

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* 7/2020. 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 various dimensions of business culture, including the disorganized nature of organizations.

Perry: We also look at how to discuss different ways of working and at differences in topics of conversation at work.

Ingram: And, 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)

David Ingram: We'll begin with our Names & News section and a story from Britain about the cartoon characters Dennis the Menace and

Minnie from the country's oldest comic magazine for children, *The Beano*.

Perry: Seriously, David? This is *Business Spotlight* remember — a serious product. And you're starting off with a children's comic magazine and a character called Dennis the...what was it again?

Ingram: Dennis the Menace. But this is a serious topic, Erin. The Bank of England, the UK's central bank, is using the comic characters to help children understand issues relating to money and finance.

Perry: Ah, OK, that is a cool — and serious — idea. Let's find out more.

[3] Funny money E

Cartoon characters such as Dennis the Menc and Minnie are helping British children to learn the basics of finance. The Bank of England worked with *The Beano*, Britain's oldest children's comic magazine, and Tes, a global education service, to develop 12 free lessons called "Money and Me". The cartoon characters are shown dealing with situations in which they have to make decisions about money.

The lessons will help to support the Strategy for Financial Wellbeing in the UK. This aims to give two million more British children and

cartoon character

► Comic-, Zeichentrickfigur

menace ► Bedrohung

young people a good financial education by 2030.

Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey told the Financial Times that it was part of the bank's role to pass on to the public financial knowledge for their daily lives. Emma Scott, chief executive of Beano Studios, says she hopes the Beano characters help children to “enjoy learning about money and gain necessary life skills”.

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[4] Introduction (II)

Erin Perry: Our next story is about an American woman who has had a remarkable career, full of well, highs and lows.

David Ingram: Highs and lows?

Perry: In the course of her career, Kathy Sullivan has become not only the first woman to do a spacewalk but also the first woman to reach the deepest point in the ocean.

Ingram: Wow, those are indeed highs and lows.

Perry: And as you listen to our story now, try to answer this question: in which year did Kathy Sullivan become the first woman to do a spacewalk? Ready? Listen now.

[5] Career highs and lows 🇺🇸

Kathy Sullivan was born to explore. “I was always a pretty adventurous and curious child, with interests wider and more varied than the stereotype of a little girl,” the 69-year-old Amer-

ican told the BBC. She studied earth sciences and geology. In 1978, Sullivan became one of the first women accepted into NASA's space program. In 1984, she became the first woman to do a spacewalk.

More than 30 years later, Sullivan got a call from U.S. investor and former naval officer Victor Vescovo. He invited her to go with him to the Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench, south-east of Guam. At nearly 11 kilometers deep, it is the lowest known point on earth. Sullivan accepted the invitation, and, in June, she became the first woman to reach the deepest point in the ocean. When she returned to the ship after the dive, Sullivan called the International Space Station (ISS). The call brought her extraordinary accomplishments full circle.

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chief executive

• (Firmen-)Chef(in)

life skills • Lebens-, Alltagskompetenzen

pretty • hier: ziemlich

earth sciences

• Geowissenschaften

accepted: be ~ into sth.

• hier: in etw. aufgenommen werden

naval officer

• Marineoffizier(in)

Challenger Deep

• Challengergraben

Mariana Trench

• Marianengraben

dive • Tauchgang

accomplishment

• Leistung, Erfolg

full circle: bring sth. ~

• (mit etw.) den Kreis schließen

Ingram: OK? Did you get the answer to our question? In which year did Kathy Sullivan become the first woman to do a spacewalk?

- The answer is 1984. Listen again. “In 1984, she became the first woman to do a spacewalk.”

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

BUSINESS SKILLS

Disorganized organizations

[6] Introduction

David Ingram: OK, now it's time to start our special focus on various dimensions of business culture. And we begin with the topic of organizational culture.

Erin Perry: Yes, or rather, the topic of disorganizational culture. Because as Bob Dignen says in his latest Business Skills article in *Business Spotlight*, many organizations can be better described as “disorganizations”.

Ingram: Right, but as Bob says, this can be a strength rather than a weakness — and, in any case, disorganization at work is something that we have to learn to manage.

Perry: So, let's get on and do some exercises on the topic of organizations and disorganization.

[7] Exercise: Strategy

David Ingram: In this exercise, you will hear some statements about how organizations function. In the pause after each statement, decide whether you agree or disagree with the statement and why. Then I'll give you some feedback, based on Bob Dignen's article. See whether or not you agree with the feedback. Ready? Here's the first statement.

1. A change management programme is the best way to manage the changing business environment.
 - Bob disagrees. He thinks that by the time a change management programme has been completed, the world will have changed again. This means that organizations never catch up with reality.
2. Badly organized companies can survive as long as they make a profit.
 - Bob agrees. He says that some companies survive for a long time despite their poor leadership or business models.

environment → Umfeld

catch up with sth.: never ~
• ständig hinter etw. zurückbleiben

3. Departments often pull in different directions in organizations.
- Bob agrees. He thinks that this is because departments often have different and conflicting goals.
4. Most top professionals find it easy to communicate with each other.
- Bob disagrees. He thinks that professionals with different areas of expertise often find it difficult to communicate with each other.
5. Relations between headquarters and local business units are often less than harmonious.
- Bob agrees. This is because they operate on the basis of entirely different logics. One thinks globally, and the other thinks locally.
6. Slow decisions from top management always cause problems.
- Bob disagrees. He suggests that decisions are often made slowly because top management need to carefully balance the risks.
7. We need to be able to hold opposing ideas in our heads at the same time.
- Bob agrees. We live in a business world in which opposing realities and values often clash. We therefore need to become comfortable managing two or more truths at the same time.

8. We need to cultivate cross-company networks, working beyond teams and departments.
- Bob agrees. He thinks such networks can promote holistic thinking and create solutions.

Ingram: Well, done. Did you agree with Bob's feedback?

[8] Exercise: Vocabulary **M**

David Ingram: In this exercise, we'll look at some of the expressions that are useful when talking about how companies are organized. 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 sentence containing the expression. In the pause, repeat the sentence. OK? Ready?

department ▶ Abteilung

goal ▶ Ziel

professional ▶ Fachkraft

expertise

• Sachkompetenz

headquarters ▶ Zentrale

business unit

• Geschäfts-, Unternehmensbereich

comfortable: become ~ doing sth. ▶ hier: etw. problemlos tun können

cross-company

• firmenübergreifend

1. OK, here's the first expression. **Out of sync.** What does this mean?

- a) Not matching.
 - b) Out of date.
 - a) is correct. If two things are "out of sync" with each other, they do not match. Listen and repeat.
- "The company is out of sync with the changing business environment."

2. Next expression. **Behind the curve.** What does this mean?

- a) Slower at doing something than others or than the situation demands.
 - b) Waiting for others to make the first move.
 - a) is correct. If you are "behind the curve", you are slower about doing something than others are or slower than the situation demands. Listen and repeat.
- "Organizations are usually behind the curve of reality."

3. OK, next expression. **Fit for purpose.** What does this mean?

- a) Designed to a very exact specification.
 - b) Good enough to do the job that something was designed to do.
 - b) is correct. If something is "fit for purpose", it is good enough to do the job that it was designed to do. Listen and repeat.
- "In a rapidly-changing environment, organi-

zations are never fully fit for purpose."

4. Next one. **Stretch the limits.** What does this mean?

- a) Change radically.
 - b) Go beyond what is normally expected or accepted.
 - b) is correct. To "stretch the limits" is to go beyond what is normally expected or accepted. Listen and repeat.
- "Organizations sometimes stretch the limits of what is legally allowed."

5. OK, next expression. **Bear the brunt.** What does this mean?

- a) Take on a difficult task.
 - b) Suffer the most.
 - b) is correct. If you "bear the brunt" of something, you suffer the most. Listen and repeat.
- "Who bears the brunt of our customers's dissatisfaction?"

6. Next expression. **Authority vacuum.** What does this mean?

- a) A situation in which control is shared.
- b) A situation in which no one is in control.
 - b) is correct. An "authority vacuum" is a sit-

designed: be - to sth.

- für etw. vorgesehen/konzipiert sein

environment

- Umfeld

uation in which no one is in control. Listen and repeat.

“An authority vacuum can lead to endless arguments among senior managers.”

7. OK, here's the last expression. **Turn things around.** What does this mean?

a) Cause a situation to change in a positive direction.

b) Do the opposite of what is expected.

➤ a) is correct. To “turn things around” is to cause a situation to change in a positive direction. Listen and repeat.

“How can we turn things around in the current situation?”

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

[9] Exercise: Dialogue

David Ingram: In this exercise, we will practise some free speaking on the subject of organizations and disorganization. I'll ask you a question. You answer in the pause — based on your own experience and situation. Right. Let's start.

■ Have you ever taken part in a change management process? If you have, was it valuable? And did it work?

■ Have you ever noticed that the various departments in your organization have had different goals? If you have, how has this affected your work?

■ How easy is it for you to communicate clearly with colleagues who have a very different professional background from yours?

■ Do you think it would be a good idea for IT departments to employ “translators”, whose job it is to help people understand new technology? Justify your answer?

■ Have you had experience of conflict between a central headquarters and a local branch or subsidiary? If so, what was the nature of the conflict?

■ Have you ever complained about managers in your organization “playing politics”? If so, what was the situation?

■ Do you agree that most organizations are actually disorganized? Justify your answer.

senior ➤ leitend; ranghoch

subsidiary

➤ Tochterunternehmen

play politics

➤ Winkelzüge machen; hier: seine eigene Agenda verfolgen

Ingram: OK, good. Were you able to answer all the questions? You might want to go back to do that exercise again — and think carefully about the nature of organization or disorganization in your place of work.

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PERSONAL TRAINER

The power of networking

[10] Introduction

David Ingram: We'll now move on to the Personal Trainer section in *Business Spotlight*.

Erin Perry: Yes, this is the section in which Ken Taylor 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

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

Ken Taylor: Elizabeth Wakeling. Liz is the UK Chairman of International Management Assistants — IMA. IMA is the leading network for personal assistants and executive assistants in more than 26 countries. Liz also heads up Beckenham College in south-east London, and designs and delivers training programmes for both the public and the private sector.

Perry: And which topics did you discuss with Elizabeth?

Taylor: We discussed the importance of building personal networks so that you can keep up to date with professional developments and learn from role models and mentors. We also talked about some other key benefits in joining an organization like IMA — such as how networking can also open the door to future opportunities.

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

Taylor: How joining a networking organization gives you the opportunity to develop yourself. If you are an active member, you meet people with different approaches that challenge your own assumptions, you get the chance to learn new skills and you get support and help when you need it. Anyway, you can read the full interview in the latest issue of *Business Spotlight*.

chairman

► Vorsitzende(r)

executive assistant

► Assistent(in) der Geschäftsleitung

head sth. up ► etw. leiten

design sth.

► etw. konzipieren

topic ► Thema

keep up to date ► sich auf dem Laufenden halten

role model ► Vorbild

approach ► Herangehensweise; hier: Denkansatz

assumption

► Annahme

issue ► Ausgabe

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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LANGUAGE TEST

Managing a crisis

[12] Introduction

David Ingram: Erin, did I tell you about the crisis we had at work the other day?

Erin Perry: Only three times, David. Only three times.

Ingram: Oh sorry, it's just that it's still bothering me.

Perry: I'm not surprised. Anyway, fortunately for you, managing a crisis is the topic of our language test in the current issue of *Business Spotlight*. And let's do a short exercise now, practising a little bit of the grammar you might need to talk about what you think ought to happen.

[13] Exercise: Grammar

Erin Perry: In this exercise, I'll give you a situation and you'll hear two possible sentences you could use. In the pause, choose the sentence

with the correct verb form. Then, you'll hear the right answer and the sentence once again. OK? Let's get started. Here's the first one.

- If you think it would be a good idea to discuss an idea further, you could say...
 - We should discuss the idea further.
 - We would discuss the idea further.

► **a)** is correct: "We should discuss the idea further." OK, next one.
- If you think it would have been a good idea to discuss the idea further, you could say...
 - We would have discussed the idea further.
 - We should have discussed the idea further.

► **b)** is correct: "We should have discussed the idea further." OK, next one.
- If you think it's essential not to spend any more time discussing the idea, you could say...
 - We couldn't spend any more time discussing the idea.
 - We mustn't spend any more time discussing the idea.

► **b)** is correct: "We mustn't spend any more time discussing the idea." OK, next one.
- If you think it's essential to discuss the idea further, you could say...
 - We must discuss the idea further.

- b) We have to discuss the idea further.
- ▶ This one was a bit tricky as both a) and b) are correct: “We must discuss the idea further” or “We have to discuss the idea further”.

Perry: Well done! If you didn’t get all of those right, go back and do this exercise again.

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WORK AND RELAX

In the Zone: Topics of conversation

[14] Introduction | Track 14

Erin Perry: As we’ve discussed in the past, small talk can be an important part of business life, particularly in cultures that put a lot of emphasis on building strong personal relationships

David Ingram: Indeed, but making small talk is not always easy. I mean, you can’t just talk about the weather, right?

Perry: No, and there may be certain topics of conversation that you should avoid altogether at work.

Ingram: Right. We examine this issue of appropriate topics of conversation in our latest In the Zone section. And *Business Spotlight* editor Tenley van den Berg is here now to tell us more about the dangers.

[15] Interview: Tenley van den Berg

David Ingram: Hi, Tenley. How was your weekend?

Tenley van den Berg: It was good, thanks. The weather was spectacular. And yours?

Ingram: Ah, it was all right. Hey, did you watch the game last night? Can you believe it ended in a draw?

van den Berg: I’ve got to be honest with you, David, I don’t have a clue when it comes to football. It is football you’re talking about, right?

Ingram: Yes, sorry. I shouldn’t assume everyone has the same interests as I do.

van den Berg: That’s OK. We all know small talk isn’t easy. But it is an important part of the culture of an organization, as it builds bonds of trust and support among workers. But people can feel excluded by certain topics, such as talking about sport. And they may feel put at risk by seemingly simple questions, such as “How was your weekend?”

Ingram: Small talk can be awkward, that’s true, but how could such a simple question put somebody at risk?

draw ▶ Unentschieden

clue ▶ Ahnung

bond ▶ Beziehung

topic ▶ Thema

awkward

▶ unangenehm, verfänglich

van den Berg: Some people's culture, identity or beliefs make them wary of answering certain questions or joining certain conversations. A member of the LGBT community, for example, may find it risky to answer the question "How was your weekend" honestly. They may worry about discrimination.

Ingram: So, should office small talk be avoided then?

van den Berg: No, it has many benefits for the workplace culture. Studies have shown that small talk can improve executive brain functioning, which controls focus, planning and prioritization. It can also enhance your mood and contribute to a positive group climate and sense of belonging.

Ingram: How do you know what to talk about and how to respond to a topic that makes you feel excluded?

van den Berg: Performance experts at *Reflektive.com* suggest that healthy conversations should include identifying your inner biases. That means that you should speak up if you don't like football, for example. And people should avoid using absolutes such as "obviously" and "everyone knows". Finally, if a colleague shares a view you don't agree with, seek clarification rather than confrontation.

Ingram: Thanks a lot for the tips, Tenley. And next time, I won't even mention the game.

van den Berg: No problem, David. It's been great chatting with you. Take care.

Business Spotlight 7/2020, pp. 34-35

EASY ENGLISH

Agreeing on ways of working

[16] Introduction

Erin Perry: David, we have pretty different ways of working, don't you think?

David Ingram: What exactly do you mean, Erin?

Perry: Well, you know, I'm very organized, well-prepared, punctual, always meet my deadlines...

Ingram: And you're suggesting I'm none of those things or what?

Perry: Of course not, David, I'm just joking. But, as Mike Hogan says in his latest Easy English article, teams and departments can have very different ways of working. And if this is

wary ➔ argwöhnisch

LGBT ➔ lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

executive
➔ exekutiv, ausführend

enhance sb.'s mood
➔ jmds. Stimmung aufhellen

bias ➔ Voreingenommenheit; Vorliebe

speak up ➔ sich äußern

clarification
➔ Klärung, Klarstellung

chat with sb.
➔ mit jmdm. plaudern

the case, it's important to be able to manage and discuss these differences.

Ingram: Right, so let's do some exercises on this now.

[17] Exercise: Vocabulary (I)

David Ingram: Let's practise some key vocabulary that you might need when discussing different approaches to working. I'll describe a situation. You'll then hear two alternative words or phrases. In the pause, choose the word or phrase that best matches the situation. You will then hear the correct answer and a sentence using the word or phrase with a pause for you to repeat it. Ready? We'll begin. Here's the first situation.

1. Able to change easily according to the situation. What is this?
 - a) Impressionable.
 - b) Flexible.
 - **b)** is correct. If you're flexible, you are able to change easily according to the situation. Listen and repeat.
"How can we encourage our employees to be more flexible?"
2. OK, next one. A time by which something must be done. What is this?
 - a) A deadlock.
 - b) A deadline.

- **b)** is correct. A deadline is a time by which something must be done. Listen and repeat.
"The deadline for completing the work is the end of the month."
3. Next one. To make sure you know what is happening. What is this?
 - a) To keep track of something.
 - b) To keep an eye out for something.
 - **a)** is correct. To keep track of something is to make sure you know what is happening. Listen and repeat.
"It's hard to keep track of everyone's work."
 4. Good, next one. To take action before there is a problem. What is this?
 - a) To be proactive.
 - b) To be prolific.
 - **a)** is correct. To be proactive is to take action before there is a problem. Listen and repeat.
"We need to be proactive in our approach to our clients."
 5. Next one. To be open-minded and not critical. What is this?
 - a) To be non-judgemental.
 - b) To be non-committal.

open-minded
• aufgeschlossen

- a) is correct. To be “non-judgemental” is to be open-minded and not critical. Listen and repeat.
“It’s not easy to be non-judgemental when listening to people’s problems.”
- 6. OK, last one. To make something easier to understand. What is this?
 - a) To justify something.
 - b) To clarify something.
- b) is correct. To clarify something is to make it easier to understand. Listen and repeat.
“We need to clarify the sales situation so that everyone understands.”

Ingram: How did you get on? Go back and learn any of the words or phrases that you didn’t know.

[18] Exercise: Vocabulary (II)

David Ingram: In this exercise, we’ll do some further practice with the vocabulary you need when discussing different approaches to working. Imagine you’re talking to a colleague from another team. The colleague will ask you a question. I’ll then tell you which term to use in your answer. You speak in the pause. Then you will hear a model answer. Don’t worry if your answer isn’t exactly the same as the model. The important thing is just that you use the term correctly. OK? Good. Let’s start.

1. How do you know what is happening in your team?
 - Use “**keep track**” in your answer.
 - I try to keep track of everything.
2. When should the work be completed?
 - Use “**deadline**” in your answer.
 - The deadline is the end of the month.
3. Can you help me understand what’s happening here?
 - Use “**clarify**” in your answer.
 - Let me clarify the situation for you.
4. What’s your approach to dealing with other departments?
 - Use “**flexible**” in your answer.
 - We need to be flexible in our approach.
5. What is your approach to giving negative feedback?
 - Use “**non-judgemental**” in your answer.
 - I try to be non-judgemental in my feedback.

clarify sth.

➤ etw. klarstellen

keep track of sth.

➤ den Überblick über etw. behalten

deadline ➤ Frist

clarify sth. ➤ etw. klarstellen

approach

➤ Herangehensweise

non-judgemental

➤ unvoreingenommen, wertfrei

6. What's your approach for dealing with potential customer concerns?
- Use “**proactive**” in your answer.
 - ▶ We take a proactive approach to potential concerns.

Ingram: How was that? You could try that exercise several times with different responses until you feel comfortable using the vocabulary. It's important for different teams to be able to talk about differences in working styles and to find ways of working successfully together. The words you have just practised will help in that process.

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SKILL UP!

The language of remote working

[19] Introduction

David Ingram: Let's “skill up” now on our language, with some terms relating to remote working.

Erin Perry: Remote working? I think a lot of people have had enough of that, haven't they? I mean, being stuck at home all the time instead of going to work.

Ingram: Possibly, but I suspect the topic of remote working is going to remain a reality for many people for quite a while, at least for part of their working week. And remote working

doesn't necessarily mean working from home, but from anywhere outside the normal office environment.

Perry: True, true. So, let's get on with some exercises on the topic!

[20] Exercise: Idioms for remote working **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.

1. If the success of something depends purely on luck or coincidence, we say that it is...
 - a) hit and miss.
 - b) fit and twist.
 - ▶ **a)** is correct. If the success of something is “hit and miss”, it depends purely on luck or coincidence. OK, Next one.
2. If someone isn't allowed to leave their flat for some time, there is a danger that they will go...

coincidence ▶ Zufall

- a) go clear crazy.
 b) go stir crazy.
 • **b)** is correct. Someone who has to stay in a confined space for a longer period may “go stir crazy”. This informal US phrase means “become psychologically disturbed”. Next one.

3. If something is almost finished, it is...

- a) as soon as ready.
 b) as good as done.
 • **b)** is correct. Something that is nearly complete is “as good as done”.

OK, last one.

4. If you don't spend any more time on something than is necessary, you...

- a) keep it short and sweet.
 b) hold it small and painless.
 • **a)** is correct. If you keep something “short and sweet”, you do it in the minimum necessary time.

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

Skill Up!, no. 66, pp. 18-19

FALSE FRIENDS

[21] Exercise: Translation **M**

David Ingram: Let's continue “skilling up” on our vocabulary. Here, we'll look at some false friends relating to the area of remote working. False friends are pairs of words that sound similar in German and English. But their meanings are very different, so they can cause confusion and misunderstandings. Now, in this exercise, we'd like you to translate some German words and sentences into English, being careful to avoid the false friends. Let's begin.

Perry: Our first word refers to a room in an organization where people work at their desks. Translate this word, please.

German: Büro

English: office

Ingram: Don't say “bureau”. A “bureau” is a piece of furniture. In British English, it is a desk with drawers and a top that opens down to make a surface you can write on. In US English, it is a chest of drawers. In the US, “bureau” is also used for a public authority or agency, and “the Bureau” (with a capital “B”) is the FBI, the

confined ➔ eng, beengt

drawer ➔ Schublade

chest of drawers

➔ Kommode

public authority

➔ staatliche Behörde

Federal Bureau of Investigation. The correct translation of the German word Büro is “office”. Now translate this sentence.

German: Er arbeitet in einem

English: He works in an open-plan office.

Perry: Our next word refers to a telephone that you can carry with you. Translate this word now.

German: Handy

English: mobile phone or mobile in the UK
cellphone or cell in the US

Ingram: “Handy” is wrong here as this means “easy to use or to do”. The German word Handy is translated as “mobile phone” or more commonly “mobile” in British English, and “cellphone” or “cell” in US English. Translate this sentence now.

German: Hast Du die App auf Deinem Handy installiert?

English: Have you installed the app on your mobile phone?

Have you installed the app on your mobile?

Have you installed the app on your cellphone?

Have you installed the app on your cell?

Perry: Our last false friend is a phrase that you use when you want to say that you are not working in the company office but at home. Translate this phrase, please.

German: Homeoffice machen

English: work from home

Ingram: Be careful not to translate Homeoffice as “home office”. In the UK, the “Home Office” is the government department that deals with domestic affairs — the Innenministerium in German. In US English, “home office” usually refers to the place where a company or organization has its main administrative centre. In British English this is “headquarters” or “head office” and in German, the Firmenzentrale or Unternehmensitz. The English translation of Homeoffice machen is “work from home”. OK, now translate this sentence.

German: Ich mache seit März Homeoffice.

English: I’ve been working from home since March.

Perry: Well done. If you found these translation exercises difficult, go back and try them again.

Skill Up!, no. 66, pp. 14–15

investigation

► Untersuchung, Ermittlung

department ► Abteilung

domestic affairs

► innere Angelegenheiten

INSIGHT

Business news with Ian McMaster

[22] 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'll be discussing the topic of diversity quotas in organizations. And we'll also be asking whether the EU is having a "Hamiltonian moment".

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

[23] Business news: Diversity quotas and Europe's Hamiltonian moment 

Erin Perry: Ian, you said your first topic was diversity quotas. There's been a lot of discussion recently about whether companies with diverse workforces are more successful, right?

Ian McMaster: There certainly has. The topic of diversity in the workplace has received a lot of attention in recent years and most people would agree that more diverse workforces — whether in terms of gender, ethnicity, age or other dimensions — are desirable in order to get a broader range of views and skills. There is a debate, however, about how such diversity can best be achieved. Those in favour of quotas for certain groups of people believe that this is the

only way to guarantee real change. Those who oppose quotas believe that they can lead to organizations simply ticking boxes to show they are more diverse but not necessarily appointing the best candidates. Anyway, you can read more about this debate in the current issue of *Business Spotlight*.

Perry: You also said you'd be discussing whether the EU is having a "Hamiltonian moment". I don't suppose this has got anything to do with the hit musical, *Hamilton*, has it? Sorry, just joking.

McMaster: There's no need to apologize, Erin. This is indeed connected to the musical *Hamilton*, which has been such a success on Broadway in New York and in London's West End. A filmed version of the musical has also been available on the Disney+ platform. I watched it recently and thoroughly enjoyed it. The musical tells the story of Alexander Hamilton, one of the founding fathers of the United States of America. From 1789 to 1795, Hamilton was the first Secretary of the Treasury — the finance minister — under George Washington and is regarded as the founder of America's financial

workforce ► Belegschaft

tick a box

► ein Kästchen ankreuzen; hier: seine Pflicht erfüllen

issue ► hier: Ausgabe

thoroughly

► gründlich; hier: absolut

founding father

► Gründervater

Secretary of the Treasury US

► Finanzminister(in)

system. So, what has all this got to do with the EU and the so-called “Hamiltonian moment? Well, one of the things that Alexander Hamilton is famous for is arguing that the US constitution provided the authority for the federal government to assume liability for the debts of the individual states. So, you can probably see where this is going, as there has been a big debate in the EU about whether there should be any form of joint liability for debts incurred by the individual EU members. Traditionally, Germany has been a strong opponent of such joint liability, along with the so-called “Frugal Four”: Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden. But in July, the EU — with strong support from both France and Germany — agreed that the EU Commission could borrow up to €750 billion in the financial markets for a recovery fund to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 crisis. This money will be distributed in a combination of grants and loans to member countries in need. And this debt will be serviced via future contributions to the EU budget from member countries. As the Financial Times wrote, “for the first time, the EU will be able to run a federal deficit to respond to an economic shock”. So, this was an historic moment for the EU. On the other hand, it is just one small step and is therefore a long way from a true fiscal union or “Hamiltonian moment”. The debts of individual EU members will remain their own respon-

sibility without central liability. So maybe we should describe this as a “mini-Hamiltonian moment”. But if the EU ever does have a true US-style fiscal union, no doubt another musical will be made about the architects of such a policy. I’m looking forward to that.

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

Ian McMaster: You’re welcome.

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argue

► den Standpunkt vertreten

constitution ► Verfassung

assume sth.

► etw. übernehmen

debts ► Schulden

joint liability

► Mithaftung, gesamtschuldnerische Haftung

incur debts

► Schulden machen

frugal ► sparsam

recovery fund

► Wiederaufbaufonds

mitigate sth.

► etw. abschwächen

grant

► Zuschuss, Finanzhilfe

loan ► Darlehen

service (debt)

► (Schulden) bedienen

deficit: run a ~

► ein Defizit aufweisen; hier: Schulden machen

look forward to sth.

► sich auf etw. freuen

ENGLISH ON THE MOVE

Taking a cable car

[24] Introduction

Erin Perry: David, you know what I read the other day?

David Ingram: No, how would I know that, Erin?

Perry: Oh, don't bit be so pedantic. You know that's just a way of starting a conversation.

David Ingram: OK, sorry. Tell me, what did you read?

Perry: Well, I read that they're talking about building a number of commuter cable cars here in Munich.

David Ingram: Yeah, I read that, too. Cable cars are suddenly popping up everywhere. So, let's do some exercises about this increasingly popular form of transport.

[25] Exercise: Vocabulary

David Ingram: Cable cars can be a very efficient way of moving large numbers of people between two places. They are no longer simply used to take people up to the top of mountains but increasingly to help people commute in crowded cities. Let's look now at some useful words and phrases you might hear when talking about travelling by cable car. First, you'll hear a sentence. I'll repeat a key word from that sentence and ask you what it means. Then you'll hear two explanations, **a)** and **b)**. In the pause,

choose the explanation that best matches the word. After that, you'll hear the correct answer. This is followed by the example sentence and a pause for you to repeat it. OK? Here comes the first sentence.

1. Britain's first urban cable car opened in June 2012.

■ **Urban.** What does this mean?

a) In the suburbs.

b) In a city or town.

► **b)** is correct. "Urban" means "in a city or town". Listen and repeat.

"Britain's first urban cable car opened in June 2012."

2. OK, next sentence. London's cable car spans the River Thames.

■ **Spans.** What does this mean?

a) Goes high above something.

b) Goes from one side of something to the other.

► **b)** is correct. To "span something" means to go from one side of something to the other. Listen and repeat.

"London's cable car spans the River Thames."

3. Next sentence. The gondola is attached to a cable.

■ **Gondola.** What does this mean?

a) A hanging cabin for people to travel in.

b) A tower that holds the cable.

► a) is correct. A “gondola” is a hanging cabin for people to travel in. Listen and repeat. “The gondola is attached to a cable.”

4. OK, next sentence. You can get discounts on tickets for the cable car.

■ **Discounts.** What does this mean?

a) Free tickets for families.

b) Reductions in the normal price.

► b) is correct. “Discounts” are reductions in the usual price. Listen and repeat. “You can get discounts on tickets for the cable car.”

5. OK, last sentence. You need a valid ticket to travel.

■ **Valid.** What does this mean?

a) According to the official rules.

b) Useful and important.

► a) is correct. “Valid” means “according to the official rules”. Listen and repeat. “You need a valid ticket to travel.”

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

[26] Exercise: Dialogue M

David Ingram: In this exercise, we’ll practise talking about travelling on a cable car. First, listen to this short conversation between two friends. James is asking Becky about going on the cable car in London.

James: Where is the cable car?

Becky: It spans the River Thames near the O2 arena.

James: How long does the trip take?

Becky: The trip takes about ten minutes.

James: And how many people does each gondola hold?

Becky: Each gondola holds about fifteen people.

James: Is it expensive?

Becky: Yes, but you can get discounts on multi-journeys.

James: Can you use normal bus passes?

Becky: No. Bus passes are not valid.

Ingram: Now it’s your turn. You take the role of Becky. First, you’ll hear a question from James.

cable car ► Seilbahn

span sth.

► sich über etw. spannen

hold (a number of persons)

► (eine Anzahl von Personen) fassen

discount ► Preisnachlass

multi-journey

► hier: Mehrfahrtenkarte

pass

► hier: Fahrkarte, -ausweis

I'll then give you two or three key words for you to use in your answer. You speak in the pause. Then you'll hear Becky's answer again with a pause for you to repeat it. OK? Let's start.

James: Where is the cable car?

■ Spans. Thames. O2 arena.

Becky: It spans the River Thames near the O2 arena.

James: How long does the trip take?

■ Trip. About. Ten minutes.

Becky: The trip takes about ten minutes.

James: And how many people does each gondola hold?

■ Gondola. About. Fifteen people.

Becky: Each gondola holds about fifteen people.

James: Is it expensive?

■ Yes. Discounts. Multi-journeys.

Becky: Yes, but you can get discounts on multi-journeys.

James: Can you use normal bus passes?

■ No. Bus passes. Not valid.

Becky: No. Ordinary bus passes are not valid.

Ingram: Good, well done! And next time you go to London, why not take the cable car across

the Thames. You'll get stunning views over the whole city.

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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 something, well, big.

Erin Perry: Something big, David? Like a big business deal or a big dispute or a big scandal? What exactly are we talking about?

Ingram: Well, Erin, you'll just have to listen in and find out because, "Something big" is actually the name of the story.

Perry: OK! Then let's find out what exactly this big thing is!

[28] Something big ^A 9 a.m. today

"Apparently," said Gina, leaning forward so she was closer to Jemima as they queued to order their latte macchiato and tiger chai, "Bernie and Liz can't bear working together any more. Can you believe it?"

apparently

• allem Anschein nach

bear sth.

• etw. ertragen, aushalten

Jemima nodded, her eyes shining with excitement behind her big glasses at this piece of gossip that had been drifting around the building like the smell of a defective toilet.

“I know! I bumped into Tony from HR in the lift this morning. There’s talk of at least one of them having to leave the company. After all those prizes they won!”

“I’ve heard,” continued Gina, annoyed that Jemima had heard this juicy titbit already, “they’ve been having rows for some time now. Though you’d never know it to see them in public.”

“True,” Jemima paused for a moment as a new thought occurred to her. “I wonder if this means their office might become available now.”

“Or parking places,” said Gina. “Of course, it would be terrible for the company if they went,” she added virtuously. They were both silent for a while as the barista handed over their paper cups and they went out on to the street again.

“Do you think,” asked Jemima after a bit, “that there was anything ... you know ... going on between them? I mean, I know they’re both married, but it would explain why, after all this time working together, they suddenly can’t stand each other any more.”

“Bernie and Liz? No, I can’t imagine something like that!” lied Gina.

9.30 a.m. two weeks earlier

Liz Childer stared at the office plant that stood next to her desk, wondering for the third time this year whether it was an aloe, a yucca or a spider plant. She liked to think that she was good with plants and would say how much she loved them whenever there was an awkward pause in conversation over lunch at work. But in reality, she and plants had no rapport. She couldn’t even remember their names.

Bernie was late. Again. It was the third time this week, and it was only Wednesday. How would they get the advertising pitch ready if he couldn’t get to work on time? She looked at what they’d finished the day before, yawned and then wandered into the kitchen. She made some

piece of gossip

► Klatschnachricht

drift around (a place)

► hier: (an einem Ort) die Runde machen
(drift ► wehen)

HR (human resources)

► Personalabteilung

annoyed ► verärgert

juicy

► hier: interessant, pikant

titbit ► Leckerbissen; hier

auch: Pikanterie

row UK ifml. ► Streit

occur to sb.

► jmdn. einfallen

virtuously ► tugendhaft

stand sb.

► jmdn. ausstehen können

yucca ► Yucca, Palmilie

spider plant ► Grünstiege

awkward

► unangenehm, peinlich

rapport

► (enge) Beziehung

pitch

► (Verkaufs-)Präsentation

yawn ► gähnen

chamomile tea out of boredom and took it back to her desk, where she alternately sipped it and looked around the room she shared with Bernie. Suddenly, she got up and went to the shelf opposite her desk, which carried all the industry trophies that she and Bernie had won over the past seven years. She moved one of the blocks a centimetre to the left, then sat down again. It didn't make any difference; they were still hideous to look at. "Our little plastic tombstones..." Bernie would say with a careless laugh to any visitors who admired them. Every time. Every single time. Every single damn time.

Bernie Kravitz got out of the lift and walked down the corridor towards their office. He could feel his stomach tightening as he smelled the chamomile tea in the air. What had happened? He and Liz used to make fun of people who drank that sort of stuff, but now, he was surrounded by it every day.

"Hi, Liz," he said brightly as he took off his coat and sat down at his desk. "Sorry I'm late. You would not believe what happened..."

Please, God, don't let him talk about taking his daughter to school, Liz thought to herself, smiling at him. I can't face another story about his spoiled little princess. Please, God...

"Your Amy," she said when he'd finished, "how old is she? Six? Wow, she's as cute as a button!" She took a sip of her tea. "So, how's it going with the design of the..."

Bernie clattered the keys of his computer as loudly as possible while she asked about their latest project, and then gave the return key an extra savage thump as he entered a password. Was five minutes really too much to expect? Couldn't she just let him tell her when he was ready?

"It's going well!" he answered cheerfully. "I think we'll have a winner with this one. We'll probably get ourselves another plastic tombstone," he gave a laugh — the careless one — and Liz found herself pressing the sides of her cup much harder than necessary.

"Well, that's great," she said, then stopped, unable to think of anything else to say. On the way into the office, she'd prepared a mental list of topics they could talk about: a new series on Netflix she'd watched, her husband's experience buying a suit, an earthquake in Italy, but

chamomile tea

• Kamillentees

alternately

• abwechselnd

sip (sth.)

• Schluck; etw. schlürfen

industry trophy

• Branchenpreis, -pokal

hideous ➔ scheußlich

tombstone ➔ Grabstein

stuff ➔ Zeug

face sth. ➔ etw. gegenüberstehen; hier: ertragen

spoiled

• hier: verwöhnt, verzogen

cute: be as ~ as a button ifml.

• zuckersüß sein

clatter the keys

• hier: auf der Tastatur herumklappern

savage ➔ wild; hier: hart

thump ➔ Schlag

suddenly, they all seemed boring and lifeless. It was so strange. Both were good at talking when other people were around, and it hadn't always been like this between them. When they'd started out, they could talk for hours about nothing at all.

Silence filled the room, and they stared at their computers.

"I do love this ... yucca," she said finally in desperation. "Would you like me to get you one?"

Bernie looked up, and their eyes locked.

"It's an aloe," he said quietly. "For the third time this year, Liz. It's an aloe."

9.45 a.m. today

"Well," said Jemima, "if it wasn't an affair that went wrong, I really can't imagine what happened."

"Me neither," said Gina. "But whatever it was, it must have been something big."

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[29] CONCLUSION

David Ingram: Well, we've come to the end of *Business Spotlight Audio 7/2020*. 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.

locked: their eyes -

► ihre Blicke trafen sich

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