explain it. You speak in the pause. Then you will hear an explanation which you can compare to yours. Let's begin.

Alan: Always click the "join with video" icon before entering the conference. Otherwise, your webcam won't show up.

- **Won't show up.** What does this mean?
- ▶ "Won't show up" means "won't be seen".
Next one.

Alan: You'll enter the meeting without your camera feed.

- **Your camera feed.** What does this mean?
- ▶ "Your camera feed" is the streaming of the picture to your computer. OK, next one.

Alan: You can sometimes get audio echo or feedback in meetings

- **Audio echo.** What does this mean?
- ▶ An "audio echo" is a sound that can be heard again after the original sound has stopped.
Next.

Alan: People can mute the audio on their devices when not speaking.

- **Mute the audio.** What does this mean?
- ▶ If you "mute the audio", you stop your equipment from picking up and transmitting any sounds you make. Next one.

Alan: If you are screen-sharing, make sure you have a solid internet connection.

- **Screen-sharing.** What does this mean?
- ▶ "Screen-sharing" means that you allow others to see on their screens what is on your screen. OK, next one.

Alan: You need to make sure your email is configured properly.

- **Configured properly.** What does this mean?
- ▶ If you have "configured your email properly", you have changed the controls on your computer to suit that particular task. OK, last one.

Alan: Ask us to make sure your conference platform's email is whitelisted.

- **Whitelisted.** What does this mean?
- ▶ If something is "whitelisted", it is put on a list of things that are considered to be acceptable and trusted.

Taylor: Well done! Videoconferencing has become an essential tool for business communication. And remote meetings can be run very

pick sth. up
▶ etw. aufgreifen;
hier: empfangen
transmit sth.
▶ etw. übertragen

suit a particular task
▶ hier: eine Konfiguration auf eine spezielle Aufgabenstellung ausrichten

effectively — as long as the technology works properly! So, when organizing your next video-conference, remember Murphy's Law: whenever something can go wrong, it will go wrong! Make sure, through thorough preparation, that Murphy's Law doesn't strike during your next conference.

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INSIGHT

Business news with Ian McMaster

[25] Introduction

David Ingram: Welcome now to our Insight section, in which *Business Spotlight* editor-in-chief Ian McMaster gives his views on the recent business news.

Erin Perry: Yes, welcome again, Ian. What are the topics that you've chosen for us this time?

Ian McMaster: First, we're going to be asking whether online teaching is as effective as face-to-face teaching. And we'll also be looking at the impact of cuts in value added tax — or, in German, *Mehrwertsteuer*.

Perry: OK, as always, we're intrigued.

[26] Business news: Online vs face-to-face language teaching and value added tax

Erin Perry: Ian, you said your first topic was about whether online teaching is as effective as face-to-face teaching. I guess this has become a

critical issue as a result of the coronavirus crisis, right?

Ian McMaster: It certainly has, Erin. Many business English trainers and other educators have had to switch from offering face-to-face training to offering online courses. And they have discovered that there are both advantages and disadvantages. Online training offers a great deal of flexibility in that the learners can be in any location, and they can learn at their own pace and using whatever device suits them best. On the other hand, some trainers would argue that face-to-face training allows a more personal relationship with the learners and therefore a richer teaching and learning experience. Anyway, you can read more about this debate in the current issue of *Business Spotlight*.

Perry: You also said you would be looking at the impact of cuts in value added tax. Will the recent cut in Germany really help the economy to recover?

McMaster: Well, that's the the \$64,000 question — or rather, the €130 billion question, as that's the size of the stimulus package announced by the German government to counteract the reces-

issue (sth.) ▶ Ausgabe

pace ▶ Tempo

stimulus package

▶ Konjunkturpaket

the \$64,000 question

▶ etwa: die große Preisfrage

value added tax (VAT)

▶ Mehrwertsteuer (MwSt.)

sionary impact of the coronavirus crisis. And one element of this total package is a six-month reduction in value added tax in the second half of 2020, with the higher rate falling from 19 per cent to 16 per cent and the lower rate from 7 per cent to 5 per cent. It's estimated that these cuts alone will lead to around €20 billion less being taken out of the economy by the German government. So, like any tax cut, that is a potential boost to the economy.

A key question, of course, is who benefits from this tax cut. To the extent that the cut is passed on to consumers in the form of lower prices, that clearly benefits individuals and might encourage them to spend more — although the price reductions for the typical goods one buys for everyday life, such as food or clothing, are very small. On the other hand, some companies won't pass on the tax cuts to consumers at all. Now, that is not necessarily a bad thing. A lot of firms have been hit badly by the coronavirus crisis, and so, if the tax cut helps to improve their financial situation — and thereby protect jobs — that is also a good thing.

But there are two main criticisms of the German VAT cut. First, a lot of consumers and firms will benefit who *aren't* in financial difficulties and therefore don't really need help. One possibility for a fairer way to help would have been to provide everyone with the same absolute level of — possibly taxable — cash payment, or even

shopping vouchers, valid for a limited time period. This would have provided proportionately more benefit to those on lower incomes and would also have been a more effective way of increasing consumption. The second main criticism is that a six-month period for the tax cut is too short, not least when you consider that there are significant costs to firms in changing their prices for such a short period. So, a longer-term tax cut would have been more effective. And I wouldn't be surprised if the VAT cut in Germany was extended, depending on the economic situation towards the end of 2020. So, let's wait and see.

Perry: OK. Thanks very much, Ian. We look forward to hearing from you again next time.

McMaster: You're welcome!

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SHORT STORY

[27] Introduction

David Ingram: Now, it's time for our latest short story by James Schofield. And this time, the topic is gender diversity.

Erin Perry: Gender diversity? A very important topic indeed, David. And one that a lot of organ-

look forward to doing sth.

► sich freuen, etw. zu tun

taxable ► steuerpflichtig

you're welcome

► gern geschehen

izations still need to work on, particularly at the upper management levels. Far too often, women are totally underrepresented.

Ingram: True. And our short story, “Angela’s trumpet”, presents an interesting way of dealing with this problem.

Perry: OK! Can’t wait to hear what the solution is.

Ingram: Believe me, it’s an unusual solution. Let’s listen now.

[28] Angela’s trumpet

Hello, Rudi, this is Angela. I need you to come to my apartment now — it’s important. The door’s unlocked; just come through to the conservatory.”

Rudolph Helm, head of corporate security at Planck Pharmaceuticals in Basel, listened to the voicemail again. Dr Angela Wharton had recently retired as head of research from the company or, better said, she’d been retired. She and the new CEO had not seen eye to eye, so she wasn’t even a company employee any more.

Angela was a dangerous person to cross. When she’d left the company, Rudi expected a public retaliation of some kind, but there was nothing. Then he had heard that she needed chemotherapy, which explained her silence. It might be wise to find out what she wanted. She was a clever woman.

As promised, the door was open. He walked through the apartment to where he could see the conservatory. The windows were a mass of green leaves. As he entered the room, it was like stepping into a warm, perfumed jungle.

“Angela?” he called. “Where are you?”

“Follow the path,” she replied.

It led him around a corner, and he found Angela in a small area where the branches had been cut back to let in light from the glass above. She was sitting by a bush with long, white, trumpet-shaped flowers hanging from its branches.

“Here we are,” she said. “Take a chair. You must be hot!”

He sat down and took off his jacket and tie. It was a pleasant spot.

“I know those flowers,” he said. “You brought them to the office sometimes.”

“Angel’s trumpets, they’re called. Lovely smell.”

“Angel’s, not Angela’s, then? Where are they from?”

angel’s trumpet

► Engelstrompete

CEO (chief executive officer)

► Geschäftsführer(in),
Vorstandsvorsitzende(r)

conservatory UK

► Wintergarten

corporate security

► Unternehmenssicherheit

cross sb. ► jmdn. verärgern

head of research

► Forschungsleiter(in)

pharmaceutical

► Arzneimittel

retaliation

► Vergeltung

see eye to eye

► einer Meinung sein

voicemail ► Mailbox

“South America, originally.” There was a silence.

“It’s good to see you, Angela. How are you? I heard...”

“About the chemo?” She shook her head. “It didn’t work. They say I have three to six months. But I’ve accepted that; it’s not why I called you. We need to talk, Rudi. But first ... something to drink? The juice I make is good.”

She walked out of the room and came back carrying two bottles, each with a green smoothie inside. She handed one to him. He poured himself a glass and drank; it was delicious.

“I’m listening,” he said.

“Look at this.”

She put a copy of the company’s annual report on the table. It pictured a horizontal line of middle-aged men in white shirts and dark suits walking towards the viewer. It was Planck’s board of directors, with their new CEO.

“Well, the photographer is trying too hard to make them look dynamic,” said Rudi. “But that’s not the problem, I guess.” He looked again, and then he understood. “Ah,” he said. “No women...”

“Exactly.”

For 30 years, she told him, she’d worked to push gender equality. The former CEO had started giving women senior positions.

“Women need positions with responsibility early in their careers. I built a pipeline of talent-

ed and diverse people — not only women — to fill senior jobs. But then that CEO died...” A car accident on the way to church and her mentor was gone — along with Angela’s pipeline.

“All my stars left when they saw what the new CEO was like. He has no talent himself and doesn’t like talent around him. It’s the bland leading the bland. And it’s not just Planck. Only 29 per cent of European companies have women in senior management. Somebody has to do something...”

Rudi reached for his drink again but, to his surprise, knocked it over.

“Shorry,” he said, and stopped. His tongue felt strange.

Angela smiled. “Let’s change the subject for a minute. I have a botany lesson for you...”

The angel’s trumpet plant that surrounded them had interesting properties, she told him.

annual report

- ▶ Jahresbericht

bland: the ~

- ▶ etwa: Langweiler(innen)
- (Anspielung auf das Gleichnis vom Blindensturz „The blind leading the blind“)

board of directors

- ▶ Vorstand

botany

- ▶ Botanik, Pflanzenkunde

build a pipeline of sth.

- ▶ hier: für Nachschub von etw. sorgen

delicious ▶ köstlich

diverse ▶ unterschiedlich

fill sth.

- ▶ hier: etw. besetzen

gender equality

- ▶ Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern

knock sth. over

- ▶ etw. umwerfen

property

- ▶ Eigenschaft

senior ▶ leitend

work ▶ hier: anschlagen

Planck had profited from some of them, in particular, by creating a drug called scopolamine, made from the seeds. In small doses, it was used to treat heart disease.

“In middle-sized doses, however, it’s not so nice. Then the patient can’t move. That is what you just had in your smoothie.”

Rudi tried to stand but couldn’t.

“Wh... why?” he gaspd.

“I’m dying, so I have to do something meaningful about gender equality now. And you’re my messenger — because I’ll be dead.”

“Wh... what?”

“Well, in large amounts, scopolamine kills people,” Angela said. “I have lots in my smoothie here, and this morning, I sent your CEO a lovely box of chocolates flavoured with angel’s trumpet...” Rudi fainted.

The journalist who slapped him awake reacted quickly when Rudi told him what was happening. Angela was already dead, but within minutes, the police were on their way to the Planck offices, with journalists and camera crews close behind.

Rudi watched on television from a hospital bed. Amazingly, the police found the chocolates before anybody had eaten them.

The story dominated the news. Rudi was interviewed, Angela’s motives were examined and discussed, and the topic of gender equality

was everywhere. None of this was good publicity for Planck Pharmaceuticals, and the CEO’s career was over.

After he left hospital, Rudi took the journalist to lunch.

“There’s something I don’t understand,” Rudy said. “What were you doing at Angela’s apartment?”

“She had called and said she had a big story for me.”

“Strange,” said Rudi. “Why would she have done that? Your finding me is the only reason the man she hated is still alive.”

The journalist ordered another glass of wine. “I’ll tell you something even stranger: the police analysed those chocolates but didn’t find any angel’s trumpet poison in them. So, what was she trying to achieve?”

Rudi ate silently for a while, thinking, until gradually he understood. She’d used them all to achieve exactly what she wanted. Angela had trumpeted her message around the world.

“Let’s drink,” he said, raising his glass, “to clever women.”

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achieve sth. ➔ etw. erreichen

amazingly

➔ erstaunlicherweise

gasp ➔ keuchen

scopolamine

➔ Scopolamin (Alkaloid der Nachtschattengewächse)

seed ➔ Samen(korn)

slap sb. awake

➔ jmdn. wach klopfen

topic ➔ Thema

trumpet sth.

➔ etw. hinausposaunen; hier: verbreiten

CONCLUSION

[29] For more information

David Ingram: Well, we've come to the end of *Business Spotlight Audio 6/2020*. We hope you've enjoyed it and have found our exercises helpful.

Erin Perry: As an alternative to the CD, we also offer *Business Spotlight Audio* as a subscription download, so you can take the sound of business with you wherever you go. For more information, or to find out about our range of products, visit our website at www.business-spotlight.de.

Ingram: So, until next time, this is David Ingram...

Perry: And Erin Perry...

Ingram: Wishing you success with your business English.

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