

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! E**

David Ingram: Welcome to *Business Spotlight Audio* 9/2021. 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 have lots of exercises to help you to improve your language and communication skills.

Ingram: We'll hear from Bob Dignen about how to deal with difficult people at work. We'll provide you with tips and useful phrases for saying no to your boss. And we'll practise the language of politics. As always, you can find all the texts, dialogues and exercises in your audio booklet. OK, let's get started!

TRENDS**NAMES AND NEWS****[2] Introduction (I) E**

Erin Perry: We'll begin with our Names and News section and a story from Belgium about holy beer.

David Ingram: Holy beer, Erin! Hmm, do I like the sound of this!

Perry: I thought you might, David. The beer in question is brewed by Carlsberg in an abbey and has been blessed by the priests living there. Let's listen and find out more.

Ingram: Fine with me — cheers!

[3] Blessing the brewery E

After more than 200 years, beer is again being made in Grimbergen Abbey in Belgium.

Carlsberg, one of the world's largest beer makers, has spent millions of euros to reopen the ancient brewery. The Danish company wants to compete with the smaller breweries that customers are turning to. "It's very important for our growth, now and in the future," CEO Cees 't Hart said at the brewery's opening celebration in May 2021.

The brewery will first make three kinds of beers inspired by the recipes found in the abbey library. For example, one beer will use the kind of smoked malt used hundreds of years ago.

The priests living in the abbey have blessed the brewery. The money they receive from Carlsberg will pay for the priests' charitable work. They also make the final decision on the beers. Carlsberg brewer Marc-Antoine Sochon proudly told *The Wall Street Journal*: "We have a full panel of tasters right here."

Business Spotlight 9/2021, p. 7

abbey

- ▶ Abtei

ancient

- ▶ (ur)alt, historisch

bless sth. ▶ etw. segnen;
hier auch: (lob)preisen

brewery

- ▶ Brauerei

CEO (chief executive officer)

- ▶ Geschäftsführer(in)

charitable

- ▶ karitativ

compete with sb./sth.

- ▶ mit jmdm./etw. konkurrieren

panel

- ▶ Gremium

recipe

- ▶ Rezept(ur)

smoked malt

- ▶ Rauchmalz

[4] Introduction (II) E

David Ingram: Our next story is about a Nigerian financial expert who is also a queen in her country. Having lived in the UK for 20 years, Barbara Etim James is using her experience and expertise to help her people. As you listen to our story, answer this question: which project has Barbara Etim James started to help people in Nigeria? Ready? Listen now.

[5] A head for economics M

Barbara Etim James, 54, is the head of a private equity company — and a kingdom. In 2019, the Nigerian became queen of Henshaw Town, Nigeria. She is using the experiences she gained from 20 years of living in the UK and from working at Henshaw Capital Partners to create an economic plan for her people.

James wants to use her position to help those in her community to “think economically”. “It’s all social and consuming but not economic,” she told the BBC. “Celebrations, ceremonies,

events... But what can you do together? Can you own a farm? Can you own an enterprise?”

The queen has started a project that provides people with small loans. She also organizes financial training. Being queen “is a responsibility, so you really need someone with the capacity to help people,” said James. “It’s expensive.” The money for these projects comes out of her own pocket or from money raised privately.

enterprise

- ▶ Unternehmen

private equity company

- ▶ private Beteiligungsgesellschaft

raise money

- ▶ Geld beschaffen

small loan

- ▶ Klein-, Mikrokredit

[6] Answer: Listening comprehension E

Ingram: OK? Did you get the answer to our question? Which project has Barbara Etim James started to help people in Nigeria?

- ▶ The answer is that she’s started a project that provides people with small loans. Listen again.

“The queen has started a project that provides people with small loans.”

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

Business Spotlight 9/2021, p. 7

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Should there be a global minimum corporate tax rate?

[7] Introduction **E**

Erin Perry: Welcome now to our debate section, in which *Business Spotlight* editor-in-chief Ian McMaster looks at the two sides of a current controversy. The subject of our Head-to-Head debate in the latest issue of *Business Spotlight* is whether there should be a global minimum corporate tax rate.

David Ingram: Yes, a very current and controversial topic. Let's hear more from Ian about this.

[8] Interview: Ian McMaster **A**

Ian McMaster: Should there be a global minimum rate of corporation tax — that is, the tax on company profits? This is a question that has been discussed very intensively recently. A proposal for such a minimum rate was put forward by both the OECD and US president Joe Biden. A 15 per cent minimum rate was then agreed by both the G7 and G20 groups and is supported by some 130 countries, with the aim of introducing the minimum rate in 2023. But there are still countries that are against the proposal, including, in the EU, Estonia, Hungary and Ireland.

The argument in favour of such a minimum tax rate is that it will help to create a more level playing field between countries — in other words, fairer competition — as they try to attract international corporations. Also, it is estimated that a 15 per cent minimum rate would raise some \$150 billion — or more than €125 billion — in additional tax revenues each year. This is money that many governments urgently need, particularly in light of their increased debts following the coronavirus crisis.

Opponents of such a global minimum rate argue there will be negative economic effects on hiring and investing as a result of the higher taxation of corporate profits. They also say that not all countries are likely to enforce the global minimum with the same degree of rigour. It's also worth noting that many countries already have higher corporation tax rates than the proposed 15 per cent minimum and so wouldn't be immediately affected by the proposed change.

It's another tricky issue to decide, but I have a clear view on this. Yes, there should be a global minimum rate of corporation tax. But the global minimum rate also needs to be strictly enforced by all countries so that there is indeed a more level playing field. That's my view. But what do you think?

Business Spotlight 9/2021, pp. 16-17

affect sth.

- ▶ etw. beeinflussen

argue

- ▶ argumentieren, behaupten

corporate ▶ Unternehmens-

corporation tax

- ▶ Körperschaftsteuer

debts ▶ Schulden, Verschuldung

enforce sth.

- ▶ etw. vollziehen, durchsetzen

Estonia ▶ Estland

level playing field: create a ~

- ▶ einheitliche Voraussetzungen schaffen

put sth. forward

- ▶ etw. vorbringen

revenue

- ▶ Einnahme

rigour ▶ Strenge

tricky ▶ schwierig, knifflig

COMMUNICATION

BUSINESS SKILLS

Saying no

[9] Introduction (I) **E**

David Ingram: OK, now it's time for our Business Skills section, in which we look a key aspect of communication at work. This time, our topic is saying no to your boss, the subject of Deborah Capras's article in the latest issue of *Business Spotlight*.

Erin Perry: Oh, this should come in really handy, David. I've actually wanted to say no to all the various things you've asked me to do recently.

Ingram: Really? So, what, you're admitting now that I'm your boss, are you?

Perry: That is not what I meant, David, and you know it...

Ingram: You said it. You did. Anyway, in her article, Deborah Capras provides seven key tips

on how you can say no to your boss when asked to take on extra tasks. Let's listen to these tips now. They're read by Melita Cameron-Wood.

[10] That's a "no"! **M**

Consider what's at stake before you say no to your boss. While it's rarely a good strategy to say no to a reasonable request — or to one that could be good for your career — it's also never a good idea to say yes if you're already overworked. But saying no to your manager requires a high level of confidence if you want to pull it off well. Why is that?

Most of us have what psychologists call a harshness bias. This is when we believe that people will think badly of us if we don't respond positively to a request. In reality, however, people tend to respect a no if it's clearly justified.

To avoid taking on the wrong kind of work, or more work than you can realistically manage, it's important to get the timing, the tone and the reasoning of your no right. Here, we provide you with useful language and techniques to help you get it right.

1. Taking your time

You're unlikely to make a good impression if you say no too quickly. First of all, thank your boss for trusting you with a task or project. The more time-consuming and complex the request, the more "thankful" you might try to appear.

2. Learning the facts

If you already have a full workload, any additional task may feel unreasonable. But before you say no (or yes for that matter), make sure you have all the facts in front of you. Indicate that you are seriously considering the request by asking relevant questions — the kind that will help you decide whether you should take on the extra work or not. Ask about timelines, deadlines and responsibilities, so you know exactly what to expect.

3. Voicing your concerns

If the answers to your questions confirm that you don't have the time, skills or expertise to perform the task well, now is your chance to voice your concerns. Ideally, you should provide evidence that backs up your concerns in a way that shows you have a professional attitude to your work. You could use common idioms at first to show you are busy ("I have too much on my plate"), but you will also need to provide details of your workload.

4. Being firm

You don't want to be pigeonholed as someone who is not willing to support the team, but you also don't want to be seen as a pushover. So, if a request is completely outside your normal remit, be firm when you turn it down. If you feel uncomfortable saying no in a direct way, or prefer to keep the tone light, you can soften your response with "I'm afraid...", as in "I'm afraid

I can't free up any time for this". However, it's not a good idea to dither too long or start your replies with "I don't think...". This makes you seem less determined. Your boss might then sense your hesitation and decide to play hardball with you.

5. Talking about your workload

Your manager may genuinely not realize how heavy your workload is. To help you stand your ground, get into the habit of allocating specific times in your calendar for work and personal commitments, and not just for meetings. That way, a quick glance at your schedule should tell you whether or not you have time for a new task. Moreover, this technique will help you to quickly list anything that can justify your no and help you stick to it.

6. Asking for support

If the request still isn't going away, ask your boss for their views on how to deal with your full workload. Discuss whether there is anything you can delay or give to someone else. And if you feel you don't have the necessary skills to complete the task, ask if you can work on it with someone who does.

7. Accepting yes

If you have presented your arguments well, you should be able to win over your boss. However, sometimes, you will just have to accept that you have to say yes. In this situation, make sure that you confirm what the priorities are and

what you can give up or delay. Then try to focus on the advantage of having a boss who trusts you with more responsibilities.

allocate sth.

► etw. zuteilen, einplanen

back sth. up

► etw. untermauern, stützen

commitment

► Engagement, Verpflichtung

confirm sth.

► etw. bestätigen

deadline

► Frist

dither

► zaudern

evidence

► Beleg(e)

expertise

► Sachkompetenz

firm

► standhaft

for that matter

► (übrigens) auch

genuinely

► wirklich

glance

► Blick

harshness bias

► hier: falsche Erwartungshaltung bezüglich negativer Reaktionen

(bias ► Voreingenommenheit;

harshness ► Härte)

hesitation

► Zögern, Zögerlichkeit

indicate sth.

► etw. erkennen lassen

light ► hier: freundlich

pigeonholed: be ~

► abgestempelt / in eine

Schublade gesteckt werden

plate: have a lot on one's ~ UK

► viel um die Ohren haben

play hardball with sb. ifml.

► etwa: es darauf ankommen lassen

pull sth. off ifml.

► etw. durchziehen

pushover ifml.

► Person, die sich leicht

herumkriegen lässt

remit UK

► Aufgabenbereich

schedule

► Zeit-, Terminplan

stake: be at ~

► auf dem Spiel stehen

stand one's ground

► sich behaupten

take sth. on

► etw. übernehmen

timeline ► Zeitrahmen

turn sth. down

► etw. ablehnen

voice sth.

► etw. zum Ausdruck bringen

workload

► Arbeitspensum

[11] Essential phrases for saying no **M**

David Ingram: Let's now practise some phrases that are useful when saying no to your boss. I'll tell you what to say and give you some of the words you'll need. In the pause, form the necessary phrase. Afterwards, you'll hear the correct version. Don't worry if your phrase is slightly different from ours. Then repeat the correct version. Ready? Here's the first one.

- You want to learn some facts about a task that you've been asked to take on.
 - Use "what", "my role" and "my responsibilities".
 - What would be my role and my responsibilities?
- You want to say that you already have a lot of work to do.
 - Use "sorry" and "snowed under".
 - I'm sorry, but I'm snowed under.
- You want to say that you have already made arrangements to work on another project next week.
 - Use "my hours", "next week", "allocated" and "another project".
 - My hours for next week have already been allocated for another project.

4. You want to ask if someone can help you.
- Use “is there”, “support” and “on this project”.
 - Is there someone who could support me on this project?
5. You want to confirm that you can move your current project to a later date.
- Use “as this”, “more urgent”, “agree”, “postpone” and “current project”.
 - As this is more urgent, we agree to postpone my current project.

Ingram: Excellent. Well done! Go back and do that exercise again if you found it difficult.

[12] Essential words for saying no **M**

David Ingram: In this exercise, you'll first hear a dialogue between Elaine and Nick. Then, we'll do an exercise in which we'll test you on some of the words used. OK, first listen very carefully.

Elaine: I realize you have a lot on your plate at the moment, Nick, but we could really do with your expertise on the Hartmann project.

Nick: Well, thanks for thinking of me. You know I love a challenge, but I'm afraid I already have a pretty full workload. What sort of time-line are we talking about?

Elaine: The deadline isn't until next month, so there's plenty of time.

Nick: I see. It's just that the other projects I'm working on at the moment have really tight schedules. I'm sorry, but I just don't think it's going to be feasible.

Elaine: OK, I understand. Don't worry about it. I wouldn't want you to take on more work than you can handle.

Ingram: OK, now we'll give you two alternative words, and then you'll hear one of the sentences from the dialogue again — this time, with a beep where one of the words belongs. In the pause, choose the right word to complete the sentence. Then, you'll hear the full sentence again. Repeat the sentence trying to copy the speaker's pronunciation and intonation. Ready?

- Here's the first pair of words to choose from: “table” OR “plate”

Elaine: I realize you have a lot on your [beep] at the moment, Nick.

- I realize you have a lot on your plate at the moment, Nick.

- And here's the next pair of words: “expertise” OR “experiment”

Elaine: But we could really do with your [beep].

- But we could really do with your expertise.

- And the next pair of words: “employment” OR “workload”

Nick: But I'm afraid I already have a pretty full [beep].

• But I'm afraid I already have a pretty full workload.

■ And another pair of words to choose from: "headline" OR "deadline"

Elaine: The [beep] isn't until next month.

• The deadline isn't until next month.

■ And the last pair of words: "calendars" OR "schedules"

Nick: other projects I'm working on at the moment have really tight [beep].

• The other projects I'm working on at the moment have really tight schedules.

Ingram: Well done. Did you get all the words right? If not, go back and listen to the dialogue again and then repeat the exercise.

Business Spotlight 9/2021, pp. 20-23

deadline ▶ Frist

expertise ▶ Sachkompetenz

feasible ▶ machbar

plate: have a lot on one's ~ UK

• viel um die Ohren haben

tight schedule

• enger Terminplan

timeline ▶ Zeitrahmen

workload ▶ Arbeitspensum

CAREERS

CAREER COACH Being kind

[13] Introduction **E**

David Ingram: OK, let's move on now to our Careers section and our career coach, Bo Graesborg. In his latest column, Bo looks at how being kind may actually be good for your career. The column is read by the author himself.

[14] Column: Bo Graesborg **M**

Why aren't there more nice people at the top of organizations? One obvious reason is simply that squaring kindness with ambition is tricky. Both characteristics are important, and they can, of course, coexist. But most of us tend to emphasize one characteristic at the expense of the other.

Those of us who are skewed towards ambition move up — because we want it more. And those of us who put more value on kindness get stuck because we struggle with the dilemma of how to stay kind and still have a great career.

If you are kind and ambitious, you do not have to choose. You can leverage your kindness — in other words, make it work for you. Being strong on kindness means you are strong with people. And the thing about robust relationships is that they can withstand a bit of strain.

Many kind people shy away from any action that could be construed as an attempt to exploit their relationships. They don't ask for help or request support. They are so keen on giving to others that they lose sight of the fact that taking can also be OK.

If you really are kind and good with people, you will find that those people respond positively when you ask them to do something for you. This might be giving you advice on how to deal with the notoriously difficult head of marketing or on how best to place your message with the management board. Or it might mean setting up a meeting for you with someone from their network.

Like most things in life, kindness is a habit that gets easier with practice. So, before you jump into leveraging your kindness, you could start by simply (but consistently) showing it. In other words, forget about what kindness can do for you and just focus on the kind acts themselves.

For example, why not say hello to a stranger? If you see a job well done, say so. And when someone is down, help them get up. Karma and the universe will make sure you are rewarded in the end. As Lennon and McCartney put it so poetically in their song "The End": "And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make."

Business Spotlight 9/2021, p. 35

consistently ➤ immer wieder

construe sth.

➤ etw. auffassen, verstehen

emphasize sth.

➤ etw. betonen, hervorheben

equal: be ~ to sth.

➤ gleich viel wie etw. sein, etw. entsprechen

expense: at the ~ of sth.

➤ auf Kosten von etw. (anderem)

keen: be - on doing sth. UK

➤ mit Eifer dabei sein, etw. zu tun

leverage sth. ➤ etw. einsetzen

management board

➤ Vorstand

notoriously ➤ notorisch

shy away from sth.

➤ vor etw. zurückscheuen

skewed: be - towards sth.

➤ hier: zu etw. neigen (skewed ➤ schief, verzerrt)

square sth. with sth.

➤ etw. mit etw. in Einklang bringen

strain ➤ Belastung

tricky ➤ schwierig, knifflig

withstand sth.

➤ etw. standhalten, aushalten

LEADERSHIP

Dealing with difficult people

[15] Introduction **E**

Erin Perry: The second item in our Careers section looks at the topic of leadership. In the current issue of *Business Spotlight*, Bob Dignen explains how leaders can deal with difficult people in their teams. Here's Bob now to tell us more.

[16] Interview: Bob Dignen **A**

Erin Perry: Welcome, Bob. Tell us, what do people normally mean when they say that a colleague or boss or employee is "difficult"?

Bob Dignen: OK, well, to answer that, let me put on my coach hat because that's where I spend a lot of time listening to people who tell

me about other people who are difficult. And I have to say, when you hear that description of others as difficult, it's really not clear. You have to keep an open mind. You know, the coachee may be telling me genuinely about people who are in some way difficult to handle. Difficult for different reasons: they're rude, they're offensive. Or maybe they're nice people but they just don't deliver on time. They talk too much in meetings. They don't talk enough in meetings. All that kind of stuff. You know, I've heard a lot of different complaints from people about other people. And yes, yeah, you have to admit some people are challenging to be around.

But there's a big "but" here. When people say others are difficult, I always think that, fundamentally, they're not describing other people. Fundamentally, they're describing more about themselves: their needs, their values, which this other person is somehow ignoring and triggering a negative emotion. And then this person gets labelled as "a problem", as "difficult", when in fact — and I think this is the key thing — if the person complaining had the communication or leadership skills to handle the situation, to handle the person, if they had more tolerance not to just label another person as "difficult", then there might not be any difficulty at all.

Perry: What can we do to improve the way we work with those we see as difficult?

Dignen: Yeah, well, that's the million-dollar question. And, of course, all of this is so situational. It's very difficult to give specific answers which are going to apply in specific situations. So, if we talk about general solutions, I think two fundamental approaches stand out. Firstly, we need to start with acceptance. You know, stop labelling people as "difficult". Stop asking the other person to change to my way of doing things. You know, engage with their way. You know, learn from it. Practise what we say we believe about diversity: that it's good, that we all need to live our different selves and we all need to engage with our different selves. This is ultimately a kind of flexibility.

So, that's one thing, that as we complain about others as difficult, I think it signals we've stopped being flexible. Alternatively, you just have a conversation about your rules of engagement. How shall we do things together? What is good behaviour for us? How do we do meetings? How do we write emails? How good is the quality we deliver? Build a common culture. So, for me, you know, don't complain about other people, don't label them as "difficult". Either look at yourself and try to grow your level of acceptance or talk to the other person and co-create a reality which you could both live together. Those are the first two areas I explore with clients.

Perry: Are there situations in which we need to take a stricter approach with difficult people?

Dignen: I mean, absolutely. I think there are many situations where it is actually totally justified to become intolerant and to insist on certain forms of non-negotiable behaviour. For example, if it's health and safety related: you know, zero tolerance. You cannot allow people to risk the health and safety of others. So, you see this a lot in construction and in the energy sector. Legal and financial compliance rules also demand total followership.

Non-disclosure agreements will put directors in jail if they reveal sensitive market information. And even less serious behaviour, the ones we might see in our own teams: constantly submitting work below standard, constantly being slow to collaborate, undermining colleagues with gossip. I think it's extremely important from a leadership perspective to deal very firmly with these behaviours early and openly as an overt non-acceptance of that behaviour. Because if you tolerate it, you're basically on the route to toxic team.

Perry: Finally, a personal question: what sort of people do you find it most difficult to work with?

Dignen: It's always interesting when you apply this to yourself. And to be honest, thinking about it, it's not static. It's changed over time,

which probably means that I've changed over time, too. Because in my younger days, I think I was very sensitive to individuals who are very task oriented, very demanding of themselves, very critical of others. They were kind of scary people to work with, very scary if they were customers and you had to please them. So, over time, however, I actually got to really like this kind of demanding person. In the end, I saw that they didn't want to be critical of me. They just wanted to improve themselves and their situation. And actually, this kind of focused person is relatively easy to work with.

The people who are toughest now, I think, are the, what I would call highly independent and the highly unfocused people. People who don't quite have a clear vision of what they want to achieve. And people who don't quite know how to get to what they want to achieve. But who don't respond well to structure or efforts to bring clarity because they feel they can do it themselves.

So, you know, this is a tough nut to crack: they're fuzzy, they're independent but they don't take advice well because they like to be fuzzy and they want to be independent. So, you know, collaborating with this kind of individual, I still struggle because I believe a lot in collaboration, I believe a lot in clarifying what we should do together. This is almost now a value for me, having worked with it for so many years.

So, individuals who don't buy into that, yep, I still struggle with them.

Perry: Thanks very much, Bob. We look forward to talking to you again next time.

Dignen: Thank you very much.

Business Spotlight 9/2021, pp. 36–39

buy into sth.

► etw. akzeptieren

clarity ► Klarheit

coachee

► Teilnehmer(in) einer Coaching-Sitzung

engage with sth.

► sich auf etw. einlassen

fuzzy ► schwammig;

hier: nicht leicht einzuordnen

genuinely

► echt, aufrichtig

gossip ► Klatsch, Gerede

grow sth.

► hier: etw. entwickeln

keep an open mind

► aufgeschlossen/vorurteilslos sein

labelled: be ~ as sth.

► als etw. abgestempelt werden

look forward to sth.

► sich auf etw. freuen

million-dollar question:

the ~ if/kl. ► die alles entscheidende Frage

non-disclosure agreement

► Geheimhaltungsvereinbarung

offensive

► beleidigend, kränkend

overt

► offenkundig

rude ► unhöflich

scary if/kl.

► unheimlich

sensitive

► sensibel; hier: vertraulich

sensitive: be ~ to sb.

► hier: empfindlich auf jmdn. reagieren

stand out

► auffallen, hervorstechen

submit sth.

► etw. abgeben

trigger sth.

► etw. auslösen

ultimately

► letztendlich

undermine sb.

► jmdn. schwächen

LANGUAGE

SKILL UP!

Talking about politics

[17] Exercise: Idioms (I) M

Erin Perry: OK, let's "skill up" on our language now with some idioms relating to politics. First, listen to a dialogue between Jo and Paul. The language they use is simple.

Paul: It's pointless ignoring the negative side of things. We have to do the opposite of what we originally planned.

Jo: I thought you wanted to protest against their policies.

Paul: I do, but we also need to accept reality.

Jo: And if you keep changing your opinion on this, they're going to win this with a huge majority.

Perry: Now, you'll hear the same dialogue again, but this time, Jo and Paul use more idiomatic language. Listen out for the idioms.

Paul: It's no use burying our heads in the sand. We have to do a U-turn.

Jo: I thought you wanted to take a stand against their policies.

Paul: I do, but we also need to face facts.

Jo: And if you keep flip-flopping on this, they're going to win by a landslide.

Perry: Now, it's your turn to form the idioms you've just heard. You'll hear a description of a situation and the beginning of an idiom with two suggestions, **a)** and **b)**, for the appropriate idiom. In the pause, choose the correct option. OK? Here's the first one.

1. If you ignore the negative side of things, you bury your head...
 - a) in the sand.
 - b) under a blanket.
 - **a)** is right. If you "bury your head in the sand", you refuse to admit that there are problems. Next one.
2. Someone who makes a complete change in their plans, ...
 - a) turns round.
 - b) does a U-turn.
 - **b)** is right. Someone who does the opposite of what they originally planned "does a U-turn". OK, next one.
3. If you make known your opposition to something, you...
 - a) stand away from it.
 - b) take a stand against it.
 - **b)** is right. If you "take a stand against something", you protest against it. Next one.

4. If you accept reality, you...
 - a) face facts.
 - b) watch the facts.
 - **a)** is right. If you accept the reality of a situation, you "face facts". And the next one.
5. Someone who changes their opinion about something all the time, ...
 - a) flip-flops on it.
 - b) hip-hops around it.
 - **a)** is right. If you "flip-flop on something", you change your opinion on it again and again. OK, and the last one.
6. If someone wins with a huge majority, for example in an election, they win...
 - a) by land's end.
 - b) by a landslide.
 - **b)** is right. If someone wins by a lot more votes than their opponents, they "win by a landslide".

Perry: Well done. Did you get all those idioms right? If not, go back and try the exercise again.

blanket ➤ Decke

pointless ➤ sinn-, zwecklos

[18] Exercise: Idioms (II) **M**

Erin Perry: In this exercise, you can practise those idioms again. You'll hear the sentences that Jo and Paul said using an idiom. In the

pause, rephrase what they said in simpler words. Then, you'll hear the simpler version again for you to repeat. Don't worry if your simpler sentence is slightly different to ours. OK, here's the first one.

Paul: It's no use burying our heads in the sand.

- It's pointless ignoring the negative side of things.

Paul: We have to do a U-turn.

- We have to do the opposite of what we originally planned.

Jo: I thought you wanted to take a stand against their policies.

- I thought you wanted to protest against their policies.

Paul: I do, but we also need to face facts.

- I do, but we also need to accept reality.

Jo: And if you keep flip-flopping on this,...

- And if you keep changing your opinion on this,...

Jo: ...they're going to win by a landslide.

- ...they're going to win this with a huge majority.

Perry: Well done. If you found it difficult to convert those idioms into simpler language, listen to the dialogues once more and then do the exercise again.

pointless ▶ sinn-, zwecklos

[19] Exercise: False friends **M**

David Ingram: Let's continue "skilling up" on our vocabulary by looking at a false friend. 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 misunderstanding. In this exercise, we'd like you to translate a German word and sentence into English, being careful to avoid the false friend. Let's begin.

Ingram: Our word refers to the box into which voters put their votes at an election. Translate this word, please.

German: Urne

English: ballot box

Ingram: Don't say "urn", which is also translated as Urne in German. An urn is a container that holds the ashes of a dead person — Graburne in German. The German word Urne meaning Wahlurne is "ballot box" in English. Please translate this sentence now.

German: Die Urnen wurden ordnungsgemäß versiegelt.

English: The ballot boxes were sealed properly.

Ingram: Well done.

[20] Exercise: Don't confuse M

David Ingram: In this exercise, we'll practise the use of the false friend in the previous track. First, you'll hear a sentence with a beep. In the pause, decide whether you need "ballot box" or "urn" instead of the beep. Then, you'll hear the correct sentence again. Ready?

1. They kept her [beep] at home until the funeral.
 ➤ They kept her urn at home until the funeral.

OK. Next sentence.

2. The general election started three hours later as the [beep] hadn't arrived on time.
 ➤ The general election started three hours later as the ballot boxes hadn't arrived on time.

OK, there are two beeps in our third and final sentence. So, listen carefully.

3. The late party leader's [beep] was shaped like a [beep].
 ➤ The late party leader's urn was shaped like a ballot box.

Ingram: Did you choose the right words to complete the sentences? If not, go back and try this exercise again.

[21] Dialogue and exercise: Collocations M

Erin Perry or our final Skill Up! exercise, we'll look at some collocations. These are words that frequently go together to form word partnerships. Listen carefully to the following dialogue between Deb and John. They are talking about Alex, who is planning to enter politics. We'll then do an exercise on it.

Deb: Alex is the political heavyweight right now. He's sure to reshape politics if he's elected. He's got grassroots politics to thank for his success.

John: And yet I've heard someone is about to drop a political bombshell about him. I think he's on the brink of losing his political clout.

Deb: Oh, that's bound to be little more than your average office politics. It won't change anything.

Perry: OK, in this exercise, you'll hear the beginning of a sentence describing a situation. In the pause, complete the sentence using a collocation with the terms "politics" or "political" from the dialogue you just heard. Then, you'll hear the correct answer. OK, here's the first sentence.

1. If you change the structure of politics, you...
 ➤ **reshape politics.** If you change the structure of politics, you reshape politics.

OK, next one.

2. If someone has a lot of influence in politics, they have...

- **political clout.** If someone has a lot of influence in politics, they have political clout.

Next one.

3. An unexpected and unpleasant political event is a...

- **political bombshell.** An unexpected and unpleasant political event is a political bombshell.

OK, next one.

4. Politics that involves the people is...

- **grassroots politics.** Politics that involves the people is grassroots politics.

OK, last one.

5. The way that power is exercised among colleagues in the workplace is called...

- **office politics.** The way that power is exercised among colleagues in the workplace is called office politics.

Perry: Well done. If you didn't get all those collocations right, listen to the dialogue again and then try the exercise once more.

Business Spotlight 9/2021, pp. 42-43

TALKING FINANCE Forecasting

[22] Introduction **E**

Erin Perry: Welcome now to our Talking Finance section, in which *Business Spotlight* editor-

in-chief Ian McMaster talks about a topical financial subject.

David Ingram: Yes, this time, Ian looks at the topic of forecasting.

Perry: Oh, you mean like predicting who's going to win sports events, such as this summer's soccer tournament?

Ingram: Well, not so much sports predictions, Erin, as economic and political forecasting. And I wouldn't mention the football to Ian if I were you — he's English, like me, remember?

Perry: Ouch, OK. I won't say a word. But let's hear now what Ian has to say about forecasting.

[23] Interview: Ian McMaster **A**

Ian McMaster: Well, let's start with football — or “soccer”, as the Americans say — why not? Before the recent Euro 2020 tournament, which took place a year late, of course, I made a prediction. And this was that England would win the tournament.

Most of my friends laughed at me. They thought I was just saying that because I'm English. As it turned out, my prediction was indeed false: England lost on penalties in the final to Italy. So, my prediction very nearly came true, but it didn't.

Now, imagine if I had said to my friends before the tournament: “My prediction is that England will win the tournament, but there is a

margin of error on this prediction.” They would rightly have laughed at me even more.

When we make predictions for specific events, such as who will win a sports tournament, we don’t normally talk in terms of margins of error. I mean, what would that look like in practice? Would it be a geographical margin of error? “I’m predicting that England will win, but it might be Wales, Scotland or France, the three countries geographically nearest to England.” Absurd, right? And, as it happens, all those predictions would have been wrong, too, even though France were the pre-tournament favourites.

If I were predicting a specific score in a game, talking in terms of margins of error might make a little more sense. For example: “I’m predicting that England will win their next game 2-0, but it might be 1-0 or 3-0.” It still sounds pretty weird, though.

On the other hand, when we come to economic forecasting — and note that here, we tend to use the terms “forecasts” or “projections” rather than “predictions” — margins of error make a lot more sense. So, when forecasting rates of economic growth, or inflation rates, for example, economists often provide a central forecast — say, two per cent — and a range within which the growth rate might lie: say, between one and a half and two and a half per cent. Even more sophisticated is to provide a whole range of

forecasts, with different probabilities attached to each one.

Typically, however, both the media and the wider population tend to focus purely on the central forecasts — in the same way that, in politics, they focus on the central numbers from opinion polls, forgetting two things. Firstly, that there is always a margin of error on such numbers and, secondly, that opinion polls are not actually forecasts or predictions, but simply a snapshot of opinions on a particular date.

But let’s finish off by coming back to football. Why did I make my prediction that England would win Euro 2020? It wasn’t simply wishful thinking because I’m English, although that no doubt played a role. There were a number of objective factors at play here. England had finished fourth and third in their last two tournaments. They had an excellent record in their recent games. And they were a host country and due to play most of their games at Wembley.

As we know, however, my prediction was ultimately wrong. And I should confess to one thing: I always predict that England will win. Maybe one day, I’ll be right. Maybe.

Business Spotlight 9/2021, p. 44

forecasting

• Prognostizierung, Vorhersage

host • Gastgeber(in)

margin of error

• Fehlerspanne

opinion poll

• Meinungsumfrage

penalty • hier: Elfmeter

prediction

• Vorhersage, Prognose

projection

- Vorausschau, Prognose

score ➤ Punktzahl;

hier: Toreergebnis

snapshot

- Momentaufnahme

sophisticated

- komplex, (hoch)kompliziert

tournament ➤ Turnier

turn out

- sich herausstellen

ultimately

- letztendlich

weird *ifml.* ➤ seltsam

wishful thinking

- Wunschdenken

SHORT STORY**[24] Introduction E**

David Ingram: Staying on the topic of numbers, it's time now for our latest short story by James Schofield. This time, it's about the kind of conclusions that one can draw from different number combinations. The title of the story is "Lucky number".

Erin Perry: OK, sounds intriguing. Let's listen in.

[25] Lucky number M

"Tell me," said Jerome Jones, CEO of Topfoods plc, to Nick Samuel, head of human resources. "Is your wife a psycho?"

Nick took a moment to consider what his boss meant. Was JJ really asking whether his wife, Claire, was a psychopath, or did he mean something else? JJ's language was sometimes confused as well as confusing.

"I don't think so," Nick said finally. "At least she wasn't when I left home this morning."

"Right. It's just that we had a long chat at the company family day last weekend, and she

spotted something I've never noticed before. So, I wondered if she had psycho powers."

Nick understood. "Ah, I think you mean psychic powers, JJ. What did she spot?"

"Well, I told her how funny it was that my birthday was on the 23rd of June and that the company headquarters is at 23 Alderbury Road."

Nick waited for JJ to continue. "Yes?" he said after a while.

"It's the number 23, isn't it? There are strange things about the number 23. For example: President Kennedy was assassinated on the 22nd of November 1963. If you add 2+2+1+9+6+3, it comes to 23!"

"Yes, but..."

"Did you know your blood takes 23 seconds to travel around your body?"

Nick was alarmed. When JJ got a bee in his bonnet, there was often trouble for everybody. "No, I didn't, JJ. But... what's the time? Don't you have a meeting?"

JJ looked at his watch and gasped. "See? It's 10.23 exactly! I need to..." Nick hurried away before his boss could continue.

That evening, Nick and Claire almost had a row.

"Don't blame me!" she said. "You left me with him while you took the children off for an ice cream. You know how difficult I find it to talk to him."

“But why did you fill his head with this esoteric nonsense about the number 23?”

“Well, I was bored. He started talking about stuff like employee empowerment and millennial leadership. I just changed the subject to something I’d seen on YouTube because he mentioned his birthday being on the 23rd. He’s not taking it seriously, is he?”

“I don’t know,” said Nick. “We’ll have to see.”

For the next few days, JJ was quieter than normal. Nick thought everything was going to be all right, until JJ sent an email to everybody in the company, inviting them to a presentation that would “...blow your mind in 23 different ways”. It was scheduled for the 23rd of July.

“What am I going to do?” Nick said to Claire crossly when he got home. “If he starts talking about the magical powers of 23, everyone will think he’s bonkers. This is all your fault!”

“Don’t talk to me like that,” answered Claire. “I might be able to help you, but if that’s your attitude, you can go whistle. I’m off for a bath.”

After a long bath and several apologies from Nick, Claire graciously shared her idea with her husband. It was a little unusual, but as nothing else presented itself, Nick had to try it.

“JJ,” Nick asked at their next meeting, “would you like to do a dry run of your big presentation? To practise?”

JJ was enthusiastic.

20

“Only, I have to bring my children with me into the office,” Nick continued. “Claire’s away. Is that okay?”

“Not a problem, Nick,” answered JJ. “Your kids will be fascinated.”

They all met in the boardroom early next morning. Nick’s children, Thomas and Helen, were ten and nine years old, respectively, and their parents loved them dearly. This was lucky because their schoolteachers were not so enthusiastic.

“Well, Tom and Nelly,” JJ began, “today, I want to show...” Helen’s hand shot up. “Yes, Nelly?”

“Mr Jerome, could you use our proper names? We don’t like being called ‘Tom’ and ‘Nelly’.”

“Oh, sorry,” said JJ.

Thomas polished his glasses and fixed JJ with a look like a spider that has seen a fly. “Please continue, Mr Jones,” he said.

JJ shuffled his papers. “Yes..., as I was saying, I want to tell you about the importance of a simple number, the number 23.” Helen’s hand shot up again.

“Actually, Mr Jones, 23 isn’t really that simple,” she said. “It’s the lowest prime number that consists of consecutive digits.”

“They’re the atoms of mathematics,” added Thomas, “the building blocks for the world of numbers.”

JJ laughed nervously. “Oh, you like numbers? Well, fun fact: William Shakespeare was born

and died on the 23rd of April. And that's not all. Kurt Cobain was born in 1967 and died in 1994. But check this: $1+9+6+7 = 23$ and $1+9+9+4 = 23!$ "

Helen's hand was already in the air. "Who's Burt Cocaine, Mr Jones?"

"Well, don't worry about him. Listen to this: the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima at 8.15 a.m. $8+15 = 23$... Yes, Helen?"

"When you were talking about Burt Cocaine, you added the numbers separately to make 23. So, if you do the same for the Hiroshima bomb, you get $8+1+5 = 14$, not 23."

"You must be consistent with your methods if you want to prove something, Mr Jones," added Thomas. "That's important."

"Nick," said JJ in a strangled voice, "can we have a word outside?"

Ten minutes later, Nick went back into the boardroom to collect his children, who had turned on the video screen on the wall and were watching a TED talk about quantum physics.

"Unfortunately, Mr Jones has to go to a meeting," Nick told them. "He said thank you for your help. You gave him a lot to think about."

"Oh, isn't he going to finish?" asked Helen, disappointed. "I was enjoying it."

"He seemed nervous," said Thomas. "We should have told him about the negative effects of adrenaline on presentation performance."

"Maybe another time. But not to worry. You were a great help to me as well as Mr Jones. Let's

take the rest of the day off and do something nice."

So, they took the train to London and went to the Natural History Museum.

Business Spotlight 9/2021, pp. 46-47

Lucky number

► (persönliche) Glückszahl

assassinated: be ~

► einem Attentat zum Opfer fallen

blow sb.'s mind *ifml.*

► jmdn. umhauen

boardroom ► Sitzungsraum

bonkers UK *ifml.*

► übergeschnappt

building block ► Baustein

CEO (chief executive officer)

► Geschäftsführer(in)

consecutive digits

► aufeinanderfolgende Zahlen

consistent: be ~ with sth.

► konsequent mit etw. sein

crossly UK ► verärgert, sauer

dearly ► innig

dry run: do a ~ of sth. *ifml.*

► einen Probedurchlauf von etw. machen

empowerment

► Stärkung; hier auch: Entscheidungsverantwortung

fun fact *ifml.*

► interessante Nebenbemerkung, witzige Tatsache; hier: nebenbei bemerkt

gasp

► nach Luft schnappen

get a bee in one's bonnet *ifml.*

► eine fixe Idee entwickeln

go whistle: sb. can ~ UK *ifml.*

► jmd. kann sich etw. abschminken, etw. vergessen

graciously

► liebenswürdigerweise

have a word ► (kurz) reden

head of human resources

► Personalchef(in)

headquarters ► Zentrale

millennial

► zwischen 1980 und 2000 Geborene(r)

plc (public limited company)

UK ► etwa: AG

prime number ► Primzahl

psychic ► übersinnlich

psycho *ifml.*

► Irre(r), Verrückte(r)

row UK *ifml.*

► Auseinandersetzung

schedule sth.

► etw. anberaumen

shoot up ► in die Höhe schnellen

shuffle sth.

► etw. umsortieren

spot sth. ► etw. entdecken

strangled

► erürgt; hier: erstickt

AND FINALLY ONE QUESTION

[26] Introduction **E** US

David Ingram: And finally, we come to our One Question section, in which we ask you to identify our mystery person. Listen now to our clues.

[27] Who am I? **M**

- I was born on June 27, 1949, in New York.
- Both of my parents are Chinese. They moved to the United States in the 1940s.
- My grandfather was a Fengtian clique warlord.
- I started figure skating when I was eight years old. I now work as a bridalwear designer. Figure skating continues to influence my designs.
- In 1968, I took part in the U.S. Figure Skating Championships. I didn't make the U.S. Olympic team, so I decided to start a career in the fashion industry instead.
- I studied art history at Sarah Lawrence College, a private liberal arts college in New York. I also attended the Sorbonne, in Paris.
- In 1968, I attended the International Debutante Ball at the Waldorf Astoria New York, where I was presented to high society.
- After college, I became an editor at *Vogue*. I was the magazine's youngest-ever editor. I spent 17 years there.

- In 1987, I started working for Ralph Lauren. I worked there for two years.
- When I got married, at age 39, I couldn't find my dream wedding dress, so I launched my own bridalwear collection. At 40, I left my job and became a bridalwear designer.
- My brand is now known not only for its bridalwear, but also for its perfume, evening wear, eyewear, shoes, jewelry, and ready-to-wear collections.
- I love black wedding dresses.
- I have designed wedding dresses for many celebrities, including Avril Lavigne and Ivanka Trump.
- My husband and I adopted two girls.
- I have made cameo appearances in the TV series *Gossip Girl* and *Ugly Betty*.
- I own over 1,000 T-shirts.
- I was added to the U.S. Figure Skating Hall of Fame in 2009 for my work as a Winter Olympics costume designer.
- After 23 years of marriage, my husband and I got divorced in 2012.
- I have just created a limited-edition vodka in collaboration with the Polish brand Chopin.
- My 2020 net worth was \$270 million (€228 million).
- So, who am I?

Business Spotlight 9/2021, p. 50

David Ingram: So, do you know who our mystery person is? If you want to find out, go to our website at www.business-spotlight.de/who0921, where you'll find the answer.

brand	▶ Marke
bridalwewear	▶ Brautmode
cameo appearance	▶ Kurzauftritt
celebrity	▶ Prominente(r)
clique	▶ hier: Militärfraktion
debutante	▶ Debütantin
divorced: get ~	▶ sich scheiden lassen
editor	▶ Redakteur(in)

eyewear	▶ Brille(n)
figure skating	▶ Eiskunstlauf
gossip	▶ Klatsch
launch sth.	▶ etw. starten
liberal arts	▶ etwa: Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften
make sth.	▶ hier: es in etw. schaffen
net worth	▶ Vermögen
ready-to-wear collection	▶ Prêt-à-porter-Kollektion

CONCLUSION

[28] For more information

David Ingram: Well, we've come to the end of Business Spotlight Audio 9/2021. We hope you've enjoyed it and have found our exercises helpful.

Erin Perry: We offer Business Spotlight Audio both as a CD and a subscription download. For more information, and 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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