

**LESS
HASSLE
MORE
HUSTLE**

**Save loads of work,
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edutaining posts
to copy and paste.**

Your time is precious, so I won't take up any more with a long-winded 'intro' prose.

You now have 100 texts, all Grammarly* checked, with vocabulary lists (German translations). Print out as is, photocopy & you are good to go.

Please download the Word doc from this link:

(https://drive.google.com/file/d/10V7kL2_7IPsuCJuAllos6eWkJYxRihiQ/view?usp=sharing) to copy & paste. Get your creative juices flowing & recreate the texts just 4 U.**

The book is divided into 3 major categories:

- 1) Speak / Write like a native (general, presentations, telephoning, mailing, small talk) (20 posts). These posts are in the PDF book "The Workplace English Toolkit":
- 2) Grammar & Quizzes (70 posts). These posts are in the PDF book "The Workplace English Toolkit"
- 3) Vocabulary (wide range of topics, cultural aspects) (10 posts). These posts are in the PDF books "Handy English 1" & "Handy English 2" (Coming soon)

If you like my work, just a reminder to sign up to the newsletter

(<https://teatimetitbits.de/dear-english-teachers/>) and please spread the word in your country. If you have any feedback, suggestions, ideas for future (joint) projects, please let me know at dave@teatime-titbits.de.

I wish you every success with this product and more importantly less hassle!

Take care and take it easy!

Yours

Dave

P.S. I've included the 'List of Contents' of my quiz book 'Tuesday Teasers' as well as 'Handy English 1 & 2' & 'Fun on Friday (FOF)' (there are no FOF posts in this PDF***) for more of my vocabulary based content at the end of this book.

*I subscribe to Grammarly Professional – link. If you haven't seen one of their promotion videos on YouTube watch this <https://youtu.be/3YlpF1hlwm8> If you decide to use Grammarly Professional, it would be cool if you could sign up using my affiliate link <https://grammarly.go2cloud.org/SH26J> (I get a small commission at no extra cost to you). BTW, I've also left in some other affiliate links in the texts!!

**Ideal as content for worksheets, social media FB & co, video (YouTube) or audio (Podcast) texts, courses, newsletters, e & physical books (for your native language learners*) – it can save you a tone of time. WARNING! Please be aware that Google can 'punish' content creators, who copy content from other sources. Generally the 'original' posts have different titles. That being said I would still warn against simply copying & pasting this content as is and using it for your blog.

***I didn't include any from FOF because they are ALL special posts, which may not be suitable for your students.

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*Taken from the book 'Handy English 1'. ** Taken from the book 'Handy English 2'. (coming soon)

Stress-free telephoning template.

You are sitting alone in your office and the office English expert is in the meeting when the phone rings. Shock horror, it's a foreign number. Was that dialling code for Italy or France you ask yourself, more importantly, what's the likelihood they will speak German? In both cases unlikely to tell you, so you ignore it, pretend you're not in, let it ring and hope no one else hears it. They'll ring back anyway later you tell yourself confidently.

Do you ever get that feeling of panic whenever the phone rings and it's a foreign number? Do you ignore it, pretend you're not in the office and let it ring?

If you would like a template for a sure-fire method to deal with the call – then look no further. Download the free PDF: <https://teatimetitbits.de/download/your-inbound-call-emergency-pdf/>

Now when foreign call comes in, don't ignore, don't pretend, pick up the receiver, put a smile on your face and confidently say "Dave Preston, Preston Consulting speaking, how can I help you?"

template (Vorlage), **to take the call** (das Gespräch annehmen), **to pretend** (so tun, als ob), **sure-fire method** (eine todsichere Methode), **to deal with the call** (mit dem Gespräch umgehen)

5 question phrases to sound more polite.

In mails or on the phone, I'm sure you will have read/heard natives use the following when asking about something/for information. Often they don't want to come across 'too direct' or maybe the situation is more formal.

"Could you possibly tell me?"

"Do/would you mind telling me?"

"I was wondering if / whether / what ...?"

"Do you happen to know ...?"

"I don't suppose youknow"

Imagine you meet someone and would like to find out about their work. You could use the 'direct' question form:

'Direct': "What line of business are you in?"

or you could add on, let's say, "I was wondering" to form an 'indirect' question,

'Indirect': "I was wondering what line of business you are in?"

I'm sure you'll agree it sounds a whole lot better for formal/polite and appropriate for the situation. Check out some other questions.

Direct: "What is your ETA in Düsseldorf?"

Indirect: "Would you mind letting me know what your ETA is?"

Direct: "Which company does Dave work for?"

Indirect: "Do you happen to know which company Dave works for?"

Direct: "What did you earn in Q2 (= 2nd quarter)?"

Indirect: "Would you mind telling me what you earned in Q2?"

Direct: "I can't find Dave anywhere. Where's he disappeared to?"

Indirect: "Don't suppose you know where he's disappeared to?"

What becomes clear is the grammar of the 'indirect' question changes. Put simply; the 'indirect' question form goes like this:

"I was wondering what line of business you are in?"

Indirect add on "I was wondering .." + question word(s) "what line of business ..." + the normal sentence structure "...you are in"? As you see, when the helping verbs are 'to be' 'to have (got)' they just swap places with the pronoun (you):

Direct: "What time is it?"

Indirect: "Do you happen to know what time it is?"

More often than not, the direct question will have a 'do/ does/ did etc.' as a helping verb in the direct question. In the indirect question, you simply miss it out.

Direct: "What part of town do you live in?"

Indirect: "I was wondering what part of town you live in?"

Unfortunately, I don't see or hear many Germans use the phrases "Do you happen to know ...?" and "I don't suppose you know?" (unless they are advanced speakers and/or spent time abroad). Even if they sound strange to German ears – it's like music to ours. Try them out!!!!.

to come across (wirken), "**Do/would you mind...(telling) .. ?**" (Haben Sie was dagegen), "**I was wondering if/whether/what ..?**" (Ich frage mich), "**Do you happen to ... (know) ...?**" (Hier. Wissen Sie zufällig), "**I don't suppose you ... (know) ...?**" (Hier. Wissen Sie zufällig), **ETA = Estimated Time of Arrival** (voraussichtliche Ankunftszeit)

5 ways to get what you want.

Requesting aka asking for something is a relatively easy function in English – “Please, send me a current price list?” or “Can you call me back later?” etc. isn’t rocket science.

But have you ever had the experience that your request fell on deaf ears in some way, maybe delayed/late or even no response? The “why” could have many reasons, but just perhaps, it was how you wrote your mail at the beginning.

In any case, my advice would always be to replace the above–mentioned “can you or please ...” with the following:

“I wonder if you might forward a copy of the contract as soon as possible?”

“We would very much appreciate it if you could pay the outstanding invoice?”

“I’d be grateful if you could mail me the dates.”

“Would you mind calling me as soon as you reach the office?”

“Do me a favour and get Dave to call me back, **would/will you?**”

The differences are apparent. Phrase 1 is very formal, expressions (2-4) are all formal, which you should always use in the initial stages of a business relationship.

Even as the relationship is developing, I would still highly recommend (2 – 4). Only if/when you have become pretty good “buddies”, would I start going into the realms of informal/colloquial English (5).

The last tip. To avoid any issues/problems always let your partner “reduce” formality first, you follow suit if you feel comfortable with it.

If you don’t already, give them a try!

“It isn’t rocket science” (Das ist keine Diplomarbeit), **to fall on deaf ears** (auf taube Ohren stoßen), **initial stages** (in der Anlaufphase), **to go into the realms of sth** (ins Reich der gehören), **to follow suit** (dem Beispiel folgen)

5 ways to get a word in edgeways.

Have you ever been in a meeting and you are itching to say something, but you're not exactly sure how to get a word in edgeways? Never fear, help is here. Here are my 5 + extras ways to get a word in!

"May I interrupt you for a moment."

"Sorry / I don't want to interrupt but ..."

"If I / Could I just come in at this point / here?"

"If no one objects, I'd like to say / point out / draw your attention to "

"Excuse me; I'd just like to add something to the last point / here, if I may?"

So no more excuses, go butt in, get your message across & knock them over with your brilliance.

to be itching to do sth (brennendes Verlangen etw. zu tun), **to get a word in edgeways** (auch mal zu Wort kommen), **to object (to sth)** (etw einzuwenden haben), **to point sth out** (auf etw hinweisen), **to draw sb's attention to sth** (die Aufmerksamkeit auf etw lenken), **to add** (hinzufügen), **to butt in** (einhaken).

6 phrases for making appointments.

Making appointments is an essential part of business. Here's a bit of help if you need to do it in English. Please note that 1-4 phrases are more formal than sentences 5 & 6.

Question.

"Does next Wednesday* suit you?"

"What date/time suits you best (next week)?"

"Is Tuesday 3 p.m. suitable / convenient / fine for you?"

"What date / time is the most suitable / convenient for you?"

"Are you available / free on Friday, let's say** 9 a.m.?"

"What / how about Monday for lunch?"

Saying yes.

"Yes, Wednesday suits me fine? What time shall we say?"

"Monday, between 3 and 5, would suit me best."

"Yes, Tuesday 3 p.m. is suitable / convenient / fine (for me)."

"Either Monday morning or Thursday afternoon would be most suitable / convenient."

"Yes, Friday 9 a.m. sounds good to me."

"Yes, I've got nothing on then. Monday it is then."

Saying no.

"No, I'm afraid, Wednesday doesn't suit me (at all), Why not Thursday?"

"Unfortunately, 3 pm isn't very suitable / convenient. Shall we say 5 p.m instead?"

"No, I've got a prior engagement then, let's make it an hour later? Is that o.k.?"

"No, I'm afraid I can't make it then, but I could make it at 11 a.m.?"

"Unfortunately, I'm really busy / running a tight schedule / chocka (-a-block) *** on Thursday, Friday would be better?"

"No, I can't, I've got something (else) on, I'm meeting **** Frank."

*Days of the week, months of the year are written with a capital, e.g. March.

**More colloquial

***slang

**** (no it doesn't mean a bad word!!) we often use the present continuous form to talk about fixed future appointments/arrangements.

to make appointments (Termine ausmachen), **to suit sb** (passen), **to be suitable /convenient** (passend sein), **to have sth on (plans)** (etw vorhaben), **prior engagement** (ältere Verpflichtung), **"I can't make it"** (Ich schaffe es nicht), **tight schedule** (voller Zeitplan), **chocka (-a-block)**(rappelvoll), **capital** (Großbuchstabe)

7 phrases for the perfect product pitch.

In Britain, we have 'Dragons' Den', in the US 'Sharks' Tank' and in Germany, loosely translated 'Lions' Den' aka 'Höhle der Löwen'. The contestants pitch their business idea to the 'dragons', 'sharks' or 'lions' (all successful and wealthy business people in their rights), ask for funding in exchange for equity shares in their fledgeling company.

The pitch lasts 1-2 minutes, then the newbie has to hold their own and convince the dragons that they are worth investing in. The questions come thick and fast, probe every aspect of their business. The questioning phase usually makes or breaks their chances of success.

What about you, do you have to do pitches? Do you have to sell the customer on the benefits of buying your product / service? Here are 7 usual phrases which you can adapt and add to your sales pitch:

"This is our latest range of (outdoor equipment)."

"It provides you with (ample space to store)."

"It comes in (three sizes / 2 colours etc.)."

"The beauty of it is that (it reduces your electricity consumption by 20%)."

"This is an exciting new (product, which will appeal to young people)."

"It will make a great addition to your (existing product range)."

"The three things, which I'm particularly excited about, with the (add here: name of the product) are, one, two" (don't forget the power of "the rule of three"*)

*[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_three_\(writing\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_three_(writing)).

– happy pitching!

The Den is real-life business, no business English language learning book. What a better place to learn business English than in the Den? Why not try watching a product pitch?

Click on this link <https://teatimetitbits.de/free-pdfs/> and download the Free PDF "Dragons fight over jaw-dropping multi-million-pound business" to get a comprehensive vocabulary list for the following pitch, which you can find on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/nJ4qA-S-KmE>

QOTD How would you have pitched the product or answered their questions?

Den (Höhle), **loosely translated** (frei übersetzt), **contestant** (Kandidat), **to pitch sth** (etw anpiesen), **wealthy** (wohlabend), **in one's rights** (aus eigener Kraft), **in exchange for** (im Austausch für), **equity share** (Aktienkapital), **fledgeling company** (Jungfirma), **pitch** (Verkaufspräsentation), **newbie** (Anfänger/Neuling), **to hold one's own** (sich behaupten), **to convince sb** (jdn überzeugen), **to be**

worth (sich lohnen), **thick and fast** (knüppeldick kommen), **to probe** (gründlich prüfen), **to do pitches** (Verkaufspräsentationen machen), **benefits** (Vorteile), **latest range** (neustes Sortiment), **ample** (reichlich), **consumption** (Verbrauch), **to appeal to sb** (jdn ansprechen), **addition** (Ergänzung), **existing product range** (bestehende Produktpalette), **to be excited about sth** (von etw. begeistert sein)

7 ways to give advice.

From silly to serious, giving advice is part & parcel of our everyday lives and so something you will need to know in English too.

“What would you do (, if you were) in my shoes?” is the question commonly used to invite you to give your two cents.

Grammar boffins will immediately notice the 2nd conditional form, which is used when we want to talk about ‘unreal’, imaginary or hypothetical situations like putting yourself in someone else’s shoes. You are not the other person, but if you were and in that situation, how would you handle it.

Here are seven ways to offer you advice:

1. Have you ever thought of + verb + ‘ing’ form (e.g. doing more sports)?
2. Why don’t you + infinitive form (inf) (e.g. find a new job)
3. You could always + inf
4. Your best bet is to + inf
5. If I were you / in your shoes, I’d* + inf
6. You should + inf
7. You’d** better + inf

*” I’d” is short for “I would”

**” You’d” is short for “You had”

Be aware that the phrases increase in “forcefulness” as they go down. “You’d better,” tells sb if you don’t heed the advice, you could get/be into hot water.

To be part & parcel (ein fester Bestandteil von etwas sein), **to give your two cents** (Senf dazu geben), **boffins** (Experten), **to heed advice** (einen Rat befolgen), **to get/be into hot water** (in Schwierigkeiten geraten).

8 phrases to sex up your (self) introduction – guaranteed!

Have you been there too? You attend, let's say, a work-related course, and it starts with the usual ice breaker phase, where everyone uses the generic introductory phrases "Hi, my name is, blah, blah ...".

The first few guys you listen to attentively, after 4 or 5 you manage to take in the odd titbit (eh, there's that word again) but as you go further around the room your attention starts to wane, your thoughts drift off.

Here's my not so serious solution to make sure people will sit up and remember you! Try this – based on me:

"Hi, I'm Dave – your Teatime Titbit man (replace with any amusing job title/nickname / what are you famous for), and I'll turn 21 this year, yes, I know I look younger. My significant other half is Alma & we tied the knot (= got married) 10 years ago. I have a wee (Scottish for little) fella (short for man) called Matthew. (for a daughter maybe call her your wee lady/Queen).

I was born & bred in Sheffield. I was the English rover until I put roots down (=settled down) in Münster in 2004. I bring people to their goals. (Use a more inspiring job description). I'm an avid audiobook listener, traveller & Guinness drinker. I'm crazy about Matthew & Liverpool FC. Now just fill in the gaps:

1. **Hi, I'm** (**but everyone calls me**)

(replace with any amusing job title / nickname / what are you famous for).

2. **I'll turn 21 this year, yes, I know I look younger.**

3. **My significant other / the hubby / missus is** (enter name). N.B. if you are single or not married (congratulations!!), maybe try this

"I am still looking for Mr or Mrs Right, any offers?!?!"

4. **I have ...** (number of children) .

e.g. son = wee (Scottish for little) fella (short for fellow), daughter = wee lady/Queen).

5. **I was born & bred in** (enter place name). ... a village, (small) town in the middle of nowhere. Somewhere near a bigger town/city, most people have heard of.

6. **I work** (job description- try to think an inspiring up).

7. **I'm an avid** (add the name of the person who does the hobby) **and am crazy about** (add whatever)

8. **That's all about me.**

generic (allgemein/typisch), **to wane** (schwinden), **to drift off** (abdriften), **rover** (Wandernder), **avid** (begeistert)

12 telephone phrases to speak like a native on the phone.

Here are some phrases YOU may want to use when you are telephoning. The expressions on the left in italics are standard English telephoning phrases. In bold on the right, you have more informal / colloquial phrases, which you will hear, and I would encourage you to start to use too.

Telephoning tip: DON'T USE the more informal phrases in more 'formal' situations – first (potential) client call, etc. However, feel free to 'change' your tone if you hear any more informal language.

1. *"I'll connect / put you through to sb"* = **"I'll pop you through to Mike."**
2. *"Can I repeat the account no. again."* = **"Can I just run the account no. by you again?"**
3. *"Please wait."* = **"Bear with me a sec, I'll just fetch her."**
4. *"Please write it down."* = **"Can you just jot down this ref. no, please?"**
5. *"Have you got sth at hand to write with?"* = **"Have you got something to write with handy?"**
6. *"Can you check the date again, please?"* = **"Do me a favour, please, and double-check the date, would / will you?"**
7. *"He's busy / not available."* = **"He's tied up in a meeting at the mo(ment)."**
8. *"Can you ask her to call me back later".* = **"Can you ask her to give me a ring / bell* later."**
9. *"Do you have his mobile number?"* = **"You don't happen to have his mobile number, do you?"**
10. *"Go ahead."* = **"Yes, fire away."**
11. *"Thank you."* = **"Appreciate your help."**
12. *"I've been trying to reach him on his landline number all morning."* = **"I've been trying to get hold of him on his landline number all morning."**

*more colloquial

Expressions (Ausdrücke), **italics** (kursivschrift), **bold** (fett), **colloquial** (Umgangssprache), **to encourage sb to do sth** (jdn ermutigen etw zu tun), **however**, (jedoch), **to pop sb through** (verbinden), **to run sth by sb** (wiederholen), **to bear with sb** (geduldig sein), **to fetch sb/sth** (jdn/etw. holen), **to jot sth down** (etw kurz notieren), **to have sth handy** (etw griffbereit haben), **to double-check** (nochmals prüfen), **to be tied up** (beschäftigt sein), **to happen to (do)** (zufällig), **"go ahead"** (Fang an / leg los), **landline (number)** (Festnetz), **to get hold of sb** (jdn. erreichen)

15 phrases to spice up your presentations.

Allow me to tell you about a truly inspiring and thought-provoking TED Talk (www.ted.com) by Simon Anholt entitled 'Which country does the most good for the world'. This is the perfect antidote to all that is bad in the world and should be a must-see talk for all leaders – at whatever level.

To create added value too, I took out 15 words / phrases from the speech, which you may already know but are guaranteed to 'spice' up your next speech / presentation if you can work them in:

(1.37) '**In a nutshell**' (kurz gesagt)

(1.48) '**If I look at the downside of** (globalisation)' – obviously 'upside' is then the opposite.

(2.06) when naming examples, '**I could go on**', alternatively '**the list goes on (and on)**'.

(2.46) the '**primary**' reason = instead of 'the most important.'

(6.22) '**It's hardly worth mentioning**' The combination – '**it's worth** (Es lohnt sich) (**mentioning** (zu erwähnen) / **adding** (hinzuzufügen) / **pointing out** (darauf hinzuweisen/ **highlighting** (hervorzuheben)

(7.06) '**given**' (In Anbetracht)

(8.20) '**see the bigger picture.**'

(10.41) do you see '**where I am going**' (worauf Ich hinauswill)

(11.22) '**It does exactly what it says on the tin**' (Es halt was es verspricht)

(12.34) '**According to**' the data (Gemaß/laut)

(14.05) I'm going to '**whip through**' the other slides (schnell durchgehen)

(14.43) '**in terms of**' (bezüglich)

(15.05) introduce something into the '**discourse**' (Vortrag)

(16.41) '**on the other hand**' = maybe comes after '**on the one hand.**'

(17.00) '**Ultimately**'

Did the answer surprise you? Nobody cares two hoots, which nation is top? Wouldn't it better if every country came first?

thought-provoking (nachdenklich machend), **to create added value** (Mehrwert schaffen), '**Nobody cares two hoots (about it)**' (Danach kräht kein Hahn)

20 presentation phrases to structure your talk.

Presenting in any language can be a very stressful and nerve-racking experience. That's why I put together this little list of useful 'presentation phrases' to give you a helping hand.

There are five main groups of typical presentation phrases to start, link, discuss and finish the parts of your presentation. They provide you with the perfect backbone; all you have to do is add some 'body' to it.

Without further ado, let's dive into:

Introducing the topic:

"I'm going to talk about"

"I've divided into/split my presentation up into five parts ..."

"First & foremost, I'd like to give you an overview of"

"Secondly, I'll investigate/look into"

"Next, we'll concentrate/focus on."

"After that, I'm going to consider/deal with"

"Finally, I'll draw/present my conclusions."

"There is a handout (in front of you) on."

Dealing with questions:

"If you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them in the Q&A (questions & answers) section."

"If you have any questions, feel free to ask me. "

Introducing each section:

"So let's start with / jump into.."

"Moving onto"

"I'd like to draw your attention to...."

"This leads me to"

Referring backwards and forwards:

"I mentioned earlier about ..."

"I'll say more/come back to this point later."

Concluding:

“That concludes my talk.”

“That brings me to the end of my presentation.”

“If you have any questions, I’ll do my best to answer them now.”

“Thank you for your attention.”

Get the “Phrases to give your presentation a backbone” as a free PDF –Click here <https://teatimetitbits.de/free-pdfs/> to download your copy.

I hope they will help you get started, at least. However, in today’s TED talk* culture, you may want to make it more unique, maybe add a more personal touch and, of course, be more convincing, so it stands out from the rest.

For 15 more phrases for your presentations

<https://teatimetitbits.de/15-phrases-to-spice-up-your-presentations/>

*Discover the secrets to a successful TED Talk with the book “Talk like TED: The nine public speaking secrets of the world’s top minds by Carmine Gallo.”

If you want to buy the book, why not follow this affiliate link - NO extra cost to you?

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German version: Talk like TED: Die 9 Geheimnisse der besten Redner.

<https://amzn.to/2L36Xy2>

backbone (hier: Grundgerüst), **body** (hier: Inhalt), **without further ado** (ohne weitere Umstände), **nerve-racking** (nervenaufreibend), **to give you a helping hand** (jdm behilflich sein), **to divide into / to split ... up into** (aufgliedern in), **first & foremost** (zuallererst), **to investigate sth / to look into sth** (untersuchen), **to consider sth** (etw bedenken/erwägen), **to deal with sth** (sich mit etw befassen), **to draw / present my own conclusions** (seine Schlüsse ziehen), **to draw your attention to sth** (Ihre Aufmerksamkeit auf etw lenken), **“This leads me to ..”** (das bringt mich ..), **to refer to sth** (beziehen), **to mention sth** (erwähnen), **to conclude** (zum Schluss kommen), **however** (allerdings), **to add a personal touch** (etw eine persönliche Note verleihen), **to be convincing** (überzeugend wirken), **to stand out from the rest** (sich abheben gegen etw), **to proofread** (Korrektur lesen), **to give sb a tinkle** (jdn anrufen), **to discover sth** (etw entdecken)

24 and a bit phrases from agreeing to disagreeing.

Do you have discussions in English at work? Do you often feel your language is somehow limited to a few phrases? Then this post might just give you a helping hand to take up a few more and to help you widen and vary your language. Get the full list here: <https://teatimetitbits.de/download/how-to-agree-and-disagree/>.

I've divided the list into 5 categories from (1) 'Agreeing,' e.g. "I couldn't agree more.", to (5) 'Disagreeing,' e.g. "I can't go along (with you) on that."

Category no. (2) 'Agreeing Tentatively' means you agree but not with confidence, e.g. "I'm inclined to agree (with you) on that". Number 4 is when you 'Express Reservations' as have doubts about what somebody says. Try "To a certain extent, but ..".

Finally, Category no. (3) in the middle 'Being Non-Committal' means you don't give an opinion, you remain neutral like the colloquial phrase "I'm sitting on the fence (on this one)."

Question Of The Day (QOTD) based on the following article:

Who's going to get the ball rolling?

to give sb a helping hand (jdm behilflich sein), **to widen** (erweitern), **to vary** (wechseln), ('agreeing) **tentatively** (zögernd), **'being non-committal'** (zurückhaltend), **'expressing reservations'** (Zweifel ausdrücken), **to get the ball rolling** (Hier: loslegen)

Write like a native.

2 apologies, 6 reasons.

Have you ever got back after long weekend break / a holiday and your email inbox is full to bursting point? What to do? I'm sure the thought of clicking "delete all" is swimming around your mind!

Thanks to your auto-responder, everyone knows you were out of the office. But what about on those occasions when you overlooked mails or put off writing back until later and then simply forgot about them?

Here are a few phrases to hopefully smooth things over. First of all, GROVEL something like:

"I apologise for not **replying** (formal) / **answering** (standard) / **getting back to you** (informal) any earlier but .." or

"I'm (terribly/so) sorry, that I didn't get around to (informal) write back before but .."

Secondly, EXCUSE (make it a good one – hard work is always a good start)

"I've been extremely busy lately".

"I've had a lot to do (standard) / on my plate (informal) recently."

"I've been swamped (standard) / snowed under with (informal) work."

"I've been in endless meetings in the last few days."

"I've been on a lot of business trips in the last few weeks."

And the best till last:

"I'm covering for / standing in for my boss / a colleague."

Hope they work! If not, don't look at me!!!

to be full to bursting point (zum Bertsen voll sein), **to put sth off** (etw verschieben), **to smooth things over** (Schönwetter machen), **to grovel** (um Gnade winseln), **to get around to sth** (dazu kommen, etw zu tun), **excuse** (Ausrede), **to have a lot on my plate** (viel am Hals haben), **to be snowed under with work** (mit Arbeit zugeschüttet sein), **to cover for sb / stand in for sb** (Jdn vertreten)

3 words to soften your language.

Practice the art of sounding more tactful & diplomatic in your mails with just 3 words: WOULD; COULD & MIGHT.

Have a look at the following examples and how they can change the language to sound less direct. The top sentence is the more direct or as we say 'in-your-face' sentence. The one underneath is his more diplomatic, user-friendly buddy.

1. You should revise your time plan.

You **could** (always*) revise your time plan.

2. We need more time to complete the project.

We **might** need more time to complete the project.

3. I don't agree with you on that.

(I'm afraid / I'm sorry**) I **wouldn't** agree with that.

4. I want you to read the instructions first.

You **might** want to read the instructions first.

5. Please connect up with me on social.

You **could** (always*) connect up with me on social.

*The 'you could always' Is a useful structure when you want to suggest something and offer advice to someone.

** Always add one or the other when disagreeing with someone. It helps soften the blow.

'in-your-face' (direct), **to revise sth** (überarbeiten), **instructions** (Anweisungen), **to suggest sth** (etw vorschlagen), **to offer advice** (Rat geben), **to agree with sb** (mit jdm übereinstimmen), **to soften the blow** (den Schlag mildern).

5 tries to get things done.

If at first, you don't succeed, try try try again. Maybe you've heard this proverb before, which recommends tenacity and perseverance to achieve what you want.

An interesting link into mailing. How often are we asked to do something and estimate a due date to complete the task? How's about some 'trying' mail phrases to add to your toolkit?

"I'll endeavour* (1) (endeavor US) to complete the task by Friday." (formal)

"I'll attempt (2) / do my utmost (3) / to complete the task by Friday." (formal)

"I'll try (4) / do my best (5) to finish the task by Friday". (standard)

"I'll try / do my (very) best to finish / get the task done by Friday". (informal)

Notice the use of the 'will' form, which is often used to express a 'promise'. German speakers often make the mistake of leaving it out "I try to do it until Friday".

That leads me to a second common mistake, writing 'until' instead of 'by', which is used to express a deadline – maybe it'll arrive earlier (dream on) but

I'll bust a gut to meet the deadline.

Watch out what you promise!!!

If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try, again (Wirf die Flinte nicht gleich ins Korn), **proverb** (Sprichwort), **tenacity** (Zähigkeit), **perseverance** (Durchhaltevermögen), **to achieve sth** (etw erreichen), **due date** (Hier: Termin), **to estimate** (einschätzen), **to attempt / endeavour** (versuchen), **to do (one's) my utmost** (sein Möglichstes tun), **to express a promise** (ein Versprechen aussprechen), **(to meet a) deadline** (eine Frist / einen Termin einhalten), **'dream on'** (träumen Sie weiter), **to bust a gut** (sich den Arsch aufreißen).

10 Latinisms for your mails.

Maybe you remember that line in the classic Monty Python film 'Life of Brian' – "What have the Romans ever done for us?".

They did a hell of a lot for many European languages, including the English language, and some Latinisms even stayed and are commonly used every day, particularly in written English.

Here's my top 10 ...

ad hoc = formed or done for a particular purpose only "It is an ad hoc meeting to deal with the problem of .."

a.m. = ante meridiem, before noon

e.g. = exempli gratis, for example,

etc. = et cetera, 'and so forth.'

i.e. = id est, 'that means' "the basic essentials of life, i.e. housing, food etc."

N.B. = nota bene, 'note well' "N.B. The office will be closed from 1 July."

p.a. = per annum, 'for each year' "a gross salary of €80 000 p.a."

p.m. = post meridiem, afternoon

P.S. = post scriptum, postscript

vice versa = 'the other way round'.

The Merriam-Webster has compiled a great list of 10 Latin phrases, which appear in English lock, stock, and barrel. Great for your next pub quiz:

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/top-ten-lists/top-10-latin-words-to-live-by/amor-vincit-omnia.html>

line (Textzeile), **gross salary** (Bruttolohn), **to compile a list** (eine Liste erstellen), **lock, stock, and barrel** (ganz und gar)

10 formal mail words to start your own list.

Getting your mails / formal English to the next level is a big ask, and takes time and effort. Non-natives can write very well, but often struggle when it comes to writing more formally.

Tip: The initial (business) correspondence should be more formal.

Here are 10 formal words (left) and their 'standard' counterparts (right). It goes without saying that you should continue to build your own 'List of formal English':

- 1) swift / prompt = quick / fast
- 2) reply = answer
- 3) schedule = diary
- 4) requirements = needs
- 5) to participate = to take part in sth
- 6) employees = staff.
- 7) ample = plenty of
- 8) matter = subject
- 9) convenient = suit(able)
- 10) to appreciate = thankful / grateful

Happy Mailing.

ask (Hier: Aufgabe), **effort** (Mühe), **to struggle** (sich abmühen), , **initial** (anfänglich), "**it goes without saying**" (Es versteht sich von selbst)

10 more formal mail words to add to your list.

Business correspondence isn't what it once was, long-winded formal letters. Today as email rules the roost, things have become more to the point, less formal cos 'time is money'!

Nonetheless, you still have to read the formal mails / letters or be confronted with mails, written in a more formal style, which you feel obliged or want to answer similarly.

Here are 10 formal words (left) in phrases and their less formal (standard) friends (right).

We cannot accept any **amendments / changes** (Abänderung) to the contract.

The terms and conditions are **stipulated / stated** (etw festlegen) in the contract.

We **trust / hope** you (hoffen) will look into this matter as soon as possible.

We regret to **advise / notify** (benachrichtigen) you that there is a delay in the delivery of your goods.

The meeting has been **summoned / called** (Besprechung ansetzen) for 1. September.

We kindly **request / ask** you (jdm um etw bitten) to pay the outstanding invoice within 14 days upon receipt of this reminder.

We feel **compelled / forced** (sich veranlasst finden zu) to make a complaint about your customer services staff.

We can **grant / allow** you (gewähren) an additional period of 14 days to make payment.

We were delighted to **learn / hear** (etw erfahren) that you are interested in

Mr Preston will **attend to / deal** with (etw erledigen/sich um etw kümmern) the matter in my absence.

Happy mailing!

long-winded (langwierig), **to rule the roost** (der Herr im Hause sein), **nonetheless** (Nichtsdestotrotz), **to feel obliged to do sth** (sich verpflichtet fühlen, etw zu tun), **to pay the outstanding invoice** (Rechnung begleichen), **reminder** (Mahnung), **to be delighted** (sehr erfreut sein), **in my absence** (in meiner Abwesenheit), **to know sth off by heart** (etw auswendig können).

15 useful appointment verbs.

Appointments are a crucial part of our lives! Even if we aren't at one, we are probably thinking about one, planning (for) one or also arranging yet another one.

In one of those, I've-got-nothing-better-to-do-moments I brainstormed what we can do with 'appointments'.

This guys and gals is the result of my I've-got-nothing-better-to-do-moment. 15 !!!!
And here they are – neatly wrapped in little dialogues:

"I would like to arrange (1)/make (2)/set up* (3)/fix* (4) an appointment with Mr Preston, Please."

"I'll pencil you in (5) for 3 p.m. on Tuesday."

"Please confirm (6) the appointment as soon as you know for definite."

"I'm sorry, but something has come up, and I can't keep our appointment (7)."

"If you can't manage (8) / make* (9) 3pm, what about postponing (10)/ putting off* (11) until 5pm?"

"Due to unforeseen circumstances we have to cancel (12) / call off* (13) the meeting."

"I'm afraid I overlooked a prior engagement, can we reschedule (14) / rearrange (15), please?"

*(informal)

(1) **arrange** / (2) **make an appointment** = einen Termin vereinbaren / machen

(3) **set up** / (4) **fix an appointment** = einen Termin vereinbaren / machen

(5) **pencil sb in** = vormerken

(6) **confirm an appointment** = bestätigen

(7) **keep an appointment** = einhalten

(8) **manage** / (9) **make an appointment** = es schaffen

(10) **postpone an appointment** / (11) **put an appointment off** = verschieben

(12) **cancel an appointment** / (13) **call an appointment off** = absagen

(14) **reschedule** / (15) **rearrange an appointment** = neu planen

Due to (Wegen), **unforeseen circumstances** (unvorhergesehene Ereignisse / Umstände), **prior engagement** (ältere Verpflichtung)

30 useful phrases for linking & referring in mails.

When writing a mail or preparing a presentation, linking and referring phrases can come in very handy. **'At first'**, they start with phrases like **'First and foremost'** and **'Regarding'** and **'Finally'** they **'conclude'** with phrases like **'Considering'**. See the full list below.

The phrases aren't rocket science, and I'm sure you've come across most of them before, but they allow you to broaden and vary your language when you write your mails or the script for your presentation.

If you want to download this list, visit

to come in handy (zugutekommen), **rocket science** (Raketenwissenschaft), **to come across sth** (auf etw stoßen), **to broaden** (erweitern).

Linking

At first / Firstly / First of all

To begin / start with

First and foremost / First and most importantly

Secondly / Thirdly

Then / after that

Furthermore / In addition / Moreover

Finally / Lastly / Last of all / Last but not least

To conclude

Referring.

Regarding / As regards

As for / to*

Concerning / As far as is concerned

From the point of view of

From an point of view

In terms of*

Given

Considering

***more informal phrases**

Section 2. Grammar (70 posts)

The language of VERBS.

Every field of study has its own jargon, and unfortunately, we trainers have the annoying habit of using these words, assuming that everybody understands these words.

Verbs are those 'do' words, and we conjugate them according to tense etc. The 'infinitive' aka main verb form, e.g. 'to go' changes to past tense form 'went' (2nd column in your dictionary) and the past participle form, i.e. gone (3rd column in your dictionary).

There are also auxiliary aka helping verbs (be, have, do etc.), which help to form questions or make up the 'short answer form' or question tags (aren't you?, isn't he?, don't you? Etc).

"I don't can do that" is a common mistake I hear, which makes every sense to any learner of English – you need the 'do not' form to make a negative in English. Unfortunately, this rule doesn't apply to some of the most important verbs in English, i.e. the MODAL verbs – e.g. be able/can/could, must/have to, should/ought to etc. They don't use the 'auxiliary' verb in the question form either, so you get ... "Can you stand on your head and ?" "No, I can't do that."

Let's call it a day with verbs! Hope it helped. So here's a little list to recap and help you build your own "Jargon of Language List".

auxiliary = helping verb (Hilfsverb)
to conjugate (konjugieren, beugen)
infinitive = main verb form (Grundform)
modal verb (Modalverb)
past participle (Zweites Partizip)
question tag (Bestätigungsfrage)
tense = (Zeitform)

annoying habit (Unsitte), **to assume** (hier: voraussetzen), **according to** (gemäß), **to (rule) apply** (hier: eine Regel anwenden), **i.e.** (d.h), „**Let's call it a day**“ (aufhören), **recap** (Zusammenfassung),

Quizzes. Know your grammar terms 1 + 2?

In my view, quizzes can be an excellent way to improve your English because you see what you know and don't. They can train, tax and even tease you, which is why I call them Tuesday Teasers. Good luck with these grammar terms teasers.

to tax sb (hier: jds Gehirn viel abverlangen), **to tease sb** (ärgern),

Know your grammar terms 1?

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1) adjective | A) I'm usually at my desk by 9 am at the latest. |
| 2) adverb of manner | B) Could you please speak up I can hardly hear you. |
| 3) adverb of frequency | C) Pass me the hole punch , please. |
| 4) article | D) You worked very hard on that assignment. |
| 5) comparative | E) I was up whole night finishing the damn report. |
| 6) modal verb | F) Thank you for the prompt reply. |
| 7) noun | G) You ought to talk to the boss about this. |
| 8) preposition | H) Funny you ask, no I haven't seen her recently . |
| 9) time expression | I) Native speakers are more difficult to understand than other non-natives. |

To speak up (lauter sprechen), **hardly** (kaum), **hole punch** (Locher), **assignment** (Auftrag)

Your answers. (Results below)

1) 2) 3) 4) 5) 6) 7) 8) 9)

Know your grammar terms 2? (more advanced)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1) auxiliary verb | A) I love listening to Audible books on the commute to work. |
| 2) conjunction | B) We're having a winning streak today! |
| 3) gerund | C) Who's the new guy? Have you met him yet? |
| 4) idiom | D) Have you finished the job yet? |
| 5) personal pronoun | E) I followed up on some leads & got nowhere |
| 6) phrasal verb | F) It's been the best week we've had in terms of sales. |
| 7) present participle | G) Can I just go before you because I'm in a rush? |
| 8) question tag | H) When they found out, he got the sack right away |
| 9) superlative | I) We've met somewhere before, haven't we? |

a winning streak (Glückssträhne), **to follow up** (nachfassen)

Your answers. (Results below)

1) 2) 3) 4) 5) 6) 7) 8) 9)

Results.

Know your grammar terms 1?

1) F 2) D 3) A 4) E 5) I 6) G 7) C 8) B 9) H

Know your grammar terms 2?

1) D 2) G 3) A 4) H 5) C 6) E 7) B 8) I 9) F

Four easy tense names.

Everybody hates grammar!!!, right?!?! However hard I try to embed it in a realistic situation or introduce it in an imaginary way; you always get the groans, see the eyes glaze over. The bodies slide down the chair when they even sniff a bit of grammar with the exception, of course, of Hans and Heidi (sorry, if you are called Hans or Heidi – no offence) who let out a little “Yippy the present perfect progressive.”

Who the hell came up with the damn grammar names? They probably never worked in the trenches but in high towers, writing with a feather ink pen on parchment mumbling to themselves, “I’ll confuse these foreigners, you’ll see”.

So here’s my KISS guide to the confusing English tenses:

The NOW PRESENT = the present continuous = temporary (time of speaking)

“You ARE READING this post right now” Signal words include: at the moment, now

The GENERAL PRESENT = the present simple = permanent (facts/regular activities)

“You READ English posts every day” Signal words include: every, always-never,

The PAST PRESENT = the present perfect = an action or event, which started in the past and continues until now

“You HAVE READ any English posts for three months.”

Signal words: How long, for, since, recently etc.

And the SUPER PAST = the past perfect. = a time further back in the past (than the past)

“I HAD never HEARD of this blog before colleagues told me about it.”

to embed (einbringen), **to groan** (Stöhnen), **to glaze over** (glasig werden), **to sniff** (hier: riechen), **“no offence”** (Nichts für ungut!), **“Who the hell ..?”** (Wer zur Hölle/zum Teufel), **to come up with sth** (sich etw ausdenken), **to work in the trenches** (hier: an der Front arbeiten), **parchment** (Pergament), **to mumble to oneself** (vor sich hin murmeln), **tenses** (Zeitformen), **comprehensive** (umfassend)

Don't always speak like a native.

I always preach, listen and copy! Most of the time, this advice is the easiest way to learn to speak a language, and it's the way we learn to speak our native language.

In his video '[10 common mistakes that native English speakers make](#)' (click on link), Paul from Langfocus shows us that natives don't always get it right.

(BTW you can get a summary of the "Common mistakes even natives make" <https://teatimeitbits.de/free-pdfs/>.) Add PDF to website

Today, I would like to go into four specific 'grammar' terms, which he mentions in the vid. Are you ready for them?

1. (In)transitive verbs,

We use 'transitive verbs' with a direct object (noun/thing), 'intransitive verbs' are used without a direct object. e.g. "She wrote a letter." (a letter is the direct object), e.g. "He died suddenly." to verb 'die' is intransitive.

2. Homophones,

A homophone is a word that is pronounced like another word but has a different spelling or meaning, e.g. some & sum.

3. Stative verbs.

A stative verb describes the way something 'IS' (be, seem, understand, like, own, etc.) not any ACTION. Dynamic verbs (eat, grow, knock etc) describe ACTIONS.

4. The subjunctive mood

The subjunctive mood is a special form of a verb used to talk about imaginary situations (made-up hypothetical situations that will never happen).

1. e.g. If my mom were to become the President ... If + were (not ~~was~~) + infinitive (to become),
2. demands, e.g. "Schools require that each student be on time daily" be (not ~~is~~)
or
3. requests, e.g. "Michelle requests that each guest bring a bottle of wine." bring (not ~~brings~~)
4. or wishes that haven't happened yet, e.g. I wish he were able to come to the birthday party.

N.B. when you use the verb 'to be' in the subjunctive mood, use 'be' in the present tense and 'were' in the past or future tense (see above example) no matter what the

subject is. When you use the 'he' or 'she' form, drop the 's' or 'es' at the end of the verb (see example 3).

Hope that has clued you up a little and with PDF sheet at hand the VOTW 'wonN'T' be all Greek to you!!!!!!

to preach (etw propagieren), **however** (Jedoch), **summary** (Zusammenfassung), **terms** (Begriffe), **to mention** (erwähnen), **thing** (Dingsbums), **to pronounce** (aussprechen), **demand** (Aufforderung), **request** (Bitte), **to clue sb up** (informieren), **to be all Greek to sb** (böhmische Dörfer für jdn sein),

Getting (your) graffiti wrong!

How embarrassing getting your graffiti wrong! You would have thought doing his homework first would be a no-brainer. But not for our Brian, in a flash of madness, he ran out, paint & brush in hand and started daubing "Romans go home" in Latin (or so he thought) on a wall.

Luckily, a passing (on foot patrol) Roman centurion noticed Brian's abysmal attempt at Latin and took it upon himself to coach him to the correct version and told him to repeat it 100 times. Yes, repetition, by far the best way to learn – well done, centurion!

To relive this epic scene from Monty Python's ['Life of Brian'](#), click the link.

Wanna get your graffiti checked, why not try out Grammarly? Ideal for anyone who wants their graffiti to be right.

no-brainer (Das versteht sich von selbst), **to daub** (etw pinseln), **abysmal** (grottenschlecht), **attempt** (Versuch), **to take sth upon oneself** (etw auf sich nehmen),

Present continuous vs. present simple.

The tenses are one of the biggest challenges when it comes to learning English. Never fear we will walk you through them, tense by tense, in a KISS practical way so that you can easily use the lessons learnt going forward.

'Permanent' and 'temporary' are two words to keep in mind when talking in the 'present' in English.

'Permanent' is for facts, regular habits, and routines. We use the present simple.

Fact: "I live in Münster and work for (name of company)." (fact/doesn't change)

Habit: "I (usually)* play football twice a week." (*often with adjective of frequency
'Always = 100% – never = 0%')

Routine: "I get up at 6 a.m. and drive to work at 7 a.m. every morning." (often with 'how often' = Keywords: 'every', 'once', 'twice', 'three times')

'Temporary' is for something happening over a short time. We use the present continuous.

"I'm working on a project in Leipzig this week. Next week I will be back in Münster"(often using the word 'this' to get the message across that it is only a short period of time, which then changes again – also 'today,' 'this morning,' 'this week,' 'this month,' even 'this year')

"At present, I'm working on an important project." (with 'NOW' words/phrases – 'now', 'at the moment', 'at present', 'currently')

"Look, a man is peeing in the bushes over there." (Sorry for the example!!!) (often used after 'look' & 'listen' to talk about what is happening right now)

German speakers often overuse the present continuous by saying:

Incorrect: "I'm living in Münster and working for (name of company)."

Correct: "I live in Münster and work for (name of company)." (see above)

Incorrect: "I'm (usually) playing football twice a week."

Correct: "I (usually) play football twice a week." (see above)

Incorrect: "I'm getting up at 6 a.m. and driving to work at 7 a.m. every morning."

Correct: "I get up at 6 a.m. and drive to work at 7 a.m. every morning." (see above)

Make sense? I hope a few light bulbs went on. In the upcoming posts, I'll look into some other things to watch out for.

Tense (Zeitform), **challenge** (Herausforderung), **when it comes to** (wenn es um geht), **never fear** (keine Angst), **KISS** (Keep it short and simple), **going forward** (von jetzt an), **to sprinkle** (einstreuen),

habits (Gewohnheiten), **to overuse** (übernutzen), **light bulb** (Glühbirne), **to look into sth** (in etw hineinschauen)

Pres.continuous vs. Pres.simple quiz

Welcome to today's teaser, a good old fashioned gap-fill exercise. Fill in the gap with the correct forms of the verbs in bracket (verb). Good luck. You're going to need it!!!!

"Hi, we haven't seen each other for a long time, how you (keep) (1) ?" "I (do) (2) fine thanks, and you?"

"Hey everyone, listen up, meet Dave, he's our new sales guy. Would you believe it, he (come) (3) from Sheffield of all places and (support) (4) Liverpool". "Eh, boss, he won't last long, here"!!

"Let's just take a look at sales figures for this month. We (see) (5) a pick-up in sales. In short, I think we can say that business (look) (6) up."

"I (prefer) (7) the look of this new model. How else it (differ) (8) from the predecessor."

"No, I'm afraid, Mr Preston (speak) (9) on the other line at the moment. Can I take a message for him?"

"How you (get) (10) on in the new job?" "Well, I'm in the working -in phase everyone (seem) (11) nice. It's a huge learning curve though, and I (struggle) (12) to keep everything together."

"Dave, could you pop in my office, please? We (have) (13) difficulty closing a deal in Sheffield, you (happen)(14) to know the company or even anyone there?"

"We (try) (15) out this free new software Grammarly, you (know) (16) it?" "It's brilliant, it (check) (17) everything."

Answers template

1)..... 2) 3) 4) 5)

6) 7) 8) 9) 10)

11)..... 12) 13) 14)

15) 16)..... 17)

Answers.

1) are ... keeping 2) I'm doing 3) comes 4) supports 5) are seeing

6) is looking up 7) prefer 8) does differ 9) is speaking 10) are getting

11) seem 12) am struggling 13) are having 14) do happen 15) are trying

16) do know 17) checks

Always

Everyone enjoys a nag now and again and what better than to get at your nearest and dearest.

“Matthew (my son), you’re always leaving your toys on the floor for Daddy to Hoover up!” (Yes, I every time do the Hoovering at home).

Stop right there!! Hold those horses!! Yes, I deliberately built in a typical German mistake into the last sentence. Of course, ‘every time’ literally means ‘always’ so use ‘always’ when you want to say ‘every time’ if you get my drift.

Always is an adverb of frequency (AOF) – like normally, usually, etc. and as such describe how often something happens: “I always brush my teeth before I go to bed.”

Please, notice two things.

1. The AOF goes between the subject (I) and the verb (brush) except for in conjunction with the verb ‘to be’, e.g. “I’m always on the last push for appointments.” You see the AOF comes after the ‘to be’ form.
2. As the AOF are often used when you want to talk about regular actions, routines and habits, they go hand in hand with present simple tense (I brush).

So back to the nagging. Did you see that I wrote “... you’re always leaving” as opposed to “.... you always leave”? It is an exception to the above rule because you can use the present continuous with ‘always’, or similar words like ‘constantly’, ‘continually’, or ‘forever’, to emphasize that something is done so often that it is characteristic of a person, group or thing. We often use this pattern when you want to COMPLAIN.

(Page 4) Advanced Grammar in Use. (Martin Hewings) <https://amzn.to/316VMMk>

a nag (Mecker), **to get at sb** (jdn auf den Pelz rücken), **your nearest and dearest** (seine lieben), (staubsaugen), **“Hold those horses”** (Immer mit der Ruhe), **deliberately** (mit Absicht), **to get sb’s drift** (jdm folgen können), **except for** (außer), **in conjunction with** (in Verbindung mit), **to be on the last push** (auf dem letzten Drücker sein), **appointments** (Termine), **habits** (Gewohnheiten), **to go hand in hand with** (zusammengehören), **as opposed to** (anstatt), **exception** (Ausnahme), **to emphasise** (betönen)

State / stative verbs.

When the Macydees (McDonald's) first came out with "I'm loving it" slogan, I thought to myself, can you say that? Isn't it grammatically wrong?

It turns out you can, but firstly here's why I thought it was wrong. Some 'state' verbs, e.g. 'to love' are rarely used in the present continuous form (to be + verb-ing), which is true. But, and there's always a but, the verb 'love' is special. We can use it in the continuous form too, especially to emphasize the situation is temporary or for some time around the present.

Take this example:

"Janet often stays with us. The kids love having her here." (present simple)

Janet's with us at the moment. (Temporary!!!) The kids are loving having her around. (present continuous)

Did you know that there is a whole list of verbs so-called 'state' verbs, which are **NOT** NORMALLY used in the present continuous because they describe 'states' that last for some time?

Check out this list and examples @ the FREE PDF section: [List of state verbs](#).

In the meantime, the Macydees slogan has grown on me just like the BigMac and my waist.

to turn out (sich herausstellen), **to emphasize** (etw betonen), **temporary** (vorübergehend), **in the meantime** (mittlerweile), **to grow on sb** (jdm ans Herz wachsen), **waist** (Taille)

Friday for future.

Don't worry, I'm not going to get all political on you – especially on a Friday! So why the title, you may ask? Did you know that we also use the two present tenses in aspects of the future?

Check this out. If you have an appointment or arrangement (fixed in your schedule/diary) with somebody, then we use the present continuous form to talk about it.

“What time **are** you **meeting** Dave this afternoon?” “I’**m meeting** him at 3 pm then I’**m having** dinner with another friend at 5 pm.”

What about the present simple? Anything, which runs according to a schedule, uses the present simple (even in the future).

“What time **does** the film **start** at the cinema this evening?” “It **starts** at 7 pm.”

“What time **does** your train **leave** this afternoon?” “It **leaves** at 5.45 pm.”

And that leads me straight into the next titbit for you! Which seems more correct for you?

“I’ll miss you when you will leave.” or “I’ll miss you when you leave”.

Maybe your gut feeling would say the first, but of course, I gave the game away by talking about the present simple before! The latter is correct, and the pattern is the same after the following words: **WHEN, IF, BEFORE, AFTER, UNLESS.**

After those words, even if it is a future idea, we use the present simple afterwards.

“We’ll set off, if you **don’t arrive** by 2 pm, ok!” (.. if you ~~won’t~~ arrive)

“Make sure to say goodbye, before you **leave** tomorrow” (... before you ~~will~~-leave)

So I’ll be back tomorrow with another post if you **want** to join me!

Appointment (Termin), **arrangement** (Vereinbarung / Verabredung), **according to** (Gemäß), **gut feeling** (Bauchgefühl), **to give the game away** (alles ausplaudern), **the latter** (letzteres), **pattern** (Schema), **to set off** (aufbrechen)

What was your weekend like?

“Too short” is the resounding response whenever I ask this question in my sessions. I often wonder why we can’t work at the weekend and have Monday to Friday off? That would make for a better work-life balance, wouldn’t it?

Naturally talking about the weekend involves using the past tense in English. Maybe you remember from school reciting/chanting the irregular verb forms “go, went, gone”, “buy, bought, bought” or even “sit, sat, sat”? Or your teacher shouting “We all know ‘play’ is a regular verb, right, Fritz!”, “So, how do we form a past tense of a regular verb, Fritz?” “Fritz, past tense of ‘play’, please and stop playing with Frederike at once!”.

“Yes, Sir, I also play with Frederike yesterday.”

All the chanting & picking on Fritz is one thing, but often when it comes to putting sentences together in the past, the correct form goes out of the window, and you end up with a very frustrated Fritz.

Anyway, I’ll dive into more detailed aspects of the ins and outs of the past tense this week. Today, I would like to introduce you into what I call ‘verb and friends’ (in grammar speak – phrasal verbs – a verb + (a) preposition(s), which together very OFTEN create a new meaning). Let’s have a look at some useful WEEKEND phrasal verbs.

There is a ‘stop/stay in’, which means to ‘stay at home’ and ‘not go out to a pub, club, restaurant or party’ and there’s a ‘stop or stay out’, meaning ‘not to go home’. We commonly talk about ‘stopping/staying out until the early/wee hours’. Bet you didn’t know that a person who does this is mockingly called a ‘dirty stop-out’? I didn’t know it’s a ‘dirty stay-out’ in American English until an American recently corrected me.

If you ‘stop/stay in’ you can decide to ‘stop/stay up late’ (go to bed late), or you drop off (fall asleep) on the couch while ‘chilling out’ (BTW – why is there no ‘chill in’? – ALTHOUGH maybe I’ve just coined a new English phrase – “I chilled in at the weekend” meaning I meditated!

What’s more, you can choose to ‘eat in’ (at home) or ‘eat out’ (in a restaurant/friends etc.)’ depending on what ‘turns you on’ at the time – but we’ll not go there now.

After a long night out or an early morning home, you need to ‘catch up on’ some sleep, so we sleep longer, get up later which we call to ‘lie in’ or ‘have a lie-in’. But please don’t mix it up with to ‘sleep in’ in British English, because it can also mean to ‘oversleep’, “I forgot to set the alarm clock and slept in/overslept”.

resounding (hier: lautstark), **to involve** (hier: erfordern), **to recite sth** (auswendig aufsagen), **to chant** (im Sprechchor rufen), **to pick on sb** (hier: jdn drannehmen), **the ins and outs** (alle Einzelheiten), **mockingly** (spöttisch), **to coin a new phrase** (einen Ausdruck prägen), **to turn sb on** (Jdn. antun), **to catch up on sth** (etw nachholen), **to lie in or to have a lie-in** (ausschlafen), **to oversleep** (verschlafen)

How well do you know your past tense?

'Blockbusters' was a general knowledge TV quiz when I was growing up in the UK. The contestants have to complete a line of squares on a board before their competitors. Each square has a letter on it, so they say to the quizmaster Bob Holdness, "I'd like a 'P' please, Bob". The person who hits the buzzer the right answer first wins the field and can choose another.

Inspired by this game, here's Blockbusters 1 and is designed to check your knowledge of the irregular 'past tense' forms. For a bit of fun – how would you do? Here goes, hands on the buzzer, let's play Blockbuster (enter music)

contestants (Kandidat), **competitors** (Mitbewerber), **participants** (Teilnehmer), **to look sth up** (nachschiagen),

Blockbusters 1.

1. What 'P' is the past tense of 'pay'.
2. What 'A' is the past tense of 'eat'.
3. What 'B' is the past tense of 'buy'.
4. What 'C' is the past tense of 'choose'.
5. What 'R' is the past tense of 'rise'.
6. What 'S' is the past tense of 'send'.
7. What 'T' is the past tense of 'teach'.
8. What 'W' is the past tense of 'you are'.
9. What 'D' is the past tense of 'drink'.
10. What 'H' is the past tense of 'must'.

Answers template.

- 1) 2) 3) 4) 5) 6) 7) 8) 9) 10)

How do you think you did with the first quiz, do you want to try another one?

Blockbusters 2.

- 1) What 'B' is the past tense of 'bring'.
- 2) What 'C' is the past tense of 'catch'.
- 3) What 'F' is the past tense of 'fly'.
- 4) What 'L' is the past tense of 'lend'.

- 5) What 'R' is the past tense of 'ride'.
- 6) What 'S' is the past tense of 'set'.
- 7) What 'T' is the past tense of 'tear'.
- 8) What 'W' is the past tense of 'wake'.
- 9) What 'D' is the past tense of 'drive'.
- 10) What 'S' is the past tense of 'spend'.

Answers template.

1)..... 2) 3) 4) 5) 6) 7)
..... 8) 9) 10)

Blockbusters 1. Answers.

1) paid 2) ate 3) bought 4) chose 5) rose 6) sent 7) taught 8) you were 9) drank
10) had to

Blockbusters 2. Answers:

1) brought 2) caught 3) flew 4) lent 5) rode 6) set 7) tore 8) woke 9) drove 10) spent

Be used to.

During a recent trip to the UK, we returned to my childhood summer holiday destination, where we 'used to'* have a caravan and spend most of my holidays.

*Talking about things that happened regularly in the past (my childhood), but **NO LONGER** happen.

Here's another example for it 'NO LONGER' happening:

"I used to play football, but I don't play very often now".

The trip was a blast from the past – walk down memory lane, it reminded me of back then when I USED TO play footy/cricket on the beach, bury my Dad in the sand & go swimming in temperatures that would give me a heart attack nowadays. Back then we DIDN'T USE to have a toilet or shower in the caravan – just a toilet & shower block – ah those were the days!

'Would' can be used in a similar way when talking about things that happened regularly in the past.

"I USED TO play footy/cricket on the beach."

"I WOULD play footy/cricket on the beach."

Question of the Day: Where did you USE to go on holidays as a kid?

P.S. The well-known Irish Band 'The Saw Doctors' wrote a great song entitled 'I used to love her'. <https://youtu.be/QtAxF3BQFRg>

Use to (do sth) (pflegen, etw zu tun), **blast from the past** (Eine Begegnung mit der Vergangenheit), **walk down memory lane** (in Erinnerungen schwelgen), **to bury** (begraben), **caravan** (Wohnwagen)

How to pronounce 'ed' in regular past tense verbs.

At the meat counter in our local supermarket, I often hear people pronouncing the 'corned' (beef) by separating the word into 'corn' and 'ed'. The same goes for baked beans, but not at the meats counter obviously. Thankfully I don't hear the word 'f**ked' very often in a German supermarket - that was just an eye-catcher.

Did you know there are rules which determine how you pronounce the 'ed' at the end of a regular verb (a verb, which ends in '(e)d' in the past)?

Let's start with the verbs 'decide' and 'last' first. We pronounce the 'ed' as 'id'

Any regular verb, which ends in the 'd' or 't' SOUND, the 'ed' is pronounced as 'id'

What about 'bake', 'pass', 'watch', 'wash' and 'drop'?

Any regular verb, which ends in the 'k', 's', 'ch', 'sh', or 'p' SOUND, the 'ed' is pronounced as 't'

The majority of regular verbs (except for the above), the 'ed' is pronounced as 'd'.

Remember if you want to get a bottle of that new brand of Vodka 'F**KED', you will know how to say it correctly.

P.S. Public health warning: Guys, please, don't ask a female assistant where you can get 'F**KED'!!!

P.S.S. Did you know that if a regular verb ending in a 'Y' has a consonant before the 'Y' (hurry, study, apply), you replace the 'Y' with an 'i' and add 'ed' (hurried, studied, applied)? If the 'Y' has a vowel before it (play, enjoy), it keeps the 'Y' and adds 'ed' (played, enjoyed)

Meat counter (Fleischtheke), **to pronounce** (aussprechen), **to determine** (bestimmen), **exception** (Ausnahme), **to replace** (ersetzen), **vowel** (Vokal)

When 'was' and when 'were'?

Reviewing some of the basic grammar can be fun. Take the past tense of 'to be' for example! Have you conjugated it in your head yet? "I was, you was, he was, we was, you was, and they was" How did it go for you, anything like that? Don't worry. You are not alone.

It's perfectly logical – no other verb changes in the past tense, does it? "I played etc., or I went, etc.", if you see what I mean? So why on earth should 'to be' be any different? To catch the foreigners out and many fall in the trap.

Before I go on, please go and watch this sketch with the London based German stand-up comedian Henning Wehn and listen carefully between 0.25 sec and 0.44 sec. <https://youtu.be/48gV9W9UZHk>

Have you watched it? Be honest, ok, so before I review the past tense of 'to be'. I tell the folks to stand up, and then I ask if anyone in the class is from London (I say it with a broad Cockney accent). Naturally, I get puzzled looks, and the fun begins!!!

"Now children," I say with a grin on my face. Then I place my hand on my chest and say out loud "I was" – I encourage them to follow suit. I point at one of the other students and say "you were" – they follow suit. Next up I point to a 'geezer' (a London word for 'man') and shout "he was". You get the picture!

At the end of the full drill, I play them that sequence of the YouTube video. And everyone realizes why I ask if they come from LONDON.

Have fun watching the rest of Henning and remember, "I was", "you were", - how could you ever forget?

to conjugate (konjugieren), "**why on earth...**" (Warum um Gottes willen..?), **to catch sb out** (hier: jdn überrumpeln), **to fall into a trap** (hereinfallen), **sketch** (hier: kurze Darstellung/Sketch), **broad Cockney accent** (ausgeprägter Cockney (London) Akzent), **puzzled look** (verblüffte Miene), **to follow suit** (nachziehen), "**You get the picture**" (kapiere),

Simple past vs Present perfect

“What did you do?” vs “What have you done at the weekend?”

As it is Monday, you may spend some of your day chin-wagging with colleagues about the weekend. So here’s a little question for you. Which do you use – the left or the right? Drum roll the LEFT one, of course. The weekend is over (in the past), signalled by the ‘at the weekend’.

The “have ... done*” form (Present Perfect) (*3rd form (past participle) of ‘to do’ (see 3rd column of any verb list in any dictionary, grammar book) or as I call it the ‘Past Present’(P.P.), as my name says, has something to do with the past and the present - something started in the past and continues to today.

It is tough because you don’t have such a tense in German, even though your past tense (haben gesehen) could be mistaken for the P.P. (have seen).

To make life a little easier, I revamped the tense name (Past Present) to make it clearer that it has to do with both the past and the present. I offer so-called ‘signal words’ to serve as aide-memoirs. If this tense confuses you, then this week is just for you.

Let’s jump in with the first set of signal words:

How long, for (period of time), **since** (specific time) – when an action is still ongoing.

“How long **have** you **worked** for XYZ company?”

“I **have worked** for XYZ company for 5 years / since 2011.”

That means you joined 5 years ago and you still work there now.

N.B. The German translation:

“Wie lange **arbeitest** Du bei der Firma XYZ?”

“Ich **arbeite** bei der Firma XYZ seit 5 Jahren.“

See how you use the German **present** tense !!!!!!!!!. Is it any wonder then that the ‘Denglish’ version is:

“How long (do) you work for XYZ company or are you working ...?”

“I am working / I work for XYZ company since 5 years.”

Here are some other examples, with this CORRECT construction:

Present partner:

“How long **have** you **been** together/**been*** married?”

“We **have been** together for 7 years”.

*3rd form of 'to be.'

Present home:

"How long **have** you **lived** in Münster?"

"I've **lived*** in Münster for 10 years."

*the long 'have lived' is often shortened to "I've (lived)"

Present car:

"How long **have** you **had** your BMW?"

"I've **had*** it for 6 years now?"

* seems strange maybe, but it's correct.

Recap. See how all the headlines talk about "**PRESENT** Thingy", however, these thingy bobs started in the past and are still ongoing now, today – the **PRESENT**.

Hope it helps a little!?!? Stay tuned for the next instalment of the P.P. saga.

to chin-wag (plaudern), **tense** (Zeitform), **to revamp** (hier: etw ausbessern), **aide-memoirs** (Eselsbrücke), **to confuse sb** (jdn durcheinander bringen), "**Is it any wonder then that..**"? (Ist es da noch verwunderlich, dass), **to recap** (etw wiederholen), **thingy** (Dingsbums), **stay tuned** (Bleiben Sie dran), **instalment** (Fortsetzungsfolge)

How long have you..... ? Quiz

I guess it's not really a Tuesday 'teaser' as such today, but more of a practice worksheet to help you remember what we looked at yesterday.

Let's kick off with a reminder:

Let's say you want to talk about the company you work for. You have 2 options to express 'how long with the company'

1. "I **joined** the company in 2015". You use the simple past because the time when you joined /started was in the past.

However, it is much more natural to say:

2. "I **have worked*** for the company for 5 years / since 2015*." That means you joined 5 years ago and you still work there now.

The "have ... worked*" form is called the present perfect (P.P.) or as I call it the 'Past Present'(P.P.), as my name says, has something to do with the past and the present - something started in the past and continues to today. We can use ***for** (period of time) or **since** (specific time).

It is formed by the auxiliary verb 'to have' and the past participle form of the main verb. In the above example, it is easy because the main verb is a so-called 'regular verb', which means it ends in 'ed' in the past participle form just like in the simple past tense.

To 'drive', on the other hand, is an irregular verb and so the verb changes in the simple past:

"I drove* to work yesterday instead of taking the bus."

*2 nd column in the irregular verb list.

In the P.P. form:

"I've driven* my BMW now for 6 years".

*2 nd column in the irregular verb list.

So we already covered your job, let's take a look at "How long you have" in some other important parts of your life. Here's an example with the job.

I'll give you the headlines: Present job. As well as the main verb 'work' you should use. Firstly practice asking the question and giving an answer for you.

E.g. Present job: to work

Question: "How long have you worked for the company?"

Answer: "I've **worked** for the company for 5 years / since 2015."

Now tries these 5:

Present partner: to be together / married

Question:

Answer:

Present flat / house: to live.

Question:

Answer:

(Present) Best friend: to know

Question:

Answer:

(Present) main hobby / interest: to be into

Question:

Answer:

(Present) car: to have

Question:

Answer:

Answers

Present partner: to be together / married

Question: How long have you been together / married?

Answer: We've been together for 10 years.

Present flat / house: to live.

Question: How long have you lived in your flat?

Answer: I've lived in my flat for 3 years.

(Present) Best friend: to know

Question: How long have you known your best mate?

Answer: I've known him for as long as I can remember

(Present) main hobby / interest: to be into

Question: How long have you been into football?

Answer: I've been into footy since **I was a kid*** (specific time = past)

Present car: to have

Question: How long have you had your BMW?

Answer: I've had it for a couple of months now.

Recently & co.

Recently, lately, in the last few hours, days, weeks etc. all talk about a time going back from the present but without stating exactly back to when – maybe it's not important or even known exactly how long it goes back. The important thing is the time started in the PAST and continues up to the PRESENT – remember Dave's tip PAST PRESENT, aka Present Perfect in correct grammar speak.

Typical situations: "Have you seen Dave recently?"

(It depends on the situation. At work between colleagues, it usually means minutes/hours, in private between family or friends, and it could mean hours, days or even weeks)

"Yes, I have. He was at the photocopier a few minutes ago."

(N.B. short answer with the auxiliary verb 'have' and then go into the PAST – A.G. O)

"No, I haven't (seen him recently). The last time I saw him was sometime last week."

What about another:

"I've been a bit under the weather lately, so I went to the doc yesterday!" (ONLY I really know how long that is. The DOC asked me to be more precise.)

But as I didn't remember the exact time I said

"Well, doc, in the last few days, I haven't been as fit as a fiddle." (so if you want to be more precise with your times, you have the phrase 'in the last few'. N.B., just because you see the word 'last' in the phrase, don't use the PAST tense form with it.

QOTD: "Have you heard a great joke lately?" AND is it clean enough to pass on?!?

Recently, lately, (kürzlich/neulich), **auxiliary verb** (Hilfsverb), **to be under the weather** (nicht ganz in Form sein)

So far & co.

How has this year been so far? Have you accomplished (all) your goals for this year yet? I hope you have already achieved some of your goals. Which goals haven't you (quite) met yet?

Did the 3 signal words for Present Perfect (Past Present – Dave's version) become clear above?

1. So far – “How has your year been for you so far?”
2. Yet – “Have you already achieved your goals for this year yet?”
3. Already – “I hope you have already achieved some of my goals for this year.

This year started on 1.Jan (PAST), and we're still in this year NOW (PRESENT). Therefore, we're talking about the time between the past and present. The 3 words often work together, check out the parent/kid scenario:

Parents “Have you finished all your homework yet”?

Kid “Yes, I've already finished maths & French but haven't finished English yet?”

Parent “How much have you done so far?”

Kid “Not much so far – I'll finish it later”.

As a very simplified rule of thumb way to remember which to use when, here's my KISS version – ‘yet’ is mostly used in ‘questions’ and ‘negative’ statements/answers, ‘already’ in ‘positive’ statements/answers and ‘so far’ in ‘questions’ and ‘negative’ statements/answers.

Hope it helps – stay tuned for more.

to accomplish a goal (Ziel erreichen), **so far** (bisher/lang), **yet** (bis jetzt), **already** (bereits), **rule of thumb** (Faustregel)

I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

Do you recognise the title from anywhere else? Seconds of head-scratching, chin-stroking in deep thought while staring into space later – U2, you cry?!?! – no, not the underground /subway line!

Yes, of course, the Irish band of the same name. This is one of my favourite U2 songs, which always gives me goosebumps as my mind is cast back to some far-flung part of my past when life seemed a fuck of a lot easier – probably cos it was – I was student!!!!

This song title is a perfect example of the 'past perfect' (Dave's name) aka present perfect (grammar term)! It is a search, which started in the past and is still going on till now.

If you want to sing along, check out this link: <https://youtu.be/fmxOUlddBm0> . If you would prefer to watch the original vid, then click on this link: https://youtu.be/e3-5YC_oHjE .

Back to TFIF (Dave's name: "Thank f**k it's Friday) aka TGIF (common expression – Thank God it's Friday). Have you planned your weekend yet?

Whatever you maybe do, do it well and have a great weekend.

To scratch one's head (sich am Kopf kratzen), **to stroke one's chin** (sich über das Kinn streichen), **deep in thought** (tief in Gedanken versunken), **to stare into space** (ins Leere starren), **goosebumps** (UK) **bumps** (US) (Gänsehaut), **to cast one's mind back to sth** (an etw zurückdenken), **far-flung** (entlegen), **probably** (Wahrscheinlich), **cos** (short form – because).

Ever

What's the best present you've ever received? On 20 Sept. 2011 my son Matthew was born on my birthday!!!! That's the best present (by a million miles) I have ever had. And you?

Notice the signal word here? 'Ever' meaning at any time in your life - your life started in the past and continues up to today. The question, therefore, "Have you ever been to New York?" literally means "have you 'at any time in your life' been to New York?"

Now, this is where the confusion starts – how do you answer it?

Some make this mistake: "~~I've been to NY in 2008.~~"

Say either:

- ✓ ("Yes, I have**"), "I've been to NY" (with NO specific / named past time)
- ✓ ("Yes, I have**"), "I went to NY in 2008" (with specific / named past time =simple past).
- ✓ ("No, I haven't.*"), "I've never** been to NY."

*I always suggest giving the short answer and adding to it if necessary.

** the negative of 'ever' is never 'at NO time in your life:

Then there is also sometimes confusion why we say 'been to' instead of 'gone to' from 'go' to NY. 'Been' is used always used with the idea of going and COMING back. Check out

"Where've you been?" = You are here now!!! But where did you go?

"Where's Dave gone?" = He isn't here now!!! Where is he/where did he go?

Have you ever left a comment below? What better time to start as now! What's the best present you've ever received? Go on I'd love to hear your story.

ever, (jeweils), **confusion** (Verwirrung), **to suggest** (vorschlagen), **to add** (hinzufügen), **if necessary** (wenn nötig)

Grammar Quiz: Which is correct?

I think we've done enough of the 'past present' or more correctly named the 'present perfect' for you to rise to the challenge of today's quiz.

Example:

Everything is going well. We didn't have / haven't had any problems so far.

(haven't had is correct)

- 1) Lisa didn't go / hasn't gone to work yesterday. She wasn't feeling well.
- 2) Your son is much taller than when I last saw him. He grew / has grown a lot.
- 3) I still don't know what to do. I didn't decide / haven't decided yet.
- 4) I haven't seen / didn't see you at the party on Saturday.
- 5) When Sue heard the news, she wasn't / hasn't been very pleased.
- 6) This is a nice restaurant, isn't it? Is this the first time you are / you've been here?
- 7) I need a new job. I'm doing / I've done the same one for too long.
- 8) 'Where's Ann?' `Anna went / has gone out.'
- 9) `Oh, What time did she go / has she gone?'
- 10) I'd like to see Tina again. It's a long time since I saw her / that I didn't see her.
- 11) Robert and Maria have been married since 20 years / for 20 years.
- 12) Have you ever been / Did you ever go to Britain?
- 13) Finally, I've finished / I finished my work.

Answers template.

- 1)..... 2) 3) 4)
..... 5) 6) 7)
..... 8) 9) 10)
..... 11) 12) 13)
.....

Answers.

1) didn't go, 2) has grown, 3) haven't decided, 4) didn't see 5) wasn't 6) you've been, 7) I've done, 8) has gone, 9) did she go 10) saw, 11) for 20 years, 12) Have you ever been ?, 13. I've finished

Present Perfect for news(paper) readers.

Have you ever read news articles and wondered why they often start with the 'present perfect' form or as I call it the 'past present'? Check this out.

"Two 15-year-olds **have been** arrested in connection with a knife attack on a 14-year-old in London."

What is 'NEWS'? It's new information for somebody. When did the action or event take place? In the past, however, the time isn't given* or even known. The connection to the PRESENT is the new information. *(if so the simple past tense would be correct)

Here are a couple of other examples from the BBC News app.

Coronavirus "Hong Kong **has begun** a mandatory two-week quarantine for anyone arriving from mainland China."

"Senior Conservatives **have written** to Tory MPs to raise concerns about the government's decision to allow Huawei to play a role in the UK's 5G network."

"A criminal gang that trafficked tonnes of stolen waste cardboard from Madrid to Asian countries **has been shut** down, Spanish police say."

Here's the thing, you could give another reason for the use of the PP in the above examples, namely, the RESULT now of a past action/event.

"Two 15-year-olds **have been** arrested in connection with a knife attack on a 14-year-old in London."

They were arrested sometime in the past (not really important when). What is the result NOW? They are off the streets and in police custody.

Here are possible conclusions for the other news item.

"Hong Kong **has begun** a mandatory two-week quarantine for anyone arriving from mainland China."

Result: Hong Kong is taking action to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

"Senior Conservatives **have written** to Tory MPs to raise concerns about the government's decision to allow Huawei to play a role in the UK's 5G network."

Result: Senior Conservatives are warning their colleagues about Huawei.

"A criminal gang that trafficked tonnes of stolen waste cardboard from Madrid to Asian countries **has been shut** down, Spanish police say."

Result: The gang can't operate anymore.

More practically, you can use this idea in a whole host of situations:

1. "I've lost my keys" – RESULT: you can't get into the room/building.
2. "We've (already) seen the film (before)" – RESULT: don't want to watch again / want to watch another
3. "Oh, shit, I've left my wallet at home" – RESULT: I can't pay for something
4. "I've made you a cup of tea" – RESULT: It's there for you, please drink it / why don't you drink it?
5. "I've booked the holiday" – RESULT: Yippee we can look forward to a holiday.

I hope that **has cleared** things up a bit – RESULT: you understand this use of the PP better now!!!!

to wonder (sich fragen), **aka – also known as** (auch bekannt als), **to arrest sb** (jdn festnehmen), **in connection with** (in Zusammenhang mit), **mandatory** (zwingend), **Conservatives** (Konservative Partei in Großbritannien), **Tory** (Spitzname der Konservative Partei in GB), **to raise concerns** (Bedenken aufkommen lassen), **decision** (Entscheidung), **to allow** (erlauben), **cardboard** (Karton), **to shut sth down** (etw stilllegen), **conclusion** (Schlußfolgerung), **police custody** (Polizeigewahrsam), **to take action** (Maßnahmen ergreifen), **to prevent** (verhindern), **spread** (Ausbreitung), **a whole host of** (eine ganze Reihe von), **wallet** (Portemonnaie), **to look forward to sth** (sich auf etw freuen), **to clear sth up** (etw klären).

This week.

Big fanfare, trumpets are sounding, Yes, it's Thursday! Why such a big fuss over Thursday? Well, we've made it over the hump, and there's light at the end of the tunnel. How's this week been for you on a scale from awesome to awful? Let's take stock of what you've done this week. Grab a pen and jot down what you've managed to achieve/cross off your 'to-do list' this week.

At work: complete assignment / project, attend 10 meetings, hold a presentation etc.

At home: do chores, run errands, prepare meals, do exercise etc.

How would it look for Dave?

I've published my daily posts this week.

I've sold 3 [Workplace English Toolkit \(WET\) books](#) this week. (Link to book)

I've prepared 2 new exercises and worksheets for company sessions this week.

I've been to the gym twice this week.

I've ONLY once read a goodnight story to Matthew (my son) this week. (I hang my head in shame)

What do all the above sentences have in common? Yep, you guessed it PAST PRESENT (I've published, I've sold etc.) But why? Remember the idea of something starting in the past and continuing in the present.

Whenever time isN'T over, usually expressed with the signal word 'this': 'this week' started in the past (Monday) and is still ongoing/hasn't finished (Thursday), 'this morning' (at 10 am – the morning isn't over), today (at 5 pm – today isn't over), etc.

And, what about your list for 'this week'? I hope you've had a good week!

BTW if you are interested in time management, I can highly recommend the book '[12 week years](#)' as well as the YouTube channel, Thomas Frank. Check him out.

fuss (Aufheben), **to make it** (es schaffen, etw zu tun), **to be over the hump** (über den Berg sein), **awful** (furchtbar), **to take stock of sth** (über etw Bilanz ziehen), **to jot down** (etw kurz notieren), **to manage (to do sth)** (es schaffen, etw zu tun), **to cross (sth) off (the list)** (etw von der Liste streichen), **to do one's chores** (die häuslichen Pflichten erledigen), **to run errands** (Besorgungen machen), **to exercise** (sich bewegen), **to hang one's head in shame** (beschämt den Kopf hängen lassen), **to have in common** (Gemeinsam haben)

Carnival arrangements

Carnival isn't everyone's cup of tea, I know, but if you live in 'carnival' areas you maybe get the Monday free giving you a welcome more extended weekend. I'm sure that is everyone's cup of tea! As we say "Never look a gift horse in the mouth".

Are you embracing or escaping Carnival? Are you taking part, or are you travelling away to get away from it all? Have you noticed which tense I used? Yep, the present continuous aka the NOW present. Why? We use this tense to talk about future appointments/arrangements aka 'fixed things' (Dave's KISS term)

And what we haven't made any arrangements for the Carnival period yet? Different options depend on how sure you are about doing it. Let's start with the next option – plans aka 'unfixed things'. Check out this conversation

"What are you doing over Carnival?" (asking for 'fixed things').

"We haven't really got around to arranging anything yet – always on the last push as you know."

"Well, we're going to ('fixed thing') the Shrove Monday procession, do you want to join us?"

"Yes, that would be great when are you going into town?" (asking for 'fixed time')

"I don't know yet, but we **are going to** head into town in the morning" ('unfixed thing')

"Ok, sounds good, just text me when you set off."

"Will do, I'm sure it'll be great – I'm getting dressed up as a clown" (fixed thing)

"That reminds me, I have a figure out a costume. I'd better get off, see you."

Have you spotted the 'to be + going to + infinitive (main verb)'? We use this form when some plans have been made, but it's NOT yet fixed 100%.

Check out the subtle difference:

"I don't know yet, but we **are going to** head into town in the morning."

"We're **heading** into town at 10 a.m. so we can be there for the start."

In example 1, plans have been made to go to the Shrove Monday procession, but they haven't arranged any times yet. (unfixed). In example 2, however, the times have also been arranged (fixed).

So whatever you are doing or going to do over the Carnival, do it well, with passion and have a great time. Alaaf.

“It’s not my cup of tea!” (Das ist nicht mein Bier), **“Never look a gift horse in the mouth”** (Einem geschenkten Gaul schaut man nicht ins Maul), **to embrace** (hier: ergreifen), **to take part in sth** (teilnehmen), **tense** (Zeitform), **appointment** (Termin), **arrangement** (Verabredung), **to get around to doing sth** (dazu kommen etw zu tun), **to be on the last push** (auf den letzten Drücke sein), **Shrove Monday** (Rosenmontag), **procession** (Umzug), **to head** (somewhere) (gehen (in eine bestimmte Richtung), **to set off** (losfahren), **to get dressed up as** (sich verkleiden), **“That reminds me”**(Das erinnert mich an ...), **to figure out** (sich über etwas klar werden), **“I’d better get off”** (Ich sollte lieber gehen), **subtle** (fein)

Be going to vs. will

Those of you that have followed my daily English blog for a long time now will know that I'm a staunch Liverpool fan (non-football fans, please bear with me for a moment). What you didn't know is that I also like Borussia Dortmund. My two favourite teams in the world go into battle against each other tonight in Dortmund and next Thursday in Liverpool.

And as fate would have it, I'm travelling to the UK later today for a long weekend and back to Germany on Wednesday evening. As a result, I am missing the return leg in Liverpool too. Having said all that, I guess getting a ticket would be nigh on impossible both in Germany as well as back in England. Nonetheless, how unlucky is that.

I know you don't really want to hear my sob story, and so I'll get to the point. "Who's GONNA (going to) win?" or should I say "Who'll (will) win?" Which question is correct the 'GOING TO' or the 'WILL' form?

Well, both are right. 'GOING TO' and 'WILL' are both used if you want to 'predict' something in the future. The subtle difference is that by using the 'GOING TO' form you are making a prediction based on the situation NOW – that you know, feel, can see etc.

e.g. "Look at those black clouds. It's going to rain." (not it will rain)

(We can see that it is going to rain from the clouds in the sky right now)

e.g. "I feel terrible. I think I'm going to be sick." (not I think I'll be sick)

(You feel terrible now!)*

To transfer to this situation, you could say:

"I think Liverpool is GONNA win." (Not I think Liverpool will win")

Because we know / see Liverpool is playing well in the Premier League whereas Dortmund isn't at the moment.

Or make a prediction "I guess Liverpool will win".

Back to reality, it's too close to call for me. Naturally, I hope for a Liverpool victory.

QOTD: Do I walk alone in my prediction?

staunch (loyal), **to bear with sb** (gedulden Sie sich), **fate** (Schicksal), **return leg** (Rückspiel), **nigh on** (nahezu), **sob story** (rührselige Geschichte), **to predict** (vorhersagen), **subtle** (fein), **it's too close to call** (zu knapp, den Ausgang vorherzusagen)

'Will' form for promising.

At the end of a telephone call, you often make some promise to the other, and German speakers often say something like: "I call you back first thing tomorrow".

We use the future 'will' form so "I'll call you back first thing tomorrow."

Here are some other examples:

"I'll write / mail* you the details in due course."

"I'll ask / have a word with* my boss and get back to you a.s.a.p."

"I'll process / get right on with* processing your order."

"I'll put / pop* the confirmation in the mail immediately."

"I'll arrange / set up* an appointment with XYZ and send you confirmation."

"I'll look into the matter / it* and get back to you as soon as I can."

"I'll sleep on the matter / it* and give my decision before the end of the week."

"I'll let you know my estimated time of arrival (ETA) as soon as I get around to* arranging the flight."

"I'll be in touch."

"I'll have my assistant take care of it, and you'll have it before the end of the day."

And please don't make the typical "We'll see us on Friday" mistake, say "I'll see you on Friday."

Happy promising! But remember only to make promises you can keep – it's wrong to break a promise.

* (colloquial)

To disappoint sb (jdn enttäuschen), **never fear** (keine Angst), **to boot** (obendrein), **in due course** (zur gegebenen Zeit), **to get right on with sth** (gleich mit etw. anfangen), **to look into the matter/it** (der Sache nachgehen), **to sleep on the matter/it** (etw überschlafen), **ETA** (= **estimated time of arrival** = voraussichtliche Ankunftszeit), **to get around to sth** (zu etw kommen)

Will vs. be going to for predictions / forecasts.

Here's a bit of food for thought! The unbelievable pace of technology is mind-blowing, exciting for future opportunities but also scary when it comes to where the human race and planet earth might be in JUST 80 years. Check out this video to see what I mean, "No one will recognise the world by 2100". https://youtu.be/S42OoEex8_Y

Before you start, a little foray into the grammar of the future, did you know there are two ways of predicting / forecasting in the future? The difference, however, is often overlooked or even unknown:

Firstly, the 'will' form (for predicting the future)

I think the weather will be beautiful this afternoon.

Secondly, the 'be going to' form for predictions based on a situation NOW

"Look at those black clouds. It's going to rain."

(we can see that it is going to rain from the clouds that are NOW in the sky - so

DON'T USE 'will' in this example).

So as you can tell from the title, they use the 'will' form because we can't see the situation NOW.

QOTD. At the end of the film, it asks you the question: Which future prediction has impressed you the most?

mind-blowing (irre), **exciting** (spannend), **scary** (furchterregend), **human race** (die Menschheit), **foray into sth** (Ausflug), **to predict** (voraussagen), **to forecast** (vorhersagen), **however** (jedoch).

The 'future' cheat sheet.

You write the essentials on the minutest piece of paper, in the minutest of writing, which you then fold so tightly it fits into your ear!

After successfully getting through the airport-style security bag and body search unnoticed, you make your way over to the designated table. You sit down, watch the 'security patrols' march up and down the aisles and wait for the perfect moment to 'poke' your ear to retrieve the tightly folded cheat sheet. If all goes well, operation 'English Ear' is a great success and you pass the (English) exam with flying colours. Ahh, those were the days, weren't they? Cheat sheets to the rescue.

I was and still am a big believer in cheat sheets – with all the essentials and without all the fluff. That's why those of you, who have bought the [Workplace English Toolkit](#) (WET), will know that Chapter 5 is the approx. 30-page Cheat Sheet Section to print out and copy & paste.

The future cheat sheet is, therefore, a summary of the different future forms, we've looked at so far. Head over to the [free PDF download section](#) of the website and grab your very own future cheat sheet.

By the way, there are a whole bunch of others freebies, feel free to browse through and download to your desire.

Cheat sheet (Spickzettel /Kurzdarstellung), **minutest** (kleinste), **to fold sth** (etw falten), **tightly** (fest), **unnoticed** (unbemerkt), **designated** (ausgewiesen), **aisle** (Gang), **to poke sth** (stochern), **to retrieve** (hier: herausholen), **to pass an exam with flying colours** (mit Bravour bestehen), **to come to the rescue** (zu Hilfe kommen), **fluff** (Fussel), **therefore** (deshalb), **summary** (Zusammenfassung), **to head over** (zu etw gehen), **to grab sth**, (sich etw schnappen), **a whole bunch of** (jede Menge), **feel free** (etw ruhig tun), **to browse through** (durchsuchen), **desire** (Wunsch).

Be going to

On the British BBC TV sports quiz 'A Question of Sport', one quiz was called 'What happened next'. The contestants are shown sporting footage, which is paused, and they are asked to guess what happened next.

Did you know that the 'be going to' form in English can also be used to 'predict a future event based on what you know, feel or can see? For instance, you see black clouds above you can say "I guess, it's going to (gonna) rain soon".

As a bit of fun on Friday, I found two old adverts on YouTube. Watch them and guess what's going to happen next.

Vid one: <https://youtu.be/5WSq0szWigI> pause at 12 sec.

Vid two: <https://youtu.be/hZ17hTauYml> pause at 15 sec.

Watch the clips again for yourself to see if you were right – a great exercise to expand your vocabulary too.

contestants (Kandidaten), **footage** (Filmmaterial), **to guess** (raten)

When or if

Do you remember that we use the present simple* after words like if, when, before, etc., even if there is a future idea/meaning? Let's take a look at 2 examples:

"Say hi to Dave when you ~~will~~* see him." (The person is sure that he/she will see Dave later)

"Say hi to Dave if you ~~will~~* see him" (The person isN'T sure that he/she will see Dave later)

*Remember, don't use 'will' even though it is a future idea. Strangely enough, what do you think the answer could be to those requests? "Yes, will do" because it is a future idea.

Did you notice the subtle difference in meaning in the above sentences? What's the difference between 'if' and 'when'? 'When' is used for 'a sure thing' aka 100% whereas 'if' is for 'unsure things' aka up to 99%.

Differentiating 'when' and 'if' isn't really so much the problem but when German speakers are in full flow and often translating out of German as they go, they use 'when' instead of 'if' in an 'unsure' aka 'if situation' as the German word is, of course, very similar, i.e. "Wenn"!

Check out the following sentence:

If you place your valuables in the safe, you will prevent theft.

'If part'

'result part'

If + present simple (here:place),

will + infinitive (here:prevent)

100% crime prevention isn't possible. However, the chances of preventing theft, if you place your valuables in a safe are high, aka 'probable'/'likely'.

Talking about 'probable' situations, we use the first 'conditional'. Here's a motivational quote I picked up along the way, which uses the first conditional form:

"If you do what is easy, your life will be hard!"

"If you do what is hard, your life will be easy!"

A quick exercise as a crime prevention police officer (your new job), create 5 crime prevention tactics for the following crimes. 1) mugging, 2) burglary, 3) computer crime 4) car theft 5) shoplifting

1) If you , you will prevent mugging.

2) If you , etc.....

'strangely enough' (komischerweise), **request** (Bitte), **to notice** (erkennen), **subtle** (fein), **to differentiate** (unterscheiden), **to be in full flow** (richtig in Fahrt sein), **valuables** (Wertsachen), **safe** (Tresor), **to prevent** (etw verhindern), **theft** (Diebstahl), **however** (jedoch), **probable / likely** (Wahrscheinlich), **quote** (Zitat), **mugging** (Straßenraub), **burglary** (Einbruch), **car theft** (Autodiebstahl), **shoplifting** (Ladendiebstahl).

Futures Quiz

As you know, I'm a firm believer in practice, practice and even more practice! To make improvements with something you need repetition. So why not try these exercises based on the different future forms we looked at last week.

If you didn't get yourself the overview of the futures last week, then follow the link [free PDF download section](#) and download the "Future Cheat Sheet."

Simply fill in the gaps with the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Can you guess the second gap in question 5?

1. I (**call**) you back as soon as I know.
2. I'm afraid I (**not/make**) it to the meeting because something urgent has come up.
3. Could you tell me when the first presentation (**start**)?
4. Just give me a ring, if you (**have**) any problems.
5. Who do you think (**get**) the job? Well, I reckon George
6. I'm sorry, Thursday isn't convenient at all because I (**attend**) a conference on that day.
7. Please bear with me, I (**find**) the correct file.
8. I'll pop that in the post tomorrow and it (**be**) there by Monday.
9. The project (**take**) longer than we anticipated.
10. You've got a lot on your plate right now, I (**take**) care of that.

"I'm a firm believer" (sehr viel von etw halten), **practice** (Übung), **to make improvements** (Fortschritte machen), **repetition** (Wiederholung), **exercises** (Übungen), **in brackets** (in Klammern), "I'm afraid" (Leider / Ich fürchte), **to make it** (es schaffen), **to come up** (dazwischen kommen), **to give sb a ring** (jdn anrufen), **to reckon** (glauben), **to be convenient** (passend), "please bear with me" (Bitte gedulden Sie sich), **to pop (sth in a place)** (hier: (schnell) hinschmeißen), **to anticipate** (erwarten), **to have a lot on one's plate** (viel um die Ohren haben), **to take care of sth** (sich um etw kümmern).

Answer template.

- 1) 2) 3) 4)
5) 6) 7) 8)
9) 10)

Answers.

- 1) I'll call / know 2) I won't make, or I'm not going to* 3) starts 4) have 5) will / will 6) I'm attending 7) I'll find 8) It'll be 9) will / is going to * 10) I'll take

*a 'prediction' or 'prediction' based on what you know now.

Conditional 2.

Easter is just around the corner, any plans? Are you off on a short break, a holiday or simply chilling out at home, practising geocaching with eggs in the garden?

Now close your eyes for a second and imagine you had more money than you could eat, you owned a private jet, complete with pilot, where would you jet off to?

Any grammar savvy bods (people) out there will recognise the so-called 2nd conditional structure. It is used to talk about something that is 'imaginary' or 'unreal' now! A typical example is 'If I won the lottery, I would buy a Ferrari' = you haven't won it, unfortunately, but let's imagine you did.

A quick review of how to build the sentence. Maybe try to remember it as a mathematical formula:

If + past tense form** = would + infinitive form of verb

"If money were no object, I would jet off to Oz (Australia)."

So back to my QOTD, "Where would you jet off to, if money were no object?"

**It's got nothing to do with the past, it's just used as a way to 'distance' us from 'reality'.

If money were no object* (Wenn Geld keine Rolle spielen), **to be off** (unterwegs sein), **savvy** (clever), **bods** (people)

Conditional 3

"Too short, if only I'd had more time", is a standard answer to the question "What was your weekend like"?

During the working week, you never get around to doing everything you want, plan, or even have to, so things stack up and you put off to the only available time you have – yep, the weekend.

You make a mental note or write a 'to-do list' of all those things, not forgetting the usual weekend activities you hold dear and voilà you get a(n) (over)packed weekend.

Your Saturday starts and flies by and before you know it Sunday evening knocks on the door and Monday morning all too quickly throws you back into your work/home life stress.

"Too short, if only I'd had more time I would have mowed the lawn, completed my tax return, spent more time with the kids"....., the list is endless.

Achieving such a complicated grammatical structure on the fly is tricky. So here's a quick refresher:

"If only I had had more time, I would have done" breaks down to:

If + past perfect (had had) = would have + past participle (done) (3rd verb form)

The 3rd conditional form and is used to describe 'impossibilities' because it deals with the PAST – so this can't happen.

"If only I had had more time (I DIDN'T) = I would have mowed the lawn" (I COULDN'T because I didn't have the time to fit it in).

QOTD: Practice makes perfect – write down for yourself 10 things you would have got done if you had had more time?

to get around to doing sth (dazu kommen, etw zu tun), **to stack up** (aufstapeln), **to put sth off** (etw auf/verschieben), **to hold dear** (lieb und wert halten), **to mow the lawn** (Rasen mähen), **tax return** (Steuererklärung), **on the fly** (spontan/auf die Schnelle)

Conditional 2 in the song: If I lay here...

Remember the great tune by Snow Patrol entitled Chasing Cars? As always they pulled off a massive song with moving lyrics and music.

Vid with lyrics <https://youtu.be/XaKr98ktoxU>

Original vid: <https://youtu.be/GemKqzILV4w>

But hold on now there, did you ever ask yourself “Why ‘lay’ and not ‘lie’”? If you watch the video, you’ll understand that the lead singer is asking somebody to ‘lie’ next to him on the road and watch cars – pretty dangerous & stupid right?!

That’s why they use ‘lay’ - the past tense form of ‘lie’ because it is an unreal, imaginary situation. In this case, we use the second conditional in English, e.g. “If + past tense form, would + infinitive.”

From the last line, “If I just lay here, would you lie with me and just forget the world?”

Don’t know about you, I certainly would!

Anyway, enjoy the song.

to be entitled (betitelt), **to pull sth off** (etw schaffen), **massive song** (hier: erfolgreiches Lied), **moving** (rühend), **lyrics** (Liedtext), **to hold on** (warten), **lead singer** (Frontsänger), **imaginary** (erfunden).

Passive.

“They were truly hammered!” Journalists pride themselves on their headlines, particularly in the ‘tabloid press’. They use play-on-words and humour to catch our eyes.

On Saturday, my footy team Liverpool FC lost at home to West Ham United 3-0. The headline could have been ‘They were (truly) hammered’. Why?

West Ham’s (a London Club) nickname is ‘the Hammers’ and ‘to hammer somebody’ – as the word suggests means to ‘beat’ somebody. Hence, Liverpool was well beaten by the Hammers.

Did you notice the use of the PASSIVE here? A quick grammar session, eh?

West Ham (WH) hammered Liverpool (L). (WH is the subject ‘doer’ of the hammering & L. is the object or ‘the receiver’ = active phrase)

Or if you want to put the focus on L as ‘the receiver’ of the hammering you move L to the subject position and add a ‘be’ in the correct form + the past participle form (3rd column in verb tables = passive phrase), so

Liverpool was (past) hammered (by West Ham) on Saturday. ‘to defeat’ and ‘to beat’ are the same.

Relax, grammar over! Now for the quick quiz. How could you report the following weekend games?

Newcastle 0-1 Arsenal

Chelsea 1-2 Crystal Palace

And what about the scores:

Tottenham 0-0 Everton

Aston Villa 2-2 Sunderland.

Answer 1: Tottenham & Everton drew nil-nil;

Answer 2: Aston Villa & Sunderland drew two all.

BUT did you know that in slang British English, ‘be hammered’ can also mean that somebody is very drunk? My headline is, therefore, a so-called ‘double entendre’. At least that would have explained their performance if they had been truly hammered, ha, ha!!!

QOFD How did your team do at the weekend?

to pride oneself on (sich mit etw brüsten), **‘tabloid press’** (Boulevardzeitung), **to play-on-words** (Wortspiele), **hence** (folglich), **to draw nil-nil** (Null zu Null unentschieden spielen), **to draw two all** (2 zu 2 unentschieden spielen), **double entendre** (Zweideutigkeit)

Get the gaps right - Informal Mail Quiz

This is an informal mail with gaps. Fill in the gaps with the correct form/tense of the verbs in brackets

Dear Mick.

Cheers for the mail. Sorry (1) I (not/get) back to you earlier but I only (2) (come) back from my holidays yesterday.

I'm sure you (3) (appreciate) that I (4) (be snowed under) with work right now. So (5) I (not/get around) to reading through the proposal in the few next days.

(6) I (promise), (7) I (get) back to you on that a.s.a.p. Just (8) (want) to let you know that (9) I (be) on to it. Please (10) (bear) with me.

Cheers

Dave.

cheers (Danke), **to get back to sb** (auf jdn/etw zurückkommen), **to appreciate sth/sb** (hier: Verständnis für etw haben), **to be snowed under** (mit Arbeit zugeschüttet sein), **to get around to doing sth** (dazu kommen, etw zu tun), **proposal** (hier: Angebot), **to be on to sth** (etw klar erkennen), **to bear with sb** (Geduld haben mit).

Answers template.

1) 2) 3)..... 4) 5) 6) 7) 8) 9) 10)

Answers

1)didn't get 2) came 3) appreciate 4) I'm snowed under 5) won't get around 6) promise 7) I'll get 8) wanted 9) I'm 10) bear.

'To be supposed to'

..... is a handy tool in your 'speak-like-a-native toolkit'. It has two main meanings / uses according to the Oxford English Learners Dictionary:

<http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>, my trusted friend.

Firstly, it means "to be expected or required to do/be something according to a rule, a custom, an arrangement, etc."

A rule = "You're supposed to buy a ticket, but not many people do." By the way (BTW) 'Schwarzfahren' isn't 'black driving', we would probably best translate it by 'to fare-dodge'.

A custom = "Aren't we supposed to get paid our annual bonus in November."

An arrangement = "You were supposed to be here an hour ago!"

Next, there are two other everyday situations that we use this construction.

1. When you are annoyed by what somebody said, you can say "What is that supposed to mean?"
2. When you are unsure about what is expected of you, e.g. when you have to be at home, you can say "What time are we supposed to be home".

Secondly, it is used to talk about what is generally believed or expected to be/do something "I haven't seen it myself, but it's supposed to be a great film".

Thirdly, "not be supposed to do something" means that you are not allowed to do something, e.g. "You're not supposed to walk on the grass."

Pack your English toolkit with 'to be supposed to' and with one small phrase used correctly, you'll sound more like a native.

my trusted friend (meinen vertrauten Freund), **custom** (Brauch), "**What is that supposed to mean?**" (hier: "Was soll das heißen")

Quiz correctly

The bane of all English trainers, “blah, blah, blah, OR?”. How often do we hear this daily, even from speakers, who (should) know better? In general conversation, we often use these so-called “question tags” when ‘checking’ info.

Question tags are also a fantastic tool for sales peeps (people), negotiators and HR (human resources) bods (people). Kick off your questions with:

- ✓ “Correct me if I’m wrong ...”
- ✓ “If I understood you correctly ...”
- ✓ “If my memory serves me correctly”

For once the German equivalent is actually straightforward, all you do is add a word on at the end of the sentence (ne?, nicht? or oder?) and somehow it’s the ‘OR’ that ends up in the English sentence.

As you may know, the English tags are more complicated and are based on grammar – yippee!!!!

Let’s dive in with some examples:

- “**You’re** from Sheffield, **aren’t you?**”
- “**He’s** married to Alma, **isn’t he?**”
- “**You’ve** got a young son, **haven’t you?**”
- “**You live** in Münster, **don’t you?**”
- “**You studied** at Aston University, **didn’t you?**”
- “**You’ve been** in Germany for 16 years, **haven’t you?**”

As you can see, you usually start with a positive statement,

“You’re from Sheffield.”

Next you add the question tag, which is made up of the auxiliary verb, e.g. are, have, do, does, etc. This form is then (typically*) made negative.

In our example: “....., **aren’t you?**”

so that the whole STATEMENT becomes UNSURE, if you follow my drift.

“**You’re** from Sheffield, **aren’t you?**”

And there you have a perfect question tag.

*Please also be aware that it can be formulated 'negative statement, positive tag'
"You don't know Dave, do you?" - that's a whole new blog post.

So to save our sanity (of your English trainers, that is), please have a go – if you can't figure out the right question tag in the heat of the moment, try the lazy solution "blah, blah, right?".

I know that I have now just pissed you all off by telling you the 'EASY' way last - after all the hard stuff – but it's for your benefit, right? (Sorry, isn't it?).

bane (Verderben), **bods** (Typen), **statement**, (Aussage), **auxiliary verb** (Hilfsverb), **to follow sb's drift** (jdm folgen können), **be aware that** (sei dir bewusst, dass ...), **sanity** (geistige Gesundheit), **to have a go (at sth)**, (Es (mal) versuchen), **to figure (sth) out** (rauskriegen), **in the heat of the moment** (in der Hitze des Gefechts), **to piss sb off** (jdn verärgern)

Holiday email – spot the mistakes.

Here’s an email from a German colleague Markus. As you can see, his English is pretty good, but he still made 11 (small) (grammar/spelling/vocabulary) mistakes. Could you spot them with your ‘beady eyes’?

Hi Dave

Greetings from Scotland. We’re travelling through Scotland. It’s very funny. Today we’re spending the day in Inverness and making a sightseeing tour. It’s quite heavy to be in a town after these days in the Cairngorms. We’ve been to Edinburgh. Awesome city. We went up to the castle - from the castle are the views tremendous.

We are standing in a B&B tonight. I love B&Bs because of the personally touches and the owners are so friendly. The Pearl View Guest House (www.pearlview.co.uk) in Edinburgh was the best so far. Lorraine Wilson is great & gave us lots of informations about Edinburgh. And her full scottish breakfast with bacon, sausage, fried egg, haggis & potato pancakes – simply the best!!

Tomorrow we will check out Loch Ness – I hope I’ll spot Nessy with my ‘beady eyes’.

C u in a week.

Take care.

Markus.

beady eyes (wachsamen Augen)

Answers template

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)
- 9)
- 10)

Answers

Hi Dave

Greetings from Scotland. We're travelling **through** Scotland. It's **very funny**. Today we're spending the day in Inverness and **making** a sightseeing tour. It's quite heavy to be in a town after **these** days in Cairngorms.

We've been to Edinburgh. Awesome city. We went up to the castle - **from the castle are the views** tremendous.

We are **standing** in a B&B tonight. I love B&Bs because of the **personally** touches and the owners are so friendly. The Pearl View Guest House (www.pearlview.co.uk) in Edinburgh was the best so far. Lorraine Wilson is great & gave us lots of **informations** about Edinburgh. And her full **scottish** breakfast with bacon, sausage, fried egg, haggis & potato pancakes – simply the best!!

Tomorrow we will check out Loch Ness – I hope I'll spot Nessy with my 'beady eyes' – thanks to www.dict.cc.

C u in a week.

Take care.

Markus

Corrections

1. around
2. I guess he really means "It's (great) fun" = 'Es macht (viel) spaß'
3. doing
4. difficult / hard / or other words like strange / weird (kömisch)
5. Think 'this' & 'these' are close in time and space whereas 'that' & 'those' expresses distance. E.G. 'These days' = now compared with 'Those days' = in the past!
6. Word order is quite strict in English. Always think SVOPT = Subject Verb Object Place Time ! So 'the views from the castle are'
7. staying
8. personal (need the adjective not the adverb)
9. information
10. Scottish (capital 'S')

'must'.

Reading this post is a must, pun intended, if you want to know precisely when to use the verb 'must'.

Firstly, I must say (sorry!) that 'must', like 'should', 'can' and 'may' to name but a few are all so-called 'modal verbs'. You DON'T use the typical 'helping verbs' in questions and negatives:

~~"Do we must....?"~~ becomes "Must we?" and ~~"We don't must..."~~ becomes "we mustn't".

BTW, I must remind you that the past tense of 'must' isn't 'musted' but 'had to' weird eh?! Just take it as gospel, more on that tomorrow!

So here goes with the 4 situations in which the modal verb 'must' is a 'must'.

1. When talking about 'obligations', both personal and what you think is someone else's.

"I must send that email out to Dave a.s.a.p." (personal)

"The project must be completed by Friday." (others)

2. To talk about what is not allowed, naturally with NOT

"You mustn't smoke in here. The boss will throw a wobbly."

3. When talking about a 'reasonable conclusion' about something in the present.

"Congrats on the new baby. You must be made up."

4. To talk about a 'reasonable conclusion' about something in the past

"You must have been bowled over when you heard the news."

Sorry, I MUST be heading off now. TTFN (Tata for now)

"It's a must" (Es ist ein Muss), **pun intended** (Wortspiel beabsichtigt), **to name but a few** (um nur einige zu nennen), **to remind sb** (jdn daran erinnern), **weird** (seltsam), **to take sth as gospel** (etw als Evangelium nehmen), **obligations** (Verpflichtungen), **to throw a wobbly** (ausrasten), **reasonable conclusion** (vernünftige Schlussfolgerung), **to be made up** (hier: erfreut), **to be bowled over** (hier: Sprachlos), **to head off** (sich aufmachen), **TTFN tata for now** (Tschüss)

Must vs. Have (got) to

Check out yesterday's blog for when 'must' is a 'must', but what about 'must's' friend 'have (got) to'? Both talk about obligations / necessity, but with some subtle differences. Here's where it gets tricky.

However, I always try to KISS it by using the word 'option.'

Option (only personal opinion of obligation) BUT **No option** (by law / rule)

"I must send that email out to Dave a.s.a.p.*" "You mustn't smoke in here."

No option (It is necessary, a fact, not an option) BUT **Option** (It isn't necessary)

"I have to work from 9 to 5 every day." "I don't have to be at the meeting".

*so if my boss orders/tells me to do it, then it's "I have to send that mail out".

Here's an extra little titbit for Mr Must, in written rules and instructions we often use 'must' even though there is NO option = have to.

Take this example for a job application and deadlines "Applications for the job must be received by 18 May." On the dreaded school exam papers, you read in BOLD capital letters "YOU MUST WRITE YOUR ANSWERS IN INK" – oh it makes me shudder, just to think about it.

BTW, I MUST (my opinion) remind you that the past tense of 'must' isn't 'musted' but 'had to' weird eh?! And definitely not 'had (~~got~~) to', which reminds ME of the confusion sometimes caused by 'have (got) to'. Here's a wonderful example with the 'have to' form:

Husband: "Darling, do I really have to go shopping?"

Wife: (On a bad day)

"Yes, you do." (short form) or

"Yes, you have to go shopping" (long form)

Wife: (on a good day)

"No, you don't." (short form) or

"No, you don't have to go shopping." (long form)

Here's the same example with the 'have got to' form

Husband: "Darling, have I really got to go shopping?"

Wife: (On a bad day)

"Yes, you have." (short form) or

“Yes, you **have got to** go shopping” (long form)

Wife: (on a good day)

“No, you **haven’t.**” (short form) or

“No, you **haven’t got to** go shopping.” (long form)

It’s my lucky day. I haven’t got to go shopping today – YIPPEE.

obligation (Pflicht), **necessity** (Notwendigkeit), **subtle differences** (feine Unterschiede), **tricky** (schwierig), **instructions** (Anweisungen), **job application** (Bewerbung), **deadlines** (Abgabetermine), **dreaded** (gefürchtet), **in bold** (fett gedruckt), **capital letters** (Großbuchstaben), **to write in ink** (in Tinte schreiben), **to make sb shudder** (jdn erschauern lassen), **to remind sb** (jdn erinnern), **weird** (kommisch), **to remind sb of sth** (jdn an etw erinnern), **confusion** (Verwirrung), **to cause** (verursachen)

'Should' and 'ought to.'

Oh, the "I really should....." phrase, like "I really should go to the gym today" The 's' word, which you say to yourself knowing full well that you maybe won't do it. 'Should' is an obligation, but one which we may not do.

As the coach / motivational guru / speaker / Tony Robbins says you only really succeed in something when your 'shoulds' turn into 'musts' (see yesterday). You become committed, and mountains move!

'Should' is also in the advice giver's toolkit, "you should study harder" and guess what a more forceful advice word is, you guessed it, "you must". Check out the previous blog post ['Offering advice'](#) (click on the link) for the full list of 7 phrases to your advice giver's toolkit.

Other uses of the 's' word include

1. Something that will almost certainly happen as long as nothing unexpected

"We should be taking off in a few minutes."

2. Conditional sentences in more formal / written style with I / we.

"I / We should be most grateful if you could send us a copy of the agreement."

3. Back to our first use of 'should' but in the past – an obligation which was not carried out

"I should have told you, but I forgot".

That reminds me and before I forget, what about 'ought to', 'should's' less well-known and less-used big brother. It is also an obligation, which we may or may not actually do and (see 3 above) in the past, which we didn't do. He's the big brother because it is stronger than 'should'.

Obligation (Verpflichtung), **knowing full well** (wohlwissend), **to be committed** (sich für etw engagieren), **to move mountains** (Berge versetzen), **advice** (Rat), **to carry out** (durchführen), **"that reminds me"** (das erinnert mich daran).

May and might.

In this week's section on English modal verbs, we arrive at the siblings 'may' and 'might'. There's the younger sis (short form of sister) 'may' (like the English woman's first name) and the older bro (short form of brother) 'might', which both talk about 'possibility' in the present and future.

Present: "I haven't seen him around before, he may/might be the new teacher." or
Future: "I've got an important meeting at work in the afternoon so I may/might be home late this evening."

So where's the difference, if any? Older bro 'might' is LESS certain in meaning than younger sis 'may'. You could even go as far as to represent them in percentages - 'may' represents 60% and 'might' only 50%.

In the same way, "They may/might have been held up in the traffic." Talk about a possible explanation for something in the PAST with younger sis 'may' is MORE certain than older bro 'might'.

Last but not least, they are both used in questions to ask for permission, with both sounding formal and older bro 'might' even more formal (and less common) than younger sis 'may'.

Here's that aide-memoire again: Younger sis 'may' (60%) is MORE certain than older bro 'might' (50%) !

siblings (Geschwister), **certain** (sicher), **to represent** (darstellen), **to be held up** (aufgehalten werden), **last but not least** (zu guter Letzt), **permission** (Erlaubnis), **common** (geläufig), **aide-memoire** (Eselsbrücke).

The grammar of possibility

Looking at the difference between 'may' and 'might' yesterday reminded me of a "How to talk about future holidays" overview I use in sessions. Find out why we use younger sis 'may' & older bro 'might' when talking about future holidays by click on the link to grab the [Free PDF](#) (Future holiday).

As it's Friday and we are in the midst of the Corona crisis, I thought, there couldn't be a better time to talk about something more positive like holidays than now!!!!

I dug deep into my video vocab sheets, rummaged around and viola, what about a short Expedia (no, I'm not an affiliate) vacation travel guide of Cairns (Australia)?
<https://youtu.be/lf4ZoAJsgnk>

I love the use of sales style holiday adjectives to 'sell' you the holiday. Below there are 9 adjectives, which stick out like a sore thumb.

unique – einzigartig

lush (green) – sattgrün

sparkling (blue) – funkeln

picturesque (harbour) – malerisch

gentle (waves) – sanft

sheltered (Trinity Beach) – geschützt

quaint – hier: altmodisch

scenic – malerisch

palm-fringed (beaches) – von Palmen gesäumt

Hope you enjoyed that little getaway – I certainly did.

to grab sth (etw schnappen), **in the midst of** (mitten in), **to dig deep into sth** (tief in etw greifen), **to rummage around** (herumwühlen), **to stick out like a sore thumb** (auffallen wie ein bunter Hund), **getaway** (Ausflug).

Can, could, be able.

Good morning. I really CAN'T be bothered to trot out all the rules concerning when to use what. Indeed, my job is to (try to) package the grammar so that you enjoy reading the blog, you pick up some titbits (and new vocab. titbits to boot) along the way. Finally, I hope to inspire you to read more about it for yourself in your copy of 'English Grammar in Use' (EGIU) by Raymond Murphy (blue book for intermediate learners).

As I said at the outset, Murphy's (my nickname for the EGIU book) is very thorough with all the rules. Let's kick off with the KISS general stuff and then go into the "did you know section that?". Feel free to (mentally) tick off what you knew and comment on what was new for you below!

KISS, we use CAN ('be able to' is less usual) to say something is possible (or allowed) and talking about ability. We use 'could' as the PAST form of 'CAN'.

Let's get into the 'nitty-gritty', did you know that section:

1. In some tenses or after other modals, we use 'be able to' and not 'can'.

"I haven't **been able to** log into the system the last few days."

"We might **be able to** get the issue fixed for you."

2. We use 'could' for general ability in the past. However, we use 'was/were able to' to describe that somebody did something in a SPECIFIC situation, similar to 'managed to'.

"When I was younger, I was an ace at squash. I **could** beat anyone" (GENERAL)

"I even once played the Sheffield city squash champion and **was able to** beat him" (SPECIFIC)

3. However, we can use 'couldn't' to talk about 'general' as well as 'specific'.

"I played him a second time, but **couldn't** beat him".

4. We know that we can use 'can' and 'could' to talk about possible actions NOW or in the FUTURE (especially when we make suggestions), whereas 'could' is less sure than 'can'. Did you know that we use 'could' (not 'can') for actions that are NOT realistic?

"I love this place. I **could** stay here forever."

5. Last but not least, we know all good things come in fives. 'Could have (done)*' talks about the past. Did you know that we use 'could have happened'** to say something was possible but did NOT happen?

*"Yesterday, I was so tired I could have slept all day".

***" You could have really hurt yourself, luckily you didn't."

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "There are 2 days in the year that we cannot do anything, yesterday and tomorrow."

"**can't be bothered to do sth**" (keine Lust haben, etw zu tun), **to trot sth out** (etw auftischen), **indeed** (in der Tat), **to boot** (obendrein), **at the outset** (eingangs), **thorough** (gründlich), **"Let's kick off "** (Starten wir ...), **to tick off** (abhaken), **to get down to the nitty-gritty** (zur Sache kommen), **issue** (hier: Problem), **to hurt oneself** (sich verletzen).

The Gerund

Ok, it isn't quite as catchy as the Shakespearean "To be or not to be". When it comes to English grammar, the gerund is one of the more in-depth questions which requires some learning by heart – good luck.

First things first. What on earth is the gerund anyway? Basically, it is the –ing form of a verb, waiting, asking, being etc. And before you think "but it's the present continuous", it does indeed look like it with the verb-ing form. However, there is no 'to be' form like in the present continuous, e.g. "I am typing this sentence now", and the gerund has different uses!

There are four main uses of the gerund, three can be dealt with in a jiffy, and once you've got and can remember the rule, it's easy-peasy. The 4th though is where the learning comes in.

So here goes:

1. "**Walking** is good for you." The verb is the subject of the (part of) sentence.
2. "**After walking**, I feel as fit as a fiddle". Following time words like 'after', 'before', 'when', 'since', 'while'.
3. "After a while, I get **bored with walking**". After adjectives (bored) + prepositions. Check out this list below of some of the most common:

'afraid of', 'bad at', 'bored with', 'clever at', 'fond of', 'good at', 'keen on', 'interested in', 'tired of', 'worried about.'

So drum roll for numero four "I **can't stand walking** on my own", "I **enjoy walking** with company" and "I often **imagine walking** barefoot along a beautiful sandy beach in Australia as the warm seawater tickles my toes." Sorry for the last melodramatic example, I just got swept away in a tide of emotion. Sorry, I'll STOP there.

The rule behind that long-winded example was that the gerund always follows some verbs. Here is a list below of the most common:

'Appreciate', 'avoid', 'can't help', 'can't stand', 'consider', 'deny', 'dislike', 'enjoy', 'feel like', 'finish', 'give up', 'imagine', 'keep (on)', 'look forward to', 'mention', 'mind', 'miss', 'practise', 'risk', 'suggest', 'be/get used to', 'be worth.'

Wow, that was a list, eh?! Hope that answers the question "Gerund or not gerund".

If you'll excuse me now, I **feel like going** for a long walk with my son!!

catchy (einprägsam), **to learn sth by heart** (etw auswendig lernen), **first things first** (das Wichtigste zuerst), **What on earth is....?** (Was in aller Welt ..?), **basically** (im Grunde (genommen)), **jiffy** (ratzatz), **as fit as a fiddle** (fit wie ein Turnschuh), **with company** (in Gesellschaft), **to imagine** (sich vorstellen), **barefoot** (barfuß), **to tickle sth/sb** (kitzeln), **to get swept away** (hingerissen werden), **tide of emotion** (hier: überstromende Emotionen), **longwinded** (langatmig), **to excuse sb** (jdn entschuldigen), **to feel like** (Lust haben).

“To.”

Here are your next “to” learn lists, pun intended! Yes, some verbs end with the gerund (verb + -ing) form (yesterday’s post), others have “to” + the infinitive verb aka main verb form (e.g. sit). Still, others can have both depending on the usage!!! That’ll really be fun (Dave’s British humour shines through again), so I’ll leave it to the ‘Fun on Friday’ post.

Back to “to”. The inside story is that there are three lists to learn. Since your brain is still alive, let’s look at the longest and the easiest to get your heads around.

‘afford’, ‘appear’, ‘arrange’, ‘decide’, ‘fail’, ‘forget’, ‘happen’, ‘hope’, ‘intend’, ‘learn’, ‘manage’, ‘mean’, ‘offer’, ‘plan’, ‘prepare’, ‘promise’, ‘refuse’, ‘seem’, ‘threaten’.

Keeping in fashion with the three theme, here are three stupid phrases to help you remember the pattern.

Dave **forgot to send*** a birthday card to the Queen.

The Queen **arranged to have*** Dave hung, drawn and quartered in the Tower of London.

Dave **managed to escape*** by jumping onto a getaway helicopter a la James Bond 007 from the rooftop of the Tower. *(infinitive form).

Complicating matters further, did you know that some verbs take a direct object (DO) + “to” infinitive? Let me explain with two more silly sentences.

The Queen **invited me** to visit** Bucks Palace for a cuppa tea & scones.

I’ll **teach you** to mess** with me, Mrs Queeny. (**The ‘me’ & ‘you’ are direct objects).

Here’s the list: **‘advise’, ‘allow’, ‘encourage’, ‘force’, ‘invite’, ‘order’, ‘persuade’, ‘remind’, ‘teach’, ‘tell’, ‘warn’.**

Last but not least, my final over-the-top example to show the pattern. But which one?

I’ll **make Mrs Queeny (her)** sing** “God shave the Queen” at the top of her voice.

The following verbs **‘feel’, ‘hear’, ‘see’, ‘let’, ‘make’** take a DO + infinitive but WITHOUT “TO”.

Three little rules and a terrific story to get you through your Thursday. Have a great day.

pun intended (Wortspiel beabsichtigt), **to get one’s head around sth** (etw verstehen), **hung, drawn and quartered** (gehängt, gestreckt, gevierteilt), **getaway** (Flucht), **cuppa (cup of), scones** (Teegebäck), **to mess with sb** (sich mit jdm anlegen), **over-the-top (OTT)** (übertreiben), **at the top of one’s voice** (mit lauter Stimme)

Verb-ing or 'to' inf.

Today is a deep dive into detailed grammar and probably far too much to take in all at once. That's why I prepared a [free PDF to download](#) and print out, which will show you all the information in an easy-to-learn format.

Was that it then for today's post? Of course, not! I thought I'd give you a quick overview of the PDF to whet your appetite. Here are the stats. You'll learn about six different types of verbs and look specifically at 17 different verbs –

Type 1: **'continue', 'intend', 'bother.'**

Type 2: **'can't bear', 'like', 'love', 'hate' & 'prefer.'**

Type 3: **'begin' & 'start'**

Type 4: **'stop', 'remember', 'not forget' & 'regret.'**

Type 5: **'try.'**

Type 6: **'need' & 'want.'**

I'm sure you'll agree, there are all quite handy verbs so follow the link and download the PDF to get to the nitty-gritty.

to take sth in (etw erfassen), **in one go** (in einem Rutsch), **to whet your appetite** (jdn auf den Geschmack bringen), **to get to the nitty gritty** (zur Sache kommen).

'The'.

When to use it, and when not? Seems easy enough at first glance – but deep down, it isn't all that straightforward. Here's a quick overview, when and when not.

I guess it makes sense to start with when:

- 1) Before a noun that has been mentioned before, that is known or assumed, or that is very specific: "I bought the book you recommended."
- 2) Before specific nouns, including the sky; the environment; the world; the country; the ground, the sea/ocean, the cinema
- 3) Before certain times of the day, including the morning; the afternoon. the evening BUT (at noon and at night)
- 4) Before a singular noun that is used generically: e.g. "The dollar has fallen in value against the euro."
- 5) Before a collective noun that looks like an adjective and describes a group of people: e.g. "The unemployed need our assistance." But "Unemployed people need our assistance".
- 6) Before place-names containing the "state(s), kingdom, republic, union" and before the names of rivers: The Czech Republic, the United Kingdom. e.g. "The new office is near the Thames".

When not

- 1) Before nouns when talking in general terms: e.g. "Crime is a real problem in this neighbourhood" or "People work hard for their living."
- 2) Before uncountable nouns: I have the information that might help.
- 3) Before 'work' and 'home' in most contexts: e.g. "Dave didn't go to work last week". BUT "The work I do is great fun and fulfilling".
- 4) Before individual institutions when used as concepts: "I attended university/college in Birmingham."
- 5) Before a noun and number combination: "I'm in room 213/on extension 145/ on page 217.
- 6) Before the names of months, days, certain times of the day and meals: e.g. "After lunch, we resumed the negotiations." BUT "I ate a large dinner yesterday".

Oh and then there's the thing with THE pronunciation. Here I'd like to hand over to Gill. Over to you, Gill <https://youtu.be/d3zMxYQC0TM>

at first glance (auf den ersten Blick), **straightforward** (unkompliziert), **to assume** (vermüthen), **to resume the negotiations** (verhandlungen wiederaufnehmen)

'A'

Not just any old post, **a** post about '**A**', and not forgetting 'an'. This first sentence highlights the use of 'a/an'. When a noun (post) is mentioned for the first time – "**a** post. The post also reveals when and when not to use 'an'." – it's a little bit trickier than you may think. More on that later.

Back to 'A', in grammar jargon is also known as the 'indefinite article', and yesterday's 'THE' the 'definite article'. Like the word 'indefinite' (not clearly defined), we use it 'indefinite' nouns for more general meanings, e.g. **a** pen because it doesn't matter which pen." So kiddiwinkies (children), get out **a** pen and your grammar notebook."

Yes, I WAS talking to YOU because you may want to jot down the rule for 'an'. We all know that 'an' is used before a word that begins with a vowel. However, it is the SOUND, which is crucial. Have a look at the following examples:

'**an** hour' (the 'h' is silent, it is spoken like 'our')

'**an**' MP (the 'm' is pronounced 'em')

but '**a**' university (the 'u' is spoken more like 'you')

Next 'A' is used with numbers (**a** hundred, **a** thousand) and fractions (**a** half, **a** quarter). Check out this example "**A** million people received our help last year. **A** few, however, were not so lucky." Did you know that when you say '**a** few people' (with countable nouns) or '**a** little help' (with uncountable nouns), it means 'some'?

Here's a little titbit for you (and your notebook), if you leave away the 'a', 'few people' now means 'not many' and 'little help' now means 'not much'.

Please translate this "einmal die Woche", did you get 'once **a** year'? The 'A' means 'every' with expressions of time. BTW we usually use 'once', 'twice', instead of 'one time' and 'two times', strangely we then say 'three times'. Yes, I know English can be weird.

Last but not least, we use 'A' to describe a person's job (She's **a** lorry driver) or situation (He's **an** old-age pensioner).

I certainly had fun writing 'THE' post, and I hope you fun reading it!

to highlight sth (etw hervorheben), **to mention sth** (etw erwähnen), **however** (jedoch), **to reveal sth** (hier: etw zeigen), **to jot sth down** (schnell hinschreiben), **vowel** (Vokal), **key** (entscheidend), **to pronounce** (etw aussprechen), **to be lucky** (Glück haben), **(un)countable** ((un)zahlbar), **noun** (Substantiv), **pensioner** (Rentner).

'Got' vs 'gotten'.

It's a British English (got) vs American English (gotten) thing in that other, end of the post, thank you.

What, still there?!?! OK, OK, let's look at a few examples to explain what I mean?

Before that, a BRIEF rant as this is a Tiny Titbit today. I've often heard about school teachers favouring British or American and INSISTING their preference is the be-all and end-all. It's complete and utter bullshit, and if I could ever catch a teacher talking like that, I would slap them in the face (please don't do this at home kids) and tell them to wash their mouth out with soap and water (a Dave phrase).

It doesn't matter at all. The only caveat, be consistent, if you speak/write (especially as it's printed) try to follow the rules concerning vocabulary, spelling, slang and, of course, grammar. RANT OVER

Got (British English) and gotten (American English) are the past participle form of the verb 'get', which is 3rd column of verbs in the standard list of 'Irregular verbs' or found in all grammar book/dictionaries.

British: "We have got over 200 enquiries about the job."

American: "We have gotten over 200 inquiries about the job."

This is really the end of the post. Bye.

brief (kurz), **rant** (Tirade), **to insist** (beharren), **be- all and end-all** (das Ein und Alles), **complete and utter bullshit** (kompletter Unsinn), **to slap sb's face** (jdn ohrfeigen), **caveat** (Mahnung), **inquiries** (Anfragen)

'I'd' vs 'I'd'.

You know we love to shorten everything to save speaking and typing energy.

'I'd' & 'I'd' obviously look the same, but depending on the context, mean two different things. Let's take the example that you want to give advice. Here are two common ways.

1. If I were you, I would (n't) (do such & such)
2. You had better (do such & such)

You guessed it that both could be shortened to:

1. If I were you, I'd so 'would' is shortened to 'd.'
2. You'd better so 'had' is shortened to 'd.'

There you have the difference between 'I'd' & 'I'd'! It's also worth noting here that there is a difference in the "seriousness" of the advice phrases, with 'You'd better' expresses a warning whereas 'if I were you ...', you are simply putting yourself in the other person's position and telling them how you would react.

to shorten (abkürzen), **to give sb advice** (Rat erteilen), **such & such** (das und das), **to guess** (etw raten), **it's worth noting** (Es ist beachtenswert), **whereas** (während), **or else!** (sonst setzt's was)

Grammar Slang.

It is what separates the wheat from the chaff and like every other part of English, it's something you must learn if you want to have any chance of understanding native speakers. Unfortunately, it's something that is often neglected by the learner (and maybe trainer) because they have to /want to focus on 'standard' English, which they meet mostly in English language books.

At the latest when they have to deal with natives who don't speak 'received pronunciation' maybe have an accent and on top of that use informal English like short forms, phrasal verbs and idioms, not to mention, use lousy grammar and slang.

Let's kick off with short forms like: 'gonna' (from 'going to'), 'wanna' (want), 'gotta' (have got), 'you'd like' (the "d" is short for "would") or even 'you'd better' (here confusingly, the "d" is short for "had"). Yes, when it comes to speaking, WE are lazy, we shorten whatever we can to speed things up & cut out the superfluous fluff.

However, the undisputed star, the gold medal winner (for efficiency) – presenting on the winners' podium ----- 'AIN'T'! The contraction for 'am not', 'is not', 'are not', 'has not' and 'have not'.

That's all well and good, Dave, but we want some helpful examples! Your wish is my command. Here's my top 5.

1. If it ain't (isn't) broke, don't fix it = Man soll nicht reparieren, was nicht kaputt ist.
2. Life ain't (isn't) easy = Das Leben ist kein Zuckerschlecken
3. There ain't (isn't) no such thing as a free lunch = Nichts ist umsonst
4. "You ain't (haven't) seen nothing yet" = song title by the BTO band (1974).
5. Ain't (isn't) half bad this 'slang up your Friday', malarkey = Ganz gut.

To separate the wheat from the chaff (die Spreu vom Weizen trennen), **to neglect sth** (etw außer Acht lassen), **to deal with sb** (mit jdm umgehen), **'received pronunciation RP'** (britische Standardaussprache), **to shorten** (verkürzen), **superfluous** (überflüssig) **fluff** (Fluse), **undisputed** (unbestritten), **winners' podium** (Siegertreppchen), **malarkey** (Quatsch)

Prepositions 1.

The most significant single mistake learners make with the foreign language is translating out of their mother tongue into the foreign language. Hence, you get the typical 'Dinglish' mistakes, made by German speakers. It is a perfectly natural process because your main goal (in the heat of the moment) is to get your message across. Did (s)he understand me?

You can consider yourself very lucky if the person you are speaking to is a 'stickler.' A stickler is someone who will correct your English so you can learn from your mistakes going forward. Let's face it; whoever does?

Sid Efromovich used the term 'stickler' in his excellent TED talk "[5 techniques to speak any language](#)" click the link to get the Free Vocabulary List PDF. Here's the YouTube video link. https://youtu.be/-WLHr1_EVtQ

When the heat is on, you have to react NOW. There's no time to dig out the grammar book, flapping you focus on finding the right words and phrases. Quite often they are direct translations, as you think to yourself "well, that's how I would normally say it, let's hope they do it like that too". You string everything together in the hope that your buddy gets you. In other words, your knowledge of correct grammar often seems to get 'thrown' out of the window or at the very least pushed to the back of the 'priority' queue.

Guess which mistakes often seem most irrelevant? Yep, prepositions, those annoying little words, which are the least of your worries (as a learner). There are more critical things to worry about, correct vocabulary/phrases, tenses and sentence structure. Who gives a damn about effing prepositions, anyway?

Are we, as trainers, too much of a stickler when it comes to correcting piffling little things like prepositions, I know. "Dave, get off my case, will you?!" You quite rightly think to yourself! Nevertheless, prepositions could make or break communications. I will always remember doing a telephoning role play. Here's how it went:

Caller: "Hi, I would like to speak to Dave Preston, please?"

Receptionist: "Oh, he's engaged on his secretary in the moment".

I sure my wife would be interested to know I regularly engage on my secretary. As cool as a cucumber, I did my best NOT to have hysterics in front of my students, but they all saw that something had tickled me and were eager to find out what. The person playing the receptionist went very red, and everybody (myself included I'm ashamed to say) roar with laughter.

So what to do? Download the free "[Useful Preposition PDF Cheat Sheet](#)" (click on the link) and create a learning system for yourself, in which you can learn them.

GOTD "Have you ever had any embarrassing 'prepositional problems'?"

Hence (deshalb), "**in the heat of the moment**" (im Eifer des Gefechts), **to consider oneself lucky** (von Glück reden können), '**stickler**' (Pendant), "**let's face it**" (machen wir uns nichts vor), **term** (Begriff), "**When the heat is on**" (unter Druck stehen), **to dig out** (etw auskramen), **to flap** (die Panik kriegen), **to string sth together** (hier: etw sagen), **queue** (Warteschlange), **(to be) annoying** (ärgerlich), **the least of one's worries** (die geringste Sorge sein), **to worry about** (sich um etwas Sorgen machen), **tenses** (Zeitformen), **sentence structure** (Satzbau), **to give a damn about sth** (sich den Teufel um etw scheren), **effing** (scheiß), **piffling** (unwichtig), "**get off my case**" (hier: lass mich in Ruhe), **nevertheless** (nichtdestotrotz), **as cool as a cucumber** (seelenrühig), **to have hysterics** (einen hysterischen Anfall bekommen), **to tickle sb** (hier: zum Lachen bringen), **to be eager** (eifrig), **to be ashamed** (sich schämen), **to roar with laughter** (vor Lachen brüllen), **embarrassing** (peinlich)

Prepositions Quiz.

Fill me in. All the following gap-fill sentences are adjectival phrases, which contain an adjective, e.g. 'due' etc. and a preposition e.g. on etc. However, the corresponding prepositions are missing. In one sentence, NO preposition is necessary – but which one?

- 1) Dave is due promotion next month.
- 2) The boss is very angry the delay.
- 3) Sorry, I'm afraid, she's busy the other line.
- 4) Do you think he's really fit the job?
- 5) It's all subject confirmation.
- 6) He's responsible the Managing Director.
- 7) We're well behind schedule.
- 8) I'm well aware the dangers of such a joint venture.
- 9) The project is actually ahead schedule.
- 10) I'm responsible the sales department.
- 11) We're dependent our suppliers delivering on time.
- 12) I'm very grateful Michael for his help.
- 13) Is Thursday 3 p.m. convenient you?
- 14) VAT is already included the price.
- 15) Everyone is entitled 30 days paid leave a year.

to be due (anstehen), **to be subject** **availability** (nach Verfügbarkeit), **to be dependent** (abhängig), **supplier** (Lieferant), **to be grateful** (dankbar sein), **to be convenient** (passend), **VAT** (MwSt), **to be entitled** (Anspruch haben).

Answer template – scroll down for the answers.

- 1) 2) 3) 4) 5) 6) 7) 8) 9) 10)
11) 12) 13) 14) 15)

Answers

- 1) for 2) at 3) with 4) for 5) to 6) to 7) no preposition 8) of 9) of 10) for
11) on 12) to 13) for 14) in 15) to

Phrasal verbs1.

Phrasal verbs are what I call the Secret Language of the Natives (SLN). They separate the wheat from the chaff (the MEN from the BOYS) when it comes to the knowledge and use of English! If you are already MAN enough and know all there is to know about them – then great! If you are a BOY, this post will help you on the way to manhood!

A 'phrasal verb' is a verb + 1 or more prepositions (which are grammatically known as 'adverbials' because they add to verbs), e.g. to put (verb) something (sth) off (preposition). Here the something can be a meeting/ appointment/ event etc. because the phrasal verb is used to mean 'to postpone'.

E.G. "The meeting has been postponed." or "The meeting has been put off."

The tricky thing for learners is that most phrasal verbs don't make it easy to understand them. Everyone understands 'put' and 'off' but together, what can it mean? Add the word 'meeting', 'put (the meeting) off', then maybe you can guess what the phrasal verb means.

Other phrasal verbs, however, are easier to understand. Take 'put sth down' for instance. Every parent out there will be fluent in this phrasal verb, "put it down before you drop it."

I bet you didn't know though, that if you replace sth with an animal, e.g. "We had to put the dog (it) down", it means to put the animal to sleep? Shocking the difference a word can make, eh? That's why I call phrasal verbs the SLN.

To guess (hier: schätzen), "**what on earth ... ?**" (Was zum Teufel?), **to separate the wheat (men) from the chaff (boys)** (die Spreu vom Weizen trennen), **manhood** (zum Mann werden), **to postpone** (verschieben), **to guess** (hier: raten), **for instance** (zum Beispiel), **be fluent in** (fließend sprechen), **to replace** (ersetzen), **to put an animal to sleep** (einschläfern)

Phrasal verbs 2.

Did you know there are complete books as well as comprehensive online lists of phrasal verbs? All very well, IF you read, learn and use them.

I'm a big believer in piecemeal learning, titbits at a time! You choose and focus on learning JUST a limited number today, tomorrow you start with the next set and so on.

As all good things come in 5s — so here are 'your 5 a day' phrasal verbs for today. Firstly, I'll present the phrasal verb, followed by the general English synonym. Last but not least, I've included an example to show the phrasal verb (**bold**) in action. Enjoy!

Eyes down for your first phrasal:

1. **to take sb on** = to employ sb = "We've **taken on** 5 new IT specialists to meet the growing demand."

2. **to step down** = to resign = "The Prime Minister was forced to **step down** after a series of scandals."

3. **to call for sth** = to publically ask for sth to happen = In the wake of the recent cyberattacks, police chiefs are **calling for** more funding to combat cybercrime.

4. **to put sth down to sth** = to attribute to sth = Many scientists **put** the rising sea levels **down to** global warming and the melting of the polar caps.

5. **to tell sb off** = to reprimand = I can't believe he just **told him off** in front of all the colleagues.

Fill your phrasal verb toolkit, titbits by titbits and you'll be amazed how quickly you start to understand more and more of the SLN.

comprehensive (umfassend), **piecemeal** (Stückweise), **limited** (begrenzt), **set** (Satz), **last but not least** (zu guter Letzt), **to include** (hier: einfügen), **bold** (fett), **demand** (Nachfrage), **in the wake of** (infolge), **recent** (neueste), **to attribute to sth** (zuschreiben), **to reprimand** (jdn zurechtweisen)

Phrasal verbs 3.

Phrasal verbs, the Secret Language of Natives (SLN), are more informal synonyms for other verbs and as such, you'll hear a lot of them in everyday conversation.

So here are 5 more phrasal verbs (in bold) to sex up your English:

(At work, in a meeting) "Listen up everyone, we've got a lot to get through, so let's **crack on**". (**to crack on**)

(Arriving home) "Ok, I'll just **rustle up** some grub." (**to rustle up**)

(After meal) "You must have been hungry the way you **wolfed** the meal **down**". (**to wolf sth down**)

(Later 2 blokes in the pub)

"Did you see that the woman at the bar tried to **get off with me**" (**to get off with sb**)

"Ya, ya, pull the other one!"

(Food for thought on Friday) "Keep calm and **carry on**" (**to carry on**) – a very typical British cultural quirk – 'Always keep a stiff upper lip'.

Did you know it originated as a propaganda poster by the British government in WW2, which was never actually made public until it was discovered as recently as 2000? (thnx Wikipedia) and look was came out of that discovery: www.keepcalm-omatic.co.uk

P.S. Which one was your favourite phrasal verb?

phrasal verb e.g. to put sth (= a meeting) off (Verb plus Partikel z.B. etw verschieben), **to crack on** (weitermachen), **to rustle sth (grub = food) up** ("kurz was zu Essen machen"), **to wolf sth (the meal) down** (etw. hinunterschlingen), **blokes** (Kerle), **to get off with sb** (jdn anmachen), "**Pull the other one!**" (Das kannst Du anderen weismachen!), "**Keep calm and carry on!**" (Bleib ruhig und mach weiter!), **cultural quirk** (Eigenart), "**Always keep a stiff upper lip.**" (Halt die Ohren Steif / Trag's mit Fassung), **to make sth public** (etw an die Öffentlichkeit bringen), **to discover** (entdecken), **as recently as** (erst).

Phrasal verbs 4

I previously introduced the Secret Language of the Natives (SLN) (phrasal verbs) and talked about the basics of using them. What I didn't tell you then – silly me - is that there are two major types of phrasal verbs. Ones, which take an object (a noun, (sth) or a person (sb)) **CAN** separate, and others which don't an object **CAN'T** be separated. Let's walk through an example together, please go to <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com> and type in 'look up'.

Type 1. CAN'T separate.

The first thing is you find out that it can mean to become better or improve.

Next in this example 'look up', you don't see any object (sth/sb etc.), which means the phrasal verb CAN'T be separated, the 'up' (adverb) follows the verb.

"At last things are starting to **look up**."

Type 2. CAN separate.

Scrolling down the page, you will come to '**look sb up**' with the strange sign '↔'. You've guessed it, it takes an object (in this case a person 'sb') and the 'sb' is positioned between the verb (look) and adverb (up). The sign is used to show us that it CAN be separated.

"Do **look me* (sb) up** the next time you are in London."

Scrolling down still further, you find "to **look something (sth) up**", which means to search for information in a book/computer. Like above, the word 'sth' tells us it takes an object (**sth**), and the position of the word tells us that the phrasal verb can be separated. You see this example in the Oxford dictionary:

"Can you **look up the opening times (sth)** on the website?"

If the object (**sth**) is a noun (opening times), it can come BEFORE (see below) or AFTER (see above) the adverb,

"Can you **look the opening times (sth) up** on the website?"

*However, if the object (**sth**) is a pronoun (e.g. 'me', 'it'), it must come BEFORE the adverb (up)

"I **looked it (sth) up** in the dictionary."

So that was it in a nutshell. Hope it cleared things up for you! = to solve/explain sth

QOTD What kind of a phrasal verb is 'clear up' in the above situation? If unsure click on this link https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/clear-up_1?q=clear+up and scroll down to the bottom of the page.

P.S. I would like to recommend the following book “English Phrasal Verbs in Use (Intermediate)” by Michael McCarthy and Felicity O’Dell. It is a wonderfully thought through phrasal verb resource book because it is divided into ‘topic-based chapters’ from ‘The basics’ and ‘Key verbs/particles (adverbs)’, to ‘Functions’ and ‘The world around us’. These chapters are in turn split up into smaller topic units like ‘Success & failure’ (unit 27), ‘Giving and getting information’ (unit 35) or even ‘Health & sport’ (units 56 & 57 respectively).

If you decide to buy the book through my Amazon affiliate link, it would help to support my work and to NO EXTRA costs for you. Many thanx.

the basics (die Grundlagen), **“silly me”** (Ich Dummerchen), **to look sb up** (jdn besuchen), **however** (jedoch), **in a nutshell** (in aller Kürze), **to clear things up** (Dinge aufklären), **to recommend** (etw empfehlen), **to be well thought through** (wohldurchdacht), **to divide into** (sich in etw gliedern), **in turn** (hier: wiederum), **to split up into** (sich in etw aufteilen), **respectively** (bzw.), **to decide** (sich entscheiden)

Phrasal verbs 5.

Do you know the phrasal verb ‘to look sb up’? And what does it mean? Did you know that with just ONE more word ‘to’, the above phrasal verb has a whole new meaning?

Yep, ‘to look up to sb’ means to respect and admire sb. Here’s an example of the phrasal verb in action: “All young footballers **look up to** Cristiano Ronaldo.”

Today, I want to add 10 useful phrasal verbs with two adverbials/particles* to your Phrasal Verb Toolkit, which may come in handy in your daily business.

*with the help of [‘English Phrasal Verbs in Use’](#) (Intermediate). (affiliate link).

“We must **catch up with** each other sometime” = meet sb you know after not seeing them for some time.

“I’ve **come up against** a few problems” = to encounter/deal with a difficult situation

“Her decision will **come down to** her friend’s advice” = to depend mostly on / be influenced most by

“I really **get on (well) with** Mike” = to like sb

“I must **get on with** my work” = to continue doing sth: primarily work

“Whatever you say, I’m sure Dave will **go along with** you.” = to support an idea/agree with sb’s opinion.

“I’m **looking forward to** visiting Mike next week.” = to feel pleased and excited about sth that is going to happen.

“I hope this will **make up for** the delay” = to provide sth good to make a bad situation better

“I’m not going to **put up with** such behaviour anymore.” = to accept unpleasant behaviour or situation, even though you don’t like it.

“I hope you will **take me up on** the offer.” = to accept sth.

I sure hope you’ve picked up a few titbits for your phrasal verb toolkit today and wish you fun trying them out in your conversations – even if they are only “shower conversations.”**

QOTD “Which phrasal verbs do you find most useful?”

** Sid Efromovich introduced the idea of ‘shower conversations’ in his TED talk “5 techniques to speak any language”***([click on this link to watch the vid](#)). In a shower conversation, you play both roles in a conversation (Yes, that means you speak to yourself under the shower!!!) to train your newly acquired language.

***Follow this link to get the vocab list for the video:

<https://teatimetitbits.de/download/5-techniques-to-speak-any-language/>

to admire (bewundern), **to come in handy** (zugutekommen), **to encounter sth** (auf etw treffen), **delay** (hier: Verspätung), **behaviour** (Benehmen), **newly** (vor kurzem), **to acquire language** (Sprache erlernen).

Phrasal verbs 6

Rip-off (Abzocke), (to have a) **lie-in** (ausschlafen), **mix-up** (Verwechslung= confusion), **cover-up**, (Vertuschung), **pile-up** (Auffahrunfall), **handout** (Informationsblatt), **crackdown** (Durchgreifen), **cutback** (Kürzung), **outset** (Anfang), **outgoings** (Ausgaben)!!!! Welcome to another deep dive into phrasal verbs and a quick teaser for you to begin with. What do the 10 words have in common?

They are all nouns made from phrasal verbs! What other commonalities do we see in the list? Some have hyphens, and some don't! So how do we know whether we need a hyphen or not?

It is a question I've always asked myself too, so I'm happy to tell you that there are a few rules when it comes to forming nouns from phrasal verbs. Thanx once again to '[English Phrasal Verbs in Use](#)' * (Intermediate) book. *affiliate link.

Nouns coming from phrasal verbs with the adverbials –in/-up need a hyphen, whereas ones with – out/-over don't. Easy, eh?! Unfortunately, I didn't find anything about the other adverbials.

Next up, the plural 's' goes on the adverbials like in:

“High school **dropouts** have a hard time finding work”. Or “There have been several **break-ins** in the area recently”.

When it comes to pronunciation, we stress the verb part, listen for yourself @ <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com>

Does anything strike you about our last two nouns 'outset' & 'outgoings'? Well done, in both nouns the adverbials (out) comes first and NOT the verb. So 'outset' comes from 'to set out' (meaning – to begin) & 'outgoings' in the sense of money 'going out', or rather spent. BTW we stress the adverbials part when pronouncing these nouns.

Let's wrap this post up with a rhyming wrap-up – the grammar deep-dive is nice, but use a dictionary to be on the safe side!!!

to have in common (gemeinsam haben), **commonalities** (Gemeinsamkeiten), **hyphen** (Bindestrich), **high school dropouts** (Schulabbrecher), **break-in** (Einbruch), **pronunciation** (Aussprache), **to stress** (betonen), **to strike sb** (hier: jdm in den Sinn kommen), **typing error** (Tippfehler), **blatant** (offensichtlich), **Here's the deal** (hier: folgendes), **or rather** (oder genauer gesagt), **to wrap sth up** (etw abschließen), **wrap-up** (kurzzusammenfassung), **to be on the safe side** (ganz sicher gehen).

Phrasal verb pairs.

Like phrasal verbs are less formal synonyms of English verbs, e.g. postpone (put off). There are phrasal verbs, which are synonyms of other phrasal verbs.

Oh yes, the phrasal verb fun has just got a whole lot crazier! Never fret, I will hold your hand and walk you through a few phrasal verbs, which mean the same OR are very similar in meaning.

Here are five sets of phrasal verbs synonyms:

To pan out / to turn out = “Unfortunately, it didn’t **pan out** at all as we had planned”.

To boil down to / to come down to = “What it all **boils down to** is that you don’t want to spend money”.

To show up / to turn up = “What time did you finally **show up**?”

To wind up / to end up = “We **wound up** in that grotty bar near the station.”

To drive at / to get at* = “What are you **driving at**?”

*‘to drive at’ is generally more direct, i.e. ‘to mean’ whereas ‘to get at’ is more ‘to suggest.’

Friday can’t be Friday without some slangy (bad) language!!! There are three phrasal verbs, which mean ‘to make a mess of sth’. Here goes: **‘to mess sth up’ / ‘to cock* sth up’** (British English) / **‘to fuck** sth up’**.

“Dave, you really **messed / cocked / fucked up** this time!” and as you discovered yesterday, you can also make them into nouns. “What a **mess-up / cock-up / fuck-up!**”

to fret (sich sorgen machen), **to pan out / to turn out** (entwickeln /aufgehen), **to boil down to / to come down to** (auf etw hinauslaufen), **to show up / to turn up** (auftauchen), **to wind up / to end up** (enden in), **grotty** (versifft), **to drive at / to get at** (auf etw hinauswollen), **whereas** (während), **to make a mess of sth** (etw vermassel) **‘to mess sth up** (etw vermassel), **to cock sth up** (British English) (bei etw Mist bauen), **to fuck sth up** (etw versauen), **to discover** (entdecken)

Do you want some more Friday fun style blog posts, more phrases & more slang to sound more native? Download the PDF book:

<https://teatimetitbits.de/downloads/fun-on-friday/>

E-mail phrasal verbs.

Phrasal verbs will come in very handy in less formal mail when you know the recipient well. Here are two I prepared earlier! The phrasal verbs are in **bold** and underlined and their meaning in (brackets).

Subject. Product launch

Hi Marie

Gerry (the CEO of Mystuff.com) just called me to tell me to **bring forward** the launch (= do earlier than planned). I'll **get on with** (= continue) **sorting out** (= solve a problem/crisis) the logistics headache.

Can you **sort out** (= plan, organise) the filming arrangements? Is the beginning of next week doable?

Keep me posted.

Cheers

Dave

Subject: Takeover. Urgent

Hi Gayle

Sorry, you got lumbered with **dealing with** (= manage, address) this delicate matter. Their lawyers will **draw up** (= produce, write, draft (a document)) a draft contract and **get it to** you a.s.a.p. (= send, make arrive).

It's the top priority so, please **get onto** it right away (= do sth about it) and **send on** (= forward, inform) your comments to me. Don't forget to **copy** Fred **in** on your mail as well. (= send a copy of an email to a third party)

Thanx, a million.

Dave.

To come in handy (zugutekommen), **recipient** (Empfänger), **in bold** (fettgedruckt), **in brackets** (in Klammern), **subject** (betrifft), **launch** (Produktmarkteinführung), **headache** (Kopferbrechen), **to be doable** (machbar sein), **to keep sb posted** (jdn auf dem Laufenden halten), **cheers** (hier: danke), **takeover** (Übernahme), **to get lumbered with sth/sb** (jdm /etw auf dem Hals haben), **delicate matter** (heikles Thema), **draft contract** (Vertragsentwurf), **right away** (sofort)

Business meetings phrasal verbs.

Natives often use phrasal verbs instead of more common verbs, which can be tricky for non-natives. A phrasal verb is (verb + preposition, etc.). Look at the following example.

“Mike is stuck in traffic, so we’ll have to **postpone** the meeting”.

“Mike is stuck in traffic, so we’ll have to **put** the meeting **off**.”

Here are 5 other common business meetings phrasal verbs:

to bring sth up (mention); **to butt in (on)** (interrupt); **to call sth off** (cancel); **to take sth down** (to make notes); **to wrap sth up** (complete everything).

Check out the following phrases you may hear with the regular verb phrase underneath.

Great you **brought that up** ...

Great, you **mentioned** that...

Would you mind not **butting in**?

Would you mind not **interrupting me**?

Mike called in sick this morning, so we’ll have to **call the meeting off**.

Mike called in sick this morning, so we’ll have to **cancel** the meeting.

You might want to **take down** the following points.

You might want to **make notes of** the following points.

That just about **wraps it up** for today.

That just about **completes** it for today.

To postpone (vertagen), **to mention** (erwähnen), **to interrupt sb** (jdm dreinreden)

Telephoning phrasal verbs.

Here's a telephone conversation between a P.A. (personal assistant) and an irate customer. If the dialogue seems slightly odd, then that's because I made it up so I could include as many phrasal verbs as possible. I've written the meanings of some of the phrasal verbs at the bottom.

P.A.: "Hello, Magnificent Magnets Ltd. You are (1) **speaking to Angela**. How can I help you?"

Irate customer: "Can you (2) **put me through** to Mr Hunt, please?" (in an angry tone)

P.A.: "May I ask what it is about, err Mr?"

Irate customer: "Preston, and listen here, I've been trying to (3) **get through to him** on his mobile for the last few days. I've left both voice and text messages, but he hasn't (4) **rung me back**, and it's bloody urgent (return the call)

P.A.: "I'm terribly sorry about that, Mr Preston. Mr Hunt was on holiday last week, and his mobile phone was (5) **switched off**. Please, (6) **hold on** one moment, I'll just"

Irate customer (7) **butts in**: "Don't you dare put me on hold, just (8) **put Mr Hunt on** the phone and sharpish."

P.A.: "Mr Preston, please (9) **calm down**, I just wanted to check if he is available to (10) **talk to you**. According to his schedule, he is (11) **pencilled in** for a conference call now. Please (12) **bear with me**, Mr Preston

Irate customer: "Well, he'd better (13) **pick up** the phone, that's all I can say"

P.A.: "Mr Preston, I'm afraid he's indeed not answering. I'll personally (14) **see to it** that he gets your message to (15) **get back to you** a.s.a.p. Thank you for calling Mr Preston."

Irate customer: "No way, you're not going to (16) **get rid of me** that easily. Have you tried his mobile?"

P.A.: "With all due respect, Mr Preston, I'm sure you know him well enough by now. He always has his mobile off during calls. Mr Preston, as soon as you (17) **ring off**, I'll (18) **pop over** to his office and leave a note on his desk. That's the best I can do right now."

Irate customer: "Bloody hell, I'm (19) **heading out** of the office in a few minutes. He'll have to call me on my mobile. Here's my number, (20) **jut it down**, please. 0152 7964890.

P.A.: "I'll just (21) **read that by you** again 0152 7 err..."

Irate customer: "I've gotta go." He (22) **rings off**.

P.A.: "Mr Preston, Mr Preston, are you there, Mr Preston He's (23) **hung up on me**".

Angela **slams the receiver down** and swears loudly as Mr Hunt comes out of his office.

Mr Hunt smirking: "Irate customer, Angela?"

P.A.: "You bet, a certain Mr Preston, does the name ring a bell?".

(1) **to speak to sb.**

(2) **to put sb through to sb** = to connect a caller to the person they want to speak to.

(3) **to get through to sb** = to manage to talk to sb on the phone

(4) **to ring (call / phone) sb back**

(5) **to switch sth off**

(6) **to hold on** = to wait until they can talk to the person they want to

(7) **to butt in** = to interrupt

(8) **to put sb on the phone** = to give sb the telephone so that they can speak to the person who is on it

(9) **to calm down**

(10) **to talk to sb**

(11) **to pencil sb/sth in** = to write down sb's name or details of an arrangement with them that you know might have to be changed later.

(12) **to bear with sb** = to be patient with sb/sth

(13) **to pick up the phone / receiver.** The opposite (23) to put the phone / receiver down)

(14) **to see to sth** = to deal with sth

(15) **to get back to sb** = to talk to sb, usually to give them information that you weren't able to provide them with before

(16) **to get rid of sb** = to make yourself free of sth/sb that is annoying you or that you don't want

(17) **to ring off** = to end the phone call by replacing the receiver.

(18) **to pop over** = to go somewhere quickly

(19) **to head out** = to leave a place to go somewhere

(20) **to jot sth down** = to write down quickly

(21) **to read sth by sb again** = to repeat sth back to sb

(22) **to hung up on sb** = to end a phone call by replacing the receiver usually suddenly.

irate (wütend), **slightly odd** (etwas komisch), **to make sth up** (sich etw aus den Fingern saugen), **“Don’t you dare”** (Untersteh Dich), **to put sb on hold** (jdn in der Warteschleife), **sharpish** (schnell), **according to** (nach), **to take place** (stattfinden), **“he’d better”** (hier: Es wäre besser, wenn er), **with all due respect** (mit allem Respekt), **“bloody hell”** (Verdammte Scheiße), **“I’ve gotta go.”** (Ich muss los), **to slam sth down** (aufknallen) **receiver** (Hörer), **to swear** (schimpfen), **to smirk** (schmunzeln), **“You bet !”** (Und ob!), **“Does the name ring a bell?”** (Sagt Ihnen der Name etwas?).

Presentations phrasal verbs.

Nowadays your presentations don't have to be these formal affairs with high-faluting language, which was guaranteed to put your audience to sleep.

Keep your audience engaged with shit-hot presentation content, slides, and of course, communication skills, which is where your choice of English is key.

In this 'Secret Language of Natives' blog post, I've put together a list of 27 phrasal verbs to spice up your presentations. Here are my top 5 fave to get you started. Get your free PDF copy of ["An A to Z of phrasal verbs to spice up your presentations."](#) by clicking on the link.

To bring sth on = "The lack of investment in R&D **brought on** the loss of (etw verursachen)

To expand on sth = "Could you **expand on** what you said earlier about" (etw weiter ausführen)

To get down to sth = "I want to **get down to** the topic of recruiting." (etw in Angriff nehmen)

To jump into sth = "So without further ado, let's **jump** right **into** the 'WHY'" (hier: loslegen)

To touch on sth = "I **touched on it** before, but now it's high time we examine it more thoroughly." (etw anschnitten)

The title revealed yet another brilliant phrasal verb 'spice up' to spike interest. If you really want to a mouth-opened and wide-eyed audience, use the 's' word S-E-X.

So happy 'sexing up' your presentations.

high-faluting (hochgestochen), **engaged** (hier: interessiert), **slide** (Folie), **key** (entscheidend), **lack of** (Mangel an), **R&D (Research and Development)** (Forschung und Entwicklung), **"So without further ado"** (ohne langes Federlesen), **"it's high time"** (es ist höchste Zeit), **to examine sth thoroughly** (etw gründlich überprüfen), **to reveal**, (etw offen zeigen), **to spike interest** (das Interesse steigern)

'Pop' phrasal verb.

I often get strange looks when I say things like "Just pop it (down) there, please" - I'm sure I don't need to explain why. No, it wasn't a slip of the keyboard – the verb "to pop" is handy in everyday English and basically means to do something quickly or for a short time. Here are my top 10 'popping' phrasal verbs to delight the natives and get funny looks in Germany.

1. Just pop it (down) there, please
2. I'll pop it in the post on my way home.
3. I'm just popping off for a bite to eat.
4. Pop in/by whenever you like, we aren't going out.
5. He popped round for a cuppa and a natter.
6. We've run out of milk, just pop for a bottle of milk, will you, son?
7. There's a strange noise outside, pop your shoes on and look.
8. I'll pop home and look for it.
9. An idea just popped into my head. Why don't we?
10. Charity shops are popping up all over the place.

I'll pop off then - TTFN

to get strange looks (seltsame Blicke bekommen), **slip of the pen** (Schreibfehler), **colloquial English** (umgangssprachliches Englisch), **to get funny looks**, (seltsame Blicke bekommen), **to pop sth in (a place)** (schnell etw irgendwo reintun), **to pop off (to a place)** (schnell verschwinden), **a bite to eat** (eine Kleinigkeit essen), **to pop in/over somebody** (kurz reinschauen), **to pop round** (herüberkommen), **cuppa = a cup of tea** (eine Tasse Tee), **natter** (Schwätzen), **"We've run out of milk"** (Uns ist die Milch ausgegangen), **to pop for sth/sb** (schnell (jdn/etw) holen), **to pop sth on** (etw schnell überziehen), **to pop (somewhere)** ((irgendwo) flitzen), **"An idea just popped into my head"** (etw in den Sinn kommen), **charity shop** (Second-Hand-Laden), **to pop up** (aus dem Boden schießen) **TTFN (ta ta for now)** (Tschüss)

Grammar MOT.

With today's Tuesday Teaser you can check on how well you know your English grammar. Can you tell the difference between A & B in the following phrases? Beware there is a trick question.

1. A) What does he do?
B) What is he doing?
2. A) I've worked for the company for 10 years
B) I worked for the company for 10 years
3. A) Jenny has gone on holiday
B) Jenny has been on holiday.
4. A) Paul used to work for us
B) Paul is used to working for us.
5. A) They would accept the terms, if we moved on the price.
B) They would have accepted the terms, if we had moved on the price.
6. A) When we left the office the rain stopped.
B) When we left the office the rain had stopped.
7. A) We mustn't increase prices until September.
B) We don't have to increase prices until September.
8. A) Let him do it on his own
B) Let him do it by himself.
9. A) I remember asking him for the latest sales figures.
B) I remembered to ask him for the latest sales figures.
10. A) I'm travelling to Münster on Thursday next week.
B) I'm going to travel to Münster next week.

MOT (TÜV), trick question (Fangfrage).

Grammar MOT. Answer template

1. A)
- B)
2. A)
- B)
3. A)
- B)
4. A)
- B)
5. A)

- B)
6. A)
- B)
7. A)
- B)
8. A)
- B)
9. A)
- B)
- 10.A)
- B)

Grammar MOT (answers)

Can you tell the difference between A & B in the following phrases?
Beware there is a trick question. An easy one to get you started:

1. A) What does he do?
B) What is he doing?

A) What is his job? (present simple = facts, habits, regular situation)

B) What is he doing at the moment (present continuous = now / at the time of speaking)

2. A) I've worked for the company for 10 years.
B) I worked for the company for 10 years.

A) I still work there. (Present Perfect – started in past & continues to present.) TIP. Think of this tense as PAST PRESENT i.e. from past to present.

B) I don't work there anymore.

3. A) Jenny has gone on holiday.
B) Jenny has been on holiday.

A) Jenny is now on holiday.

B) Jenny went on holiday and came back so she is here NOW.

4. A) Paul used to work for us.
B) Paul is used to (sich an etw gewöhnen) working for us.

- A) He worked for the company but does not now.
B) He knows what it is like to work here and is still working here.

5. A) They would accept the terms, if we moved on price.

B) They would have accepted the terms, if we had moved on price.

A) It describes an 'imaginary/unreal' situation = 2nd conditional form. But if we change our minds and move on price the other party would do likewise.

B) It describes an 'impossible (to change)' because it is talking about a PAST situation = 3rd conditional form. The party didn't move so neither did the other party.

6. A) When we left the office the rain stopped.

B) When we left the office the rain had stopped.

A) As we left it stopped raining.

B) It wasn't raining as we left.

7. A) We mustn't increase prices until September.

B) We don't have to increase prices until September.

A) We are not allowed to = no choice.

B) We do not need to = choice.

8. A) Let him do it on his own.

B) Let him do it by himself.

This is the trick question. They both mean the same.

9. A) I remember asking him for the latest sales figures.

B) I remembered to ask him for the latest sales figures.

A) I know that I asked him for the figures.

B) I didn't forget to ask him for the figures.

10. A) I'm travelling to Münster on Thursday next week.

B) I'm going to travel to Münster next week.

A) It is appointment /arrangement = 'fixed' future event = present continuous.

B) It is a plan = 'not (totally) fixed' future event = be going to

3 common mistakes that even advanced speakers make.

Does it really matter? It's a subject; I'm very torn on. On the one hand, the main thing is that you get the message across. On the other, however, it is grammatically wrong. Is grammatical accuracy a nice to have or must have?

Here are the three common mistakes that even advanced speakers make:

Present continuous. The good old 'ing' form, which is often overused and misused in cases when the present simple is actually correct. Instead of saying 'I work for XYZ company', I often hear 'I'm working for XYZ company'. You could be saying that you are only there TEMPORARILY !!!!!!!!!!!

Present perfect. In my post 'renaming the tenses' a few weeks ago, I renamed this form - the 'past present'. Something started in the past and continues until the present, e.g. 'I've worked for the company for 10years', or a past event has an impact on the present, e.g. 'I've lost my keys.' (I can't get in now).

Conditional 2. Most people probably remember the formula:

If + past form = would + infinitive form, e.g. 'If I won the lottery, I would buy a Ferrari' etc. However, the 'Denglish' tends to kick in, particularly in spoken English, with the taking over of 'would + infinitive' in the 'If clause,' i.e. 'If I would win the lottery, I would buy a Ferrari'.

QOTD: How do you guys feel? Is grammatical accuracy a nice to have or must have?

to be torn (on sth) (zerrissen), **to overuse** (etw übernutzen), **to misuse sth** (hier: falsch einsetzen), **to kick in** (hier: greifen)

Section 3. Vocabulary. (10 posts)

Language of love, couples & marriage.

It's that time of year again when couples take the plunge and get married. So this morning I thought a timeline to marriage would be ideal for anyone, who is about to tie the knot or will be going to a wedding in the near future.

It all starts when the man – usually - proposes to his sweetheart or as we say “he pops the question”. They are then engaged to each other and known as the fiancé / fiancée.

Some days before the big day the groom celebrates his ‘stag night’ with his best man & mates while the bride has her ‘hen night’ and to enjoy their last few days of ‘freedom’. Say no more!

On the big day itself, at the registry office and or church, you exchange (marriage) vows and the registrar / priest pronounces you husband & wife.

Happily married, the newly-weds celebrate with family & friends at the reception and then start their new life together with their honeymoon.

Question Of The Day: Anyone getting hitched soon?

couples (Paare), **to take the plunge** (es wagen), **to be about to do sth** (im Begriff sein, etw zu tun), **to tie the knot** (sich das Ja-Wort geben), **wedding** (Hochzeit), **to propose to sb** (einen Antrag machen), **sweetheart** (Liebste), **to pop the question (to sb)**, (jdm einen Heiratsantrag machen), **to be engaged to sb** (mit jdm verlobt sein), **fiancé** (Verlobter), **fiancée** (Verlobte), **groom** (Bräutigam), **stag night** (Junggesellenabschied), **best man** (Trautzeuge), **mates** (Kumpel), **bride** (Braut) **hen night** (Junggesellinnenabschied), **“say no more!”** (Mehr muss man dazu nicht sagen), **registry office** (Standesamt), **to exchange (marriage) vows** (sich das Jawort geben), **registrar** (Standesbeamter), **to pronounce** (verkünden), **newly weds** (frischgebackenes Ehepaar), **reception** (Hochzeitparty), **honeymoon** (Flitterwoche), **“Anyone getting hitched soon?”** (US Umgangssprache - in den Hafen der Ehe einlaufen)

Wonderful Wednesday World: Leave.

Some may say the best thing about the job is 'leave' we take/have, but did you know how many different types of 'leave' there are?

First of all, you have 'paid' leave, which makes up your 'annual' leave and we say "you are on leave (holiday/vacation)" during this time. Secondly, there is the so-called 'leave of absence' (permission to be away from work) for a special reason e.g. funeral and the like. 'Compassionate leave' can also be granted, if someone in your family is ill or has died. Speaking of illnesses, you are said to be on 'sick leave' and the doc 'sign you off (work)' for some time. However, you don't want be "absent without leave (AWOL)" cos that'll just land you in the s**t.

Naturally, there is also 'unpaid' leave, which you have to apply for to do something special - extended holiday etc. I have recently watched a very inspiring TED talk on the matter, check it out: Travel more, buy less <https://youtu.be/AICqyZEXM1>

– great food for thought. A 'sabbatical' is also classed as a form of leave in which you have time off your normal work in order to study or travel.

Parental (maternity or paternity) leave is becoming more and more popular for men, who want to share the joy (and burden) of looking after a newly born. 'Respite' (care) could be understood as a kind of leave in the broadest sense of the word, because the carer is able to get some downtime/rest themselves.

Finally back to work, Have you ever heard of a 'Busman's holiday' or 'gardening leave'? A 'busman's holiday' is the term given to a holiday that is spent doing the same thing that you do at work and 'gardening leave' is, you guessed it have time off to tend to your garden – just kidding. This is a term I heard for the first time just recently and it is a period which somebody does not work but remains employed by a company in order to prevent them working for another company.

QOTD: Referring to the final part of the talk from 15.52, which place(s) would like to travel to?

To get around to (dazu kommen, etw zu tun), **'annual' leave** (Jahresurlaub), **"you are on leave"** (holiday/vacation), **'leave of absence'** (Freistellung). **permission** (Erlaubnis), **and the like** (und Ähnliches), **compassionate leave** (Urlaub aus dringenden familiären Gründen), **to grant sth** (gewähren), **speaking of sth** (wo wir gerade von etw sprechen), **to sign sb off (work)** (jdn krankschreiben), **absent without leave (AWOL)** (abwesend ohne Erlaubnis), **to apply for sth** (beantragen), **parental (maternity or paternity) leave** (Elternzeit), **burden** (Last), **respite (care)** (Erholungsurlaub), **in the broadest sense** (im weitesten Sinne), **the carer** (Pfleger(in)), **to tend to sth/sb** (sich um etw kümmern).

The language of headline English.

“Germany seeks to boost Saudi economic ties” is the main headline in the latest online edition of www.thelocal.de*

In this headline, there are 2 headline English words – ‘boost’ = here: encourage & ‘ties’ = relations. They are short words, which are used instead of their synonyms to save space.

Here are a few more headlines with 5 more common headline English words:

New **drive** to reduce unemployment.

Siemens to **axe** another 5000.

Plans **unveiled** in **bid** to **curb** inflation.

For the free PDF [Understanding the Headlines](#) follow the link to my website.

*www.thelocal.de is a fantastic website aimed at English speaking expats, who want to read about the (local) German news in English. Well worth visiting!

call for sth (Ruf nach etw), **PM (Prime Minister)**, **in the wake of** (im Gefolge von), **affair** (Skandal), **indeed** (in der Tat), **yippee** (Hurra!), **boost** (hier: stärken), **ties** (Beziehungen), **drive** (Kampagne/Aktion), **to axe** (abbauen), **to unveil** (hier: öffentlich vorstellen), **bid** (Versuch), **to curb** (drosseln/eingrenzen), **expat(riates)** (Auswanderer), **well worth visiting** (einen Besuch wert sein)

Speak English like a native with the help of Yiddish.

When listening or reading, mainly American English, you may often come across Yiddish words.

'Yiddish is a Germanic language, originally spoken by the Jews of Central and later Eastern Europe' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yiddish_words_in_English

I reduced the list from Wiki to a Top 10. So here goes with the 'Top Ten Yiddish words' in English.

1. **bagel**: a ring-shaped bread roll made by boiling, then baking, the dough
2. **Chutzpah**: pronunciation IPA* (hʊtspə) or hutspa (my version), (to have the) guts, audacity. *International Phonetic Alphabet: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA_for_English
3. **Dreck**: worthless, and distasteful
4. **Glitch**: a minor malfunction
5. **Kosher**: correct according to Jewish law, typically used about Jewish dietary laws. (slang) appropriate, proper, "It's not quite kosher."
6. **Nosh**: snack (noun or verb)
7. **Schlep**: to drag or haul (an object); to walk, esp. to make a tedious journey
8. **Schmuck**: (vulgar) a contemptible or foolish person; a jerk. It means 'penis'.
9. **Shtick**: comic theme; a defining habit or distinguishing feature.
10. **Spiel** or **shpiel**: a sales pitch or speech intended to persuade.

Now you know, try to keep tabs on how many you read or hear – you'll be surprised.

to have nerve (mutig sein), **(to have the) guts** (Mumm (haben)), **audacity** (Dreistigkeit), **distasteful** (unangenehm), **minor** (hier: klein), **appropriate, proper** (hier: sauber), **"It's not quite kosher"** (nicht ganz hasenrein), **tedious** (hier: mühsam), **contemptible** (verachtungswürdig), **a jerk** (Trottel auch: Wichser!), **defining habit** (bestimmende Gewohnheit), **distinguishing feature** (besonderes Merkmal), **a sales pitch** (Verkaufspräsentation), **to persuade** (jdn überzeugen), **to keep tabs on sth** (etw (genau) beobachten)

1 Island, 5 languages.

If you've ever ventured further north into Scotland or west into Wales, you will maybe have heard a completely different language than English – and I don't mean accents or dialects – real languages!!!

Let's look back in history to help understand where we are now. WARNING: This is the KISS (keep it short and simple) version so that you get an insight into why there are 5 languages in one Island – English, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Scots (an old Germanic language) and Cornish. For a more detailed video, check out this exciting vid 'Languages of the British Isles' <https://youtu.be/ODeYttUY4VI>

The Celts came to Great Britain and settled with the Anglo-Saxons not long behind them. The Anglo-Saxons drove the Celts west to Wales - Welsh, Cornwall - Cornish, Isle of Man – Manx) and some went to Bretagne in France (Breton). A different group of Celts landed in Ireland (Irish Gaelic), settled and even crossed over to Scotland (Scottish Gaelic).

As a result, you have two primary roots of Gaelic which developed into different languages: Welsh and Co and Irish & Scottish Gaelic. The Welsh & Co would more or less understand each other - at least that's what I've been told, and the Irish and Scots could get the gist of what the other is saying.

Unfortunately, putting them all in one room, the Welsh & Co wouldn't be able to understand Irish and Scots.

Want to listen to a bit of Scottish Gaelic, then check out the BBC Radio Scotland or in Gaelic (Nan Gaidheal)

https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/live:bbc_radio_nan_gaidheal

Want to listen to a bit of Welsh, then check out the BBC Radio Wales or Cymru:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/live:bbc_radio_cymru

Have a great weekend.

to venture (wagen), **get an insight into sth** (Einblick bekommen), **to settle** (sich niederlassen), **roots** (hier: Stamm), **to get the gist of sth** (das wesentliche erfassen)

Abbreviating Britain.

Every country on the planet earth uses abbreviations for shortening names, expressions and the like. Unfortunately, this makes life more difficult for foreigners, who come across them in their daily interactions with the country and culture.

Reading British media or watching British news programmes is an obvious starting point and offers you a whole host of abbreviations. Here's your starting 10:

1. VAT is short for Value Added Tax.
2. NHS is short for the National Health Service.
3. UKIP is short for the United Kingdom Independence Party. A fringe party, which advocates Brexit.
4. CPS stands for the Crown Prosecution Service.
5. SNP is the Scottish National Party, which is currently the strongest political party in Scotland especially since the Scottish referendum.
6. OAP is an old aged pensioner.
7. GP is a general practitioner, i.e. doctor.
8. SAS is short for the British special forces – Special Air Service.
9. COBRA stands for 'Cabinet Office Briefing Room A'. It is the place where the British PM (Prime Minister) meets all the essential civil servants in times of a crisis. These include ministers, advisors, military, security services like the MI5 (stands for Military Intelligence section 5) and the MI6 (stands for Military Intelligence section 6) etc.
10. G.C.S.E stands for General Certificate of Secondary Education, which are the exams British school children do at the age of 16. They receive a grade from A-F in each subject they take. On a C.V. (curriculum vitae) you see for instance 8 G.C.S.E grade A-C in German, French etc. In the past, they were simply known as the O'levels (ordinary). To this day the national exams at the age of 18 are known as A'levels (advanced)

abbreviation (Abkürzung), **expression** (Ausdruck), **to come across sth** (*auf etw stoßen*), **a whole host of** (*jede Menge*), **VAT** (*MwSt*), **NHS** (*staatlicher Gesundheitsdienst*), **fringe party** (*Kleinpartei*), **to advocate** (*befürworten*), **CPS** (*Staatsanwaltschaft*), **OAP** (*Rentner*), **GP** (*Allgemeinarzt*), **civil servants** (*Beamte*), **MI5** (*britische Spionageabwehr*), **MI6** (*Nachrichtendienst*), **C.V.** (*Lebenslauf*)

British vs. US English? Here's what I learnt 1.

A couple of weeks ago, I was researching for the British English (Br) vs. American English (US) Tuesday Teaser post and found a comprehensive list of differences. You could run along, copy & paste the list and print out 11 sheets of A4 paper (think about the trees!!!!) or you could read my 'Fun on Friday' series about what I learnt.

We have to start with the word 'titbit' (Br) for obvious reasons. At the very beginning in Nov 2015 somebody asked whether I had misspelt the name of my blog, i.e. shouldn't it really be 'tidbits' (like the US spelling).

I got defensive, threw a wobbly and wrote back "of course, I bloody hadn't" (I didn't really!!! I just thought it makes the story that little more dramatic). Thankfully this is one difference, which I already knew about.

Here, now, are 5 things that I've learnt and / or think you may find useful in Alphabetical order:

- 1) Imagine if you will a fantastic goal scored during a live game, we Brits talk about an "action replay" when the televising channels replay the goal again a few seconds later. The Americans of the other hand use "instant replay" – actually makes more sense. 0-1 US English.
- 2) You know when you read the "problem pages" of magazines, we call them the "agony aunt", compared with US "advice columnist" – more apt but "agony aunt" I think has more panache. 1-1
- 3) "Bank holiday (BH)" (Br) vs. "legal holiday" (US), originally Brits called it a BH because the banks closed – logical, and it stuck. However, LH also makes perfect sense, so a draw 2-2!
- 4) In Britain, we talk about the "(the) black economy", whereas the Americans use "(the) underground economy". Here the US seems more logical, giving the impression of a 'secretive' economy. 2-3 US English. However, what about this, "black" also gives the notion of something bad/negative/naughty? I wonder if there is a connection to the German "Schwarzarbeit" or in other words 'moonlighting/work on the side/illicit employment or work'?
- 5) Finally, 2-4 to US English with the word "eggplant" aka "aubergine" (Br). Just love the word. I guess Americans must have large chickens.

What about a few spelling issues:

Aeroplane = airplane

Aluminium = aluminum

Anticlockwise = counterclockwise

Titbitonians, the US English won the first round (2-4) of "Which is the best British vs. US English?" Hope you enjoyed this first chapter and it cleared up a few tidbits, sorry tidbits.

comprehensive (umfassend), **to misspell** (falsch schreiben), **to throw a wobbly** (ausrasten), **bloody** (verdammt), **agony aunt / advice columnist** (Kummerkastentante), **apt** (passend), **panache** (elan),

draw (hier: Punktgleichheit), **whereas** (während), **to give the impression** (den Eindruck machen), **however** (jedoch), **notion** (Gedanke)

English language vlogs.

YouTube is awash with English content on every topic imaginable like you found out with the beekeeping – have you watched it yet? Don't lie now!

The English language teaching vlogs are also very numerous and popular. Today I would like to make a few recommendations for you to take a look at.

www.engvid.com also uploads their vids onto YouTube and have made over 1000 video lessons with different experienced native-speaker teachers. Type 'engvid' into the YouTube search bar and you'll see a list of teachers and video classes to choose from. Videos cover English grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, IELTS, TOEFL, and more. Ronnie (a teacher) managed to fill 24 mins. with SEX words. "Of course I didn't search for it, the vid popped up in my YouTube recommendations feed and I haven't watched it either, honest !!!!!!!!" If you want to, here's the link:

<https://youtu.be/CgRyskaSwWE>

Mmmenglish. Emma covers a wide range of topics in her vids with all the usual suspects and even ventures into the more complicated topics of pronunciation. Diphthong anyone? It's not a new style of underwear but a term used in phonetics. What's it mean, find out in the vid.: <https://youtu.be/vL1iGL11Jzq>

BTW Emma is Australian, so you have the opportunity to listen to "Aussie English". If you take a look at her YouTube 'Home' page and look under 'channels', she has also listed other great English language vloggers to at least double up your tally of new channels! Feel free to go further down that 'rabbit hole', which is YOUTUBE. You could say Lucy is her British counterpart and they even did a video together about British and Australian slang English: <https://youtu.be/Dt0GB0iGXnQ>

7ESL learning English does great list videos of different kinds, grammar, vocabulary etc. and he speaks quite slowly too to make it easier to understand. I've chosen this video about verbs with prepositions. It's often difficult to know, which preposition follows a particular verb – this vid will give you 100 examples, so I'm sure there'll be something new for everyone: <https://youtu.be/PGbPilxhzw4>.

[IELTS](#)*. Are you planning to take the IELTS test? There are also videos to give students advice on the various parts of the test. Oxford Online English did a nice sample video for the oral exam. <https://youtu.be/9gWxx1ntHTs>

*click on the link to find out more about the IELTS test at <https://www.ielts.org>

Langfocus. Paul is excellent and produces brilliant, detailed content on the topic of language, generally. Want to pick up a few titbits about more exotic languages? Not long ago I slightly adapted his vid '10 common mistakes that native English speakers make' <https://youtu.be/vGDb-fbvJmQ> to write the free PDF "[Common mistakes even natives make](#)"*. You'll be surprised.*click on the link to download the free PDF.

to be awash with(mit etw überschüttet sein), **beekeeping** (Bienenhaltung), **numerous** (Zahlreich), **pronunciation** (Aussprache), **to appeal to sb** (jdm gefallen), **to pop up** ((plötzlich) auftauchen), **the usual suspects** (die üblichen Verdächtigen), **to venture** (wagen), **diphthong** (Doppellaut), **term** (Begriff), **tally** (Anzahl) **'rabbit hole'**(Kaninchenbau), **to give sb a piece of advice on sth** (jdm einen Ratgeben), **various** (verschiedene), **slightly** (hier: etwas)

Learning from videos: Germany vs. USA Vlog. Learning Languages.

Germany vs. USA.

Learning Languages.

https://youtu.be/AbilCNx_LwM

Pre-listening vocabulary quiz.

Alex and Jim use the following words and phrases in this video. Do you know them? Match the words/phrases on the left with the correct definition from the Oxford Learner's Dictionary <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/> on the right. Good luck.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1) to generalize | A) to become or make sb completely involved in sth |
| 2) to get exposed to sth | B) what you plan / aim to do or purpose |
| 3) to be immersed | C) a place or situation in which large numbers of people, ideas, etc. are mixed together. |
| 4) melting pot | D) an arrangement when two people / groups from different countries visit each other's homes for a short time. |
| 5) to become aware of sth | E) the level to which an area contains a lot of people, things, plants, etc. with little space between them. |
| 6) exchange programme | F) to make progress |
| 7) to underestimate | G) to make a general statement about sth and not look at the details. |
| 8) density | H) to think or guess that the amount, cost or size of sth is smaller than it really is. |
| 9) intention | I) to get better |
| 10) to makes strides | J) noticing that sth is present, or that sth is happening |
| 11) to pick up | K) to give sb support, courage or hope |
| 12) to encourage sb | L) to let sb find out about sth by giving them experience of it or showing them what it is like |

Answer template.

1)..... 2)..... 3)..... 4)..... 5)..... 6).....
7)..... 8)..... 9)..... 10)..... 11)..... 12).....

Check out the solution on the following page.

Back to school.

In the video you hear the following school information:

10th grade = year 10 in school. N.B. In British English 'grade' means a mark given in a test.

to pass the class = you successfully finish a subject at the end of the school year.

to get an 'A' in a test = you get the top grade. Grades go from A (best) to F (fail).

Elementary school = in the first type of school in the system.

A question of culture.

Jim mentioned 'DC' is short for 'District of Columbia', and is the common short form for Washington D.C.

Pre-listening vocabulary quiz solution.

1) G 2) L 3) A 4) C 5) J 6) D 7) H 8) E 9) B 10) F 11) I 12) K

Comprehension Questions

- 1) How do immigrant children deal with languages?
- 2) What experience did Jim have foreign languages growing up in the USA?
- 3) Why does Alex think it is more difficult to learn a foreign language in the USA?
- 4) How did Jim see Spanish during his school time?
- 5) What can pupils learn in an elementary school in Washington DC according to Jim?
- 6) What advice do the boys give to the listeners?

Check out the solution on the following page.

Grammar bits.

Jim used the 'super past SP' as I call the tense. In the grammar books, it's called the past perfect = had + p.p.)

At approx. 2 Mins.14 Jim said "I **had not been exposed** (SP) to a foreign language until I **was** (past) 16".

We use the SP to talk about an action completed before a particular point in the past.

Discuss.

How would you rate the foreign language teaching during your school time on a scale from 1 (negative) to 10 (positive) and why?

At what age should children start learning foreign languages in your opinion?

Which foreign language do you think is the most important to learn for the future?

Comprehension Questions answers.

1) How do immigrant children deal with languages?

They speak the language of the parents at home, outside they speak English.

2) What experience did Jim have foreign languages growing up in the USA?

He didn't have any exposure until he started learning Spanish in school.

3) Why does Alex think it is more difficult to learn a foreign language in the USA?

There is no practical use for foreign languages and it is expensive

4) How did Jim see Spanish during his school time?

He didn't take it seriously because he felt he didn't need to learn Spanish.

5) What can pupils learn in an elementary school in Washington DC according to Jim?

They have teaching in English and Spanish or English and Japanese-

6) What advice do the boys give to the listeners?

They should study abroad.

P.S. The Video Course is coming soon.

Have you ever seen the Germany vs USA vlogs on YouTube? Alex (a German guy) and Jim (an American) discuss similarities and differences between the two countries and cultures. Ideal for more advanced language classes! Lifelong updates (added quizzes) for just €19.99

Learning from videos: Remember, Remember! Bonfire night.

Yesterday was bonfire night in the UK, where we all stand around a fire watching a Guy Fawkes puppet (sitting on the top) being burnt to death, eating hotdogs and jacket potatoes, drinking beer and wine (adults only) and reciting:

‘Remember, Remember the 5th of November, gunpowder, treason and plot.’

Then there’s a fireworks display, where we all stand around open-mouthed in amazement murmuring ‘wow’ & ‘wee’. We munch on our hotdogs or jacket potatoes and guzzle yet more beer and wine (adults only). As the evening goes on the recital, become less in tune with the rest and more slurred.

To the uninitiated outsider, it may seem like some kind of funeral Pagan ritual. To those in the know, it’s an event to celebrate the thwarting of the Gunpowder plot.

I hope I have whetted your appetite to find out more about this weird and wonderful part of British culture. Why don’t you watch this short video <https://youtu.be/fMNOYxhpOY> (Horrible Histories*: Fawkes’ Thirteen) to get more info on the historical side of Bonfire night.

*A series on CBBC (Children’s BBC) and a great vlog to follow with videos about history.

bonfire (Freudenfeuer), **jacket potato** (Folienkartoffel), **to recite** (vortragen), **gunpowder** (Schießpulver), **treason** (Landesverrat), **plot** (Verschwörung), **amazement** (Staunen), **to murmur** (murmeln), **to munch on** (mampfen), **to guzzle** (schlürfen), **slurred** (undeutlich), **recital** (Vortrag), **be in tune** (im Einklang sein), **uninitiated** (uneingeweihte), **funeral** (Beerdigung), **Pagan ritual** (Heidnisches Ritual), **to thwart** (vereiteln), **to whet sb’s appetite** (jdm Lust auf mehr machen), **weird and wonderful** (merkwürdig und wunderbar)

Teatime Titbits

TUESDAY TEASERS

Quizzes To Train, Tax & Tease You



Tina is finding the Tuesday Teaser a little tough going
by Dave Preston

Teatime Tuesday Teasers (TTT).

Thank you for buying the Teatime Tuesday Teasers' book (TTT), which is made up of 50 " blog posts – www.teatimetitbits.de. I sure hope it'll challenge (tax) you, on occasions frustrate (tease) you, but you'll definitely learn a lot (train you).

To challenge sb (jdn herausfordern), **on occasions** (gelegentlich), **to tease sb** (hier: ärgern),

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46. Telephoning call. Mind the gap.
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50. Olympic quiz

Teasers 1-3 (sample only).

What's in the book?

There are 3 main types of quizzes:

1. Fill me in. - you fill in gaps in the quizzes.
2. Match me up. - you match up an English phrase with the correct definition.
3. Figure me out. - you work out the answers to the quiz.

Level of difficulty.

Did you see the scale of difficulty (top left next to the title) for each quiz? As my blog is called Teatime Titbits, we compare the difficulty of the quiz with the strength/weakness of a cuppa (cup of tea) depending on how long you let it brew.

I now proudly present you the scale:

1. 'Where was the teabag' = weak tea, little taste = EASY quiz
2. 'Aaah that hits the spot' = just right, not too weak and not too strong = MID quiz
3. 'Stewed brew' = strong, somebody left the teabag in = TOUGH quiz
4. 'Oh My God (OMG), hairs on chest cuppa.' = so strong that you feel the hairs on your chest grow (women included) = MISSION IMPOSSIBLE quiz

1. Where's the teabag. **Know your grammar terms 1.**

Match me up.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1) adjective | A) I'm <u>usually</u> at my desk by 9am at the latest. |
| 2) adverb of manner | B) Could you please speak <u>up</u> I can hardly hear you. |
| 3) adverb of frequency | C) Pass me the <u>hole punch</u> , please. |
| 4) article | D) You worked very <u>hard</u> on that assignment. |
| 5) comparative | E) I was up whole night finishing <u>the</u> damn report. |
| 6) modal verb | F) Thank you for the <u>prompt</u> reply. |

- 7) noun G) You **ought** to talk to the boss about this.
- 8) preposition H) Funny you ask, no I haven't seen her **recently**.
- 9) time expression I) Native speakers are **more difficult** to understand than other non-natives.

To speak up (lauter sprechen), **hardly** (kaum), **hole punch** (Locher), **assignment** (Auftrag)

2. Where's the teabag. **Know your tenses.**

Match me up.

- 1) Present Continuous A) Fred **has been teaching** English for **donkey's years**.
- 2) Present Simple B) The train **had already left** by the time we got there.
- 3) Past Simple C) Maria **is meeting** a client at 4pm.
- 4) Past Continuous D) Your train **leaves** in an hour. **Get your skates on!**
- 5) Past Perfect E) Mike **was watching** footy when a mate rang him.
- 6) Present Perfect F) They **moved** in next door two months ago.
- 7) Pres. Perfect contin. G) They **will move** out next month.
- 8) Future H) Oli **lives** in Münster.
- 9) Present Cont. for future I) How long **have you been** together?
- 10) Present Simple for future J) Mike **is watching footy** again on the TV.

donkey's year (ewig und drei Tage), "**Get your skates on**" (Beeil Dich)

3. Aaah that hits the spot. **Playing with prepositions.**

Fill me in.

There is no preposition necessary in one of the questions – but which one?

- 1) Dave is due promotion next month.
- 2) The boss is very angry the delay.
- 3) Sorry, I'm afraid, she's busy the other line.
- 4) Do you think he's really fit the job?
- 5) It's subject availability.
- 6) He's responsible the Managing Director.

- 7) We're well behind schedule.
- 8) I'm well-aware the dangers of such a joint venture.
- 9) The project is actually ahead schedule.
- 10) I'm responsible the sales department.
- 11) We're dependent our suppliers delivering on time.
- 12) I'm very grateful Michael for his help.
- 13) Is Thursday 3p.m. convenient you?
- 14) VAT is already included the price.
- 15) Everyone is entitled 30 days paid leave a year.

to be due (anstehen), **to be subject** **availability** (nach Verfügbarkeit), **to be dependent** (abhängig), **supplier** (Lieferant), **to be grateful** (dankbar sein), **to be convenient** (passend), **VAT** (MwSt), **to be entitled** (Anspruch haben).

Answer sheet templates.

1. Know your grammar terms 1?

1) 2) 3) 4) 5) 6) 7) 8) 9) 10)

2. Know your tenses?

1) 2) 3) 4) 5) 6) 7) 8) 9) 10)

3. Playing with prepositions.

1) 2) 3) 4) 5) 6) 7) 8) 9) 10)

11) 12) 13) 14) 15)

Answers section.

1. Know your grammar terms 1?

1) F 2) D 3) A 4) E 5) I 6) G 7) C 8) B 9) H

2. Know your tenses?

1) J 2) H 3) F 4) E 5) B 6) I 7) A 8) G 9) C 10) D

3. Playing with prepositions.

1) for 2) at 3) with 4) for 5) to 6) to 7) no preposition 8) of 9) of 10) for

11) on 12) to 13) for 14) in 15) to

Wanna get the Teatime Tuesday Teaser (€3.99)? Go to

<https://teatimetibits.de/downloads/teatime-tuesday-teasers/>

Teatime Tidbits

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by Dave Preston**

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I hope you will enjoy the story telling, experiencing words in real life (not lists) and the vocabulary learning process as a whole.

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Now think about getting a free account with www.quizlet.com, download the app and create your individual vocabulary cards to train on the go.

Congrats (Gratuliere), **to make the decision** (die Entscheidung treffen), **cuppa** (cup of), **commute** (Arbeitsweg), **queue** (Warteschlange), **on the go** (unterwegs)

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Immersion

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The Language of thingamajigs

The language of family friends and others

The language of parenting

The language of love, couples & marriage

The language of the early bird and night owl

Chapter 3. WWW 2 - work.

Interview

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Chapter 4. Language of thingamajigs 2 - In the news.

The language of headline English

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Chapter 5. WWW 3 . Words

Getting to Grips with* 'get' 1.

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Chapter 6. The language of 'thingamajigs' 3 - mixed bag

The language of liking and disliking

The language of fear

The language of betting

The language of buying a car

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Chapter 7.WWW 4 - business.

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Fancy a rant

A turncoat Royalist!

A foreigner's take on the reunification

The writing was on the wall.

How would you like your Breggit, David?

Chapter 9. WWW 5 – mixed bag.

Managing meanings

Short

Out

Bother

Splendid & Co

Chapter 10. WWW 6 - weird (sounding) words

Ad-lib

Pussyfoot

One-upmanship

Sugar-coat

Zythum & Zyzyva

Wanna get the Handy English PDF book (€3.99)? Go to

<https://teatimetitbits.de/downloads/handy-english-1/>

Teatime Tidbits

FUN ON FRIDAY

**Fun, Frolics
& F-bombs**



**Tina freaks out every Friday at 9.05 am
by Dave Preston**

Thank you for buying or stealing (just joking!) this book. True to Teatime Titbits this book will 'edutain' you and grow your vocab / grammar in a fun way like no other book out there – as I know.

If you follow my Teatime Titbits, you will know that there are no limits when it comes to Fun on Friday posts, they dare to go where others won't, they take no prisoners and ultimately give you the edge in your English because you understand better than most informal, colloquial, slang English, not to mention, bad language and swear words. You could beat a native at his/her own game, if you want!

So without further ado, take a look at the contents pages and then dive into fun, frolics and f-bombs and have a fucking good time learning the stuff - school didn't want you to know!

P.S. Please don't be selfish, pass this onto as many people as you can so they too can know the secrets of the natives. Cheers.

Take care.

Dave

to dare to do sth (es wagen, etw zu tun), **to take no prisoners** (keine Gefangener machen), **to give sb an edge** (jdm einem Vorteil verschaffen), **colloquial (English)** (Umgangssprache), **not to mention** (geschweige denn), **swear word** (Schimpfwort), **without further ado** (ohne langes Federlesen), **frolics** (Scherze), **f-bomb** (F-Wort (sagen)), **selfish** (egoistisch), **to pass sth onto sb** (jdm weitergeben), **cheers** (Hier: Danke).

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The real McCoy 3 Phrasal verbs, colloquialisms, idioms.

The real McCoy 4 Accents, bad grammar, slang.

The real McCoy 5 Three in the bed – standard / colloquial / slang.

Chapter 2. Phantastic Phrases to delight any native.

Just pop it there.

5 fun English phrases to sex up your English.

5 fun phrasal verbs to sex up your English.

5 phrases to delight your native friends.

5 fun idioms to start your own list.

Chapter 3. The Language of 'Thingybob' 1.

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Chapter 4. Texts to Tickle you.

With Christ's sky journey, a bridge day and a weekend.

They spider the Britons.

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Chapter 6. Texts to Tickle you 2.

Why is English so hard to learn

“Wenn schon, denn schon”

‘Manspreading’!!

The Full Monty – a stag night to remember.

Pissed.

Chapter 7. Learning from vids, jokes & lyrics.

Learning from vids 1: Awesome German products

Learning from jokes 1: Joking aside

Learning from lyrics 1: If I lay here. ...

Learning from vids 2: Spot the mistakes?

Learning from lyrics 2 I used to love her

Chapter 8. Learning from stories, poems and conversations.

Brain at work

You make some, you lose some

The super short story of a shitty decision

Wild office

Monday morning

Chapter 9. Tricky translations.

It’s the way it is.

Lost in translation.

Translate this one if you can! Hitzefrei

Getting places!

Good try No1.

Chapter 10. Slang up your Friday 2 (Let's party, booze, schmooze & swear a lot !)

Know your drinkingisms?

Getting to grips with pissed

Modern day Romeo and Juliet. SLANG CITY

The morning after the night before

Effing & blinding: Degree of vulgarity.

Wanna get the Fun on Friday PDF book (€3.99)? Go to

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