

# ETpedia™

## Business English

500 ideas  
for Business  
English teachers

John Hughes and Robert McLarty

Series editor: John Hughes

[www.myetpedia.com](http://www.myetpedia.com)



**ENGLISH  
TEACHING**  
*professional*

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# 10 reasons for using this resource

## 1. Everything in one place

Business English teachers can find supplementary resources, teaching ideas, activities and tips in many different places. If you work at a language school, the shelves of your teachers' room might have many different publications, resource books and folders full of materials created by your colleagues. If you are a teacher who travels to different companies to teach English, then perhaps you rely more on websites offering lesson plans and worksheets. The amount of materials for teachers these days can be overwhelming and also time-consuming to search through. The aim of this resource book is to bring together a collection of ideas, tips, tools and techniques in one place for faster reference.

## 2. Clearly organised

This resource contains 50 units covering everything from preparing and planning your Business English course, activities for different business topics and a range of ideas for developing business communication skills. Each unit always has 10 points. Why 10? Well, if you're new to teaching Business English, reading our 10 tips on carrying out needs analysis will mean you can plan your course. Having 10 activities for practising the language of sales will help most teachers prepare a lesson on the topic. And knowing the 10 criteria that make an effective presentation will allow you to give detailed feedback.

## 3. New to Business English teaching

If you are teaching Business English for the first time ever, then this resource will provide you with all the basics to help you effectively plan a course and teach students who are in work or students who are planning future careers in business.

## 4. Experienced teachers

Perhaps you have been teaching Business English in companies or in universities or colleges for some time. Hopefully you'll find some ideas in this book that are familiar or which remind you of activities you haven't used for a while, and it'll also give you some fresh ideas to give your lessons a boost.

## 5. Supplementing your coursebook

If you are following a coursebook or a set of materials for a defined syllabus, then this resource can support that content with ways to lead into topics, expand the range of activity types, and suggest how to adapt the material to match learners' needs and interests.

## 6. Studying for a Business English qualification

Perhaps you are taking a formal qualification in teaching Business English such as the Certificate in International Business English Training (Cert IBET) or the LCCI First Certificate for Teachers of Business English. Or perhaps you are focusing on developing your business English skills as part of an MA qualification or the DELTA or Diploma in TESOL. For any teacher involved in this kind of ongoing professional development, this resource is an excellent reference with the lists of 10 acting as useful study tools.

## 7. Teacher trainers

If you are a teacher trainer or someone who needs to deliver staff training in the area of Business English, then use the checklists of ideas that this resource offers as a means to preparing your sessions.

## 8. Course planners and materials writers

Business English ETpedia includes information on needs analysis, planning and lists of business topics and skills with suggested exercise types. This means that course planners and writers will find it helpful in the development of course programmes.

## 9. Additional materials

As well as the resources offered in this resource, you will also find additional photocopiable worksheets in the Appendix. These worksheets relate to units in the resource and offer instant classroom activities.

## 10. More time

The one thing most teachers need is more time; more time to plan, more time to search for resources, more time to reflect on their teaching, and more time to develop their skills and knowledge for the Business English classroom. We hope that by offering you this collection of accessible ideas, you'll have more time to spend on developing your teaching in the way you would like.

*"ETpedia saves hours of planning time and opens opportunities for variation, adaptation and even creating my own materials inspired by the ideas it offers."*

**Ayat Al-Tawel, teacher of Business English, Egypt**

# 10 ways to use this resource

This book has been written for different teachers at different stages of their Business English teaching career. It can be read and used in different ways according to your level of experience, need or interest.

## 1. Cover to cover

You could start at the beginning and read to the end. If you are finding out about teaching Business English for the first time, then the book will work as an introductory text to the subject.

## 2. Read a section

The contents page will direct you to different sections. In each section you will find units containing 10 ideas, tips, activities, questions or thoughts on a particular aspect of teaching. Some of the sections might not be immediately relevant to your context so you can leave these for later (when you might need them) and some sections will help you with immediate interests, concerns or questions.

## 3. Teacher's block

Just as writers sometimes have days when they can't write (a condition commonly referred to as 'writer's block'), there are days when teachers search desperately for ideas to help them come up with a lesson, but can't think of anything. We can call this 'teacher's block', and we hope this book will offer you some help with it. Open the book at any page and see if the 10 ideas on that page give you a new idea.

## 4. Teaching a new area of business

One reason that teachers enjoy Business English is that they are constantly coming into contact with students from different business backgrounds who need different types of English. This book suggests ways to learn about the new area of business and how to approach teaching the English needed.

## 5. Write in the book

Maybe you've tried one of the activities in the book or found an idea you liked. Make notes in the margin about why it worked or how you adapted it, so you can refer to it again later.

## 6. Helping colleagues

If you work with other teachers, then you've probably experienced a situation where a colleague is desperately searching for something to help improve their lesson. Perhaps you can help them out by suggesting they manage a lesson on meeting skills by using some of the ideas in Unit 31 on page 90. Or if they'd like to make more use of authentic materials, then show them the tips in Unit 47 on page 130.

## 7. Last-minute lessons

Most teachers have experienced the day when a colleague is off sick and they have been asked to teach a class at very short notice. You probably won't have much time to prepare, but you'll find enough ideas in Section 'Activities for business topics' (see page 39) to help you teach a complete and useful lesson.

## 8. More practice

Many students require extra practice on specific areas of English. For example, they might ask you for more speaking practice in your lesson (see Unit 24 on page 69) or perhaps you have noticed that a class needs more time to work on business writing (see Unit 41 on page 114).

## 9. Develop yourself

If you're at the stage of your teaching career where you feel you are ready for more of a challenge, you'll find some ideas in Unit 50 on page 137.

## 10. Write your own 10

Teaching is always evolving, developing and changing. More ideas can be added so why not visit the [www.myetpedia.com](http://www.myetpedia.com). You can read blog posts from other teachers suggesting their own set of 10 ideas and you are invited to suggest your own 10 (see p173).

*"I frequently use the ideas in ETpedia as a kind of checklist when preparing."*

**Mario Lecluyze, teacher trainer, Belgium**

# 10 facts about the authors

## John Hughes ...

- ▶ taught his first Business English class in Poland in 1993. He then worked as a Business English teacher at language schools, in universities, and for companies including Gucci, Deloitte and Fiat.
- ▶ has managed Business English departments in Poland and Italy, carrying out language audits and needs analyses, course design and assessment.
- ▶ has trained many teachers from all over the world to work in the field of Business English, including training courses leading to the LCCI First Certificate in Teaching Business English qualification.
- ▶ has been the author or co-author on many Business English course books, including *Business Result*, *Successful Presentations*, *Successful Meetings* (Oxford University Press), *Success with BEC Vantage* (Summertown/Cengage Learning), and *Telephone English* (Macmillan).
- ▶ regularly gives talks and presentations on different English Language Teaching topics at international teacher's conferences and in online webinars. He also writes for journals including *English Teaching Professional* and *Modern English Teacher*.

## Robert McLarty ...

- ▶ taught his first Business English class at International House, Hastings, in 1979. Since then he has worked as a Business English teacher in Paris and Oxford.
- ▶ has run Business English schools in Paris, Hastings and Oxford, designing courses, recruiting and training teachers and developing new products.
- ▶ has co-authored Business English books including *Business Basics*, *Quick Work* and *Business Focus* (Oxford University Press).
- ▶ has conceptualised and published a wide range of Business English coursebooks including *Business Result*, *Skills for Business Studies*, *Business one:one*, *Successful Presentations* and *Successful Meetings* (Oxford University Press).
- ▶ regularly gives talks on Business English, writes materials and articles, edits *Modern English Teacher* and is Principal Tutor at the Oxford Teachers' Academy.

## Thanks and acknowledgements

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# 10 activities for the topic of MARKETING and ADVERTISING

Most companies employ people to market and promote their products, services and brands. Note that pre-work students may need your help with some of the theoretical side of marketing as well as doing some practical language work. Although not everyone in your class is necessarily directly involved in marketing, they will be interested in the subject from a consumer's point of view.

## 1. Discussion questions

Lead into the lesson by writing these types of questions on the board and asking students to discuss them as a class, in pairs or in small groups:

*How much do adverts affect what you buy?*

*Which kinds of adverts attract your attention?*

*Where does your company advertise itself?*

*How important is the company website in marketing?*

## 2. Defining a product launch

The aim of this activity is to map all the stages from an initial idea through to the launch of a new product or service. First of all, list the key stages on the board, including:

Research and development.

Market research.

Conceptualisation.

Costing.

Prototyping.

Testing.

Naming.

Promotion.

Launch.

Put students in pairs and ask them to prepare one sentence which describes what happens at each stage. They can refer to dictionaries for useful words if necessary. At the end, ask different pairs to read their definitions until you have a complete description of the process.

## 3. Planning a product launch

As a follow-on to activity 2, students now plan a product launch. Ask the class to choose a product or service. If all your students work in a specialised sector like pharmaceuticals then you can choose a new drug or other form of treatment, whereas if you have a mixed group (or a pre-work class) you might want to choose something more familiar to everyone, like a chocolate bar or a perfume.

The class should decide what product or service you are going to launch and for which market and segment (age, status, current customers, etc.). Students then break out into groups and plan the name, the product description, the price, the promotional campaign and a slogan. Groups have half an hour to prepare a presentation with visual aids if necessary. After the presentations have been given, students can vote on the best plan.

#### 4. Collocation pelmanism

This activity helps activate vocabulary with a focus on marketing related collocations. Prepare cards (about the size of business cards) with one word from each collocation below. You will need to have enough cards to have 28 per group of four students.

Market research	Advertising campaign	Product launch
Free sample	End user	Marketing director
Market share	Press release	Advertising hoardings
Target market	Brand stretching	Customer feedback
Mail shot	Special offer	

Students work in groups of four with the 28 cards facing down on the table. They play pelmanism by turning over two cards at a time trying to find a pair which make a collocation. If someone finds a pair they need to make a perfect sentence using the collocation in order to keep the pair. They keep going until they make a mistake and the next player has a turn. You will also find a photocopiable set of the cards with these collocations on p148. Note that some words will collocate with more than one so there might be multiple answers in some cases; for example *target market* and *target customer* are both correct.

#### 5. Market your class/school

This activity works at any level and uses the knowledge people have of marketing, either because that is their work area or as an end-user. It is very simple in terms of preparation and usually generates a lot of language. Begin by telling the class that your school needs to get more customers for the following year. You have been briefed to decide on the marketing strategy which will reach and inform more potential customers about your services. Brainstorm ideas and elicit these main areas:

- ▶ Website
- ▶ Marketing event
- ▶ Trade-fair
- ▶ Flyers
- ▶ Products courses
- ▶ Offers
- ▶ Competitions
- ▶ Sponsorship

Divide the class into groups of four and distribute two or three subjects to each group to brainstorm more ideas. Provide them with a whiteboard or flipchart to work with. Encourage them to write their ideas on post-its and place them next to the topic. After a few minutes the groups move on and brainstorm the next idea adding to the previous group's post-its. Repeat this until everyone has talked about all topics and then decide as a group three or four to concentrate on. Each group then takes one of the chosen subjects and works on a detailed plan. The final task is to present each area to the rest of the class and ideally arrive at a useful marketing plan for your school.

## 6. Logos

As a fun lead in to the topic of company logos, make copies of some logos but remove any full names so that you only have the symbols. Show the symbols and students have to guess the company. You could also turn it into a team competition with different teams receiving points for every logo they recognise. Note that if you photocopy logos in black and white, you can make the task more difficult with students trying to remember what colours are used in the logo. As a follow up, students can be given fictional businesses in different sectors and asked to design and then present new logos.

## 7. Slogans

As with the previous activity, you can also write company slogans on the board and students have to guess which company uses the slogan. Once you have looked at some examples of slogans and discussed which ones are more memorable than others, put students in groups and have them write a slogan. Another alternative is to give each group a different photograph and tell them that it is going to be used in advert. For example, it might be a photograph of a child's toy. The group has to write a slogan to appear with the photograph in a magazine advert.

## 8. Adverts around the classroom

Adverts in magazines or from the internet provide a rich source of interesting and authentic texts. Choose a selection of adverts and pin them around the room. You can design comprehension questions such as, 'Which advert is aimed at customers aged over 60?' Many adverts also contain comparative and superlative forms so a useful grammar lesson is for students to walk around, read the adverts and make notes of any examples they find.

## 9. Improving advertising copy

Show students the following text. Explain that it is advertising a new type of packaged ready-to-cook meals but that the words in bold don't make the product sound exciting. Students read the text and, working pairs, think of interesting words to replace those in bold. There is no one correct answer, so students should share their ideas afterwards.

*Have you tried our **nice** new range of ready-to-cook vegetarian meals? They're really **good**. You just take them out of the **cardboard** packet and heat them up. They look **good** and everyone in your family will **like** eating them.*

(Possible replacement words: *exciting, tasty, colourful, delicious, love.*)

## 10. Writing advertising copy

As a follow-on to activity 9, choose an area which will be of interest to your class, such as tourist attractions, hotels or restaurants. Find some examples of website copy where they are being promoted and print them off for the class to look at. Find examples in the texts of adjectives and adverbs often used in advertising, such as *stunning, mouth-watering, state-of-the-art*, etc. and write them on the board to pre-teach. Ask the class to scan the various texts looking for them. When they have understood the role of such adjectives, ask them to work in pairs to write promotional sentences for their office, their colleagues, their gadgets, etc. Finally, ask your students to write a short paragraph describing, in the most glowing terms, something or somewhere they would like to promote – a village, a shop or a local landmark for example.

# Collocation pelmanism

## Appendix

market	research	advertising	campaign
product	launch	free	sample
end	user	marketing	director
market	share	press	release
advertising	hoarding	target	market
brand	stretching	customer	feedback
mail	shot	special	offer

# 10 tips and activities for pronunciation in Business English

When you carry out a needs analysis with your students (see Units 9 and 10), they will often request work on their speaking skills, which means you will have to take into consideration the issue of pronunciation. In fact, some students might even say they want to sound like a native speaker or that they will be happy as long as they are intelligible to their counterparts. Some students will not be aware that their pronunciation is affecting their business communication skills so you will need to address this issue early on in the course.

## 1. Balancing accuracy and fluency

Teaching pronunciation is often associated with improving accuracy; conversely, there is also a common myth that the average Business English learner is more interested in being fluent than in being accurate. It is true that often a busy manager has little time to study, and so opts for intensive language training, which doesn't lend itself to improving pronunciation in the same way that an extended course (over a year or more) might. Instead, the learner aims for communicative competence: as long as the message is communicated, the details of correct grammar or pronunciation are subsidiary.

## 2. Using pronunciation to be more effective

However, in Business English teaching we are also interested in effectiveness – how well is the message put across to the listener? Is the listener convinced by our message? Effectiveness is the total performance (linguistic and non-linguistic). In pronunciation terms, effectiveness might be extra stress placed on a key word to add emphasis or a meaningful pause to make an audience reflect.

## 3. Student interest

Aside from the more pedagogical reasoning for having pronunciation on the Business English syllabus, students tend to enjoy working on pronunciation. They recognise its importance, especially when enduring long periods of listening or the stress of making even the briefest personal introduction in English.

## 4. Business vocabulary stress

Whenever you teach a new word with more than one syllable, make it a habit to mark the stress on the word and have students do the same. Say the word aloud and ask them to repeat it and say where they think the stress falls. You can also use the photocopyable Word Stress worksheet on p171 to help students develop the habit of recognising word stress.

## 5. Telephoning and connected speech

There are no visual cues on the telephone, so students don't have the luxury of interpreting meaning from a facial expression or shift of the body. To help with listening to telephone calls, select a listening that you have already used in the lesson. Choose some of the sentences from the recording and read them at natural speed or play the extracts from the recording. Ask the students to identify how many words are in the sentence. For example: Teacher: *Can I leave a message?* Student: *Five words.* Teacher: *He's out of the office.* Student: *Five words.* (Note that contracted forms count as one word.) Teacher: *I'm afraid he's out of the office.* Student: *Seven words.* This technique focuses students on how the 'little words' (*a, of, etc.*) get lost, and it develops their confidence with listening.

## 6. Using contrastive stress

In business, when dealing with lots of figures and details, speakers often use contrastive stress to check and clarify meaning. So while your learners might be happy to say 'Sorry, can you repeat that?' when they are unsure of some information, they also need to be aware of how words are sometimes stressed to check and clarify. For example:

A: *So your final figure is five hundred?*

B: *No, nine hundred.*

To practise this feature, use the photocopiable dominoes on p172. You'll need one copy for each group (two to four students per group). Cut up the dominoes. Follow the set of instructions given or let the group read and try to understand them. Students will match the dominoes first by context and then by how the underlined syllable or word is given prominent stress.

## 7. Strategy building

Following on from activity 6, students will need to build other strategies for clarifying their pronunciation. This is especially true for areas using spelling and numbers. One lower level activity when you introduce the alphabet for the first time is to have students think of a word that begins with each letter and use it for clarifying when spelling. You can also give them themes to follow such as the names of countries and cities; for example, 'A as in Amsterdam, B as in Berlin, C as in Canada.' They can create a list and use it when dictating information to each other (see Unit 34 activity 4). Another strategy with saying numbers is to have students use techniques for breaking the numbers down; for example: 'The number is 13, as in one three.' Tips for strategies such as these can really help students early on when they are struggling with their pronunciation.

## 8. Meetings and sentence stress

Moving the stress in a sentence is a technique commonly used in meetings and negotiations to change emphasis or meaning. If your students have been listening to a meeting, choose one of the phrases used and write it on the board. Read out the sentence, stressing one word in particular. Ask the students to underline it. Now read it again, changing the stressed word and ask the students to underline it again. This can be repeated as many times as there are words. For example:

1. *What's your opinion?*
2. *What's your opinion?*
3. *What's your opinion?*

## 9. Presentations and pausing

To help the delivery of a presentation, presenters often use pauses in certain places. Typically, you'll hear a pause where there are full stops and commas, so pausing acts like a kind of punctuation and helps an audience follow. However, you can also put pauses around important information such as the name of a company or important numbers and figures. Try reading this extract from a presentation aloud and pause where you see this symbol /.

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*Good morning everyone, / and thank you for coming. Today, / I'd like talk about / Fowler / Plastics / Limited / and our results for the years / 2015 / to 2016.*

You can demonstrate the same thing to students by writing the extract on the board but leave out the pauses. Then read it aloud with the pauses and ask students to note down where you paused. Then discuss the reasons why you paused where you did. Next, ask students to choose a few sentences from a presentation they have given and write in where they think the pauses sound natural and effective. Finally, they can work in pairs and take turns to read their sentences aloud to each other and see if the pauses are effective.

## 10. Intonation to add interest

Spoken business communication is often about keeping the listener's interest. Flat-sounding intonation is monotonous and will, for example, lose an audience's attention in a presentation. To highlight this to a student take any short stretch of speech such as part of a presentation a student is working on. Read it aloud with very flat intonation and then read it again with rising and falling intonation. Ask the student to tell you what the different was between each reading. They should notice that the first reading was less interesting because of the dull intonation.

*"The aim of learning English for business should be comfortable intelligibility, both speaking and listening. There is no 'correct' pronunciation, but there is lesser and greater intelligibility. Whenever learning and practising a new language, it is not enough to attend only to the grammar or vocabulary, because how it is said and heard is an integral part of it, and can be practised at the same time. Integrate pronunciation purposefully all the time with everything."*

**Adrian Underhill, trainer and author, UK**

# Word stress

When you learn a new word, check you can pronounce it with the correct word stress. Write it under the correct word stress in this table. If the stress is not in the table, write the new word and its stress in the third row.

○	○ ○	○ ○	○ ○ ○
sales	product (n)	produce (v)	conference
○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
recruitment	machinery	expectation	communication



# Contrastive stress dominoes

No, the <u>meeting</u> is at three.	So, we sold nine <u>hundred</u> ?	No, we sold nine <u>thousand</u> .	Is that <u>E</u> as in <u>Egypt</u> ?	No, <u>I</u> as in <u>Italy</u> .	Is that <u>thirteen</u> ?
No, <u>thirty</u> .	Is the <u>meeting</u> at three?	No, the <u>presentation</u> is at three.	So, we <u>sold</u> nine hundred?	No, we <u>bought</u> nine hundred.	Is that <u>I</u> as in <u>Italy</u> ?
No, <u>A</u> as in <u>Austria</u> .	Is that <u>thirty</u> ?	No, <u>fifty</u> .	Is the <u>presentation</u> at three?	No, the <u>seminar</u> is at three.	So, <u>we</u> sold nine hundred?
No, <u>they</u> sold nine hundred.	Is that <u>A</u> as in <u>Austria</u> ?	No, <u>E</u> as in <u>Egypt</u> .	Is that <u>fifty</u> ?	No, <u>fifteen</u> .	Is the <u>seminar</u> at three?
No, the <u>meeting</u> is at three.	So, we sold nine <u>hundred</u> ?	No, we sold nine <u>thousand</u> .	Is that <u>E</u> as in <u>Egypt</u> ?	No, <u>I</u> as in <u>Italy</u> .	Is that <u>thirteen</u> ?
No, <u>thirty</u> .	Is the <u>meeting</u> at three?	No, the <u>presentation</u> is at three.	So, we <u>sold</u> nine hundred?	No, we <u>bought</u> nine hundred.	Is that <u>I</u> as in <u>Italy</u> ?
No, <u>A</u> as in <u>Austria</u> .	Is that <u>thirty</u> ?	No, <u>fifty</u> .	Is the <u>presentation</u> at three?	No, the <u>seminar</u> is at three.	So, <u>we</u> sold nine hundred?
No, <u>they</u> sold nine hundred.	Is that <u>A</u> as in <u>Austria</u> ?	No, <u>E</u> as in <u>Egypt</u> .	Is that <u>fifty</u> ?	No, <u>fifteen</u> .	Is the <u>seminar</u> at three?

## Instructions

1. Play with two to four people.
2. Each player takes seven dominoes.
3. Place one of the remaining dominoes in the middle and leave the others face down in a pile.
4. The first player places another domino at either end of the first one. This domino must have the question or response which matches the one on the end of the first domino. The player reads out the question and response, emphasising the stressed word or syllable.
5. The second player does the same and then the next player.
6. A player who can't go can pick one new domino from the pile and try to play.
7. The winner is the person who uses all his or her dominoes first or has the fewest at the end.