

THE

Business English Training

Language Key

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WHY SELECT US?

- 1 The Language Key Ltd has been delivering successful language training programs for 100s of Hong Kong companies since 1994.
- 2 We use experienced business English trainers who have a understanding of the language learning needs of Hong Kong professionals.
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THE Language Key

Welcome Back!

to enhancing your business English and communication skills.....

Dear Readers

Does this situation seem familiar to you? Your English is progressing well, the grammar is now familiar, the reading comprehension is no problem, you are communicating quite fluently, but: Listening is STILL a problem!

First of all, remember that you are not alone. Listening comprehension is probably the most difficult task for almost all learners of English as a foreign language. The most important thing is to practice listening as often as possible.

The next step is to find listening resources that you are really interested in on the radio, television and the Internet.

Once you have started to listen to English on a regular basis, you may still feel that your listening is not improving. What should you do? Here is some advice:

- First, accept that you are not going to understand everything.
- Don't worry that you can't understand every little word spoken.
- Don't translate into your own language.
- Listen for the general idea of the conversations. Don't focus on detail until you have understood the main ideas.

While you are listening to another person speaking English, the temptation is to immediately translate into your own language. This becomes stronger when you hear a word or expression you don't understand. However, when you translate into your own language, you are taking the focus of your attention away from the speaker and on to the translation process in your head. This situation leads to less, not more, understanding.

When people speak in their own language, do they repeat themselves? I don't mean word for word; I mean the general idea. If they are like most people I have met, they probably do. That means that whenever you listen to someone speaking, it is likely that they will repeat what they have said, giving you a second, or third chance to understand the main message.

By remaining calm, allowing yourself to not understand, and not translating while listening, your brain is free to concentrate on the most important thing: Understanding English in English.

Rebecca Williams
Editor – The Language Key



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PUBLICATION DETAILS

Published by:	The Language Key Ltd 604 Henning House 385-391 Hennessy Road Causeway Bay Hong Kong
Editor:	Rebecca Williams
Magazine Enquiries:	Kana Law Tel: 2893 6134 kanalaw@languagekey.com
Online Training:	Mark Wood Tel: 2893 6688 markwood@languagekey.com
In-house Training:	Lachlan Robertson Tel: 2893 6124 lachlanrobertson@languagekey.com

www.languagekey.com

www.workplace-english-training.com





Hong Kong Protesters Demand Democracy

During September 2014, thousands Hong Kong citizens **protested** against China's decision on proposed **electoral reform**.

When Britain handed Hong Kong back to China in 1997, China agreed to govern Hong Kong under the **principle** of "one country, two systems", where the city would enjoy "a high degree of **autonomy**, except in foreign and defense affairs" for 50 years.

Hong Kong's leader, the chief executive, is currently **elected** by a 1,200-member election committee. Most of the representatives are considered as **pro-China**, however.

Hong Kong's **Basic Law** says that "the **ultimate** aim" is to elect the chief executive "by **universal suffrage**".

The Chinese government has promised direct elections for the chief executive by 2017.

But in August 2014 China **ruled** that voters will only have a choice from a list of two or three candidates selected by a nominating committee. This committee would be formed in accordance with Hong Kong's mostly pro-China election committee. Any candidate would have to get the support of more than 50% of the nominating committee before being able to run in the election.

Democracy activists believe China will use the committee to **screen out** candidates it **disapproves** of.

China has **denounced** the pro-democracy protests taking place in Hong Kong, and has called the latest street occupations "illegal".

Key Vocabulary

protested (verb) showed you disagree with something by standing, shouting, holding signs, etc.

electoral reform (phrase) change in an electoral system to improve how public desires are expressed in election results

principle (noun) a basic idea or rule that explains how something happens or works

autonomy (noun) the right of a country or group of people to govern itself

elected (verb) chosen someone for a particular job or position by voting

pro- (prefix) supporting or approving of something

Basic Law (phrase) The leading document in the law of Hong Kong

ultimate (adj.) final or most important

universal suffrage (phrase) when every citizen over the age of 18 is allowed to vote

ruled (verb) made an official legal decision

Democracy activists (phrase) people to actively fight for democracy

screen out (phrasal verb) refuse to accept someone who is not appropriate for something, for example a job

disapproves (verb) thinks that someone or something is bad or wrong

denounced (verb) publicly criticized someone or something

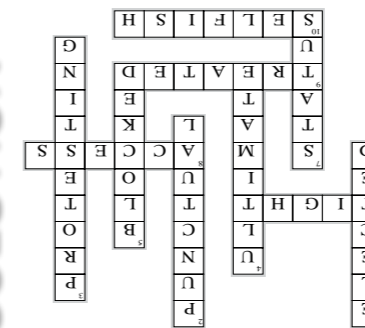
Complete the sentences below and right (including the crossword puzzle) using the highlighted vocabulary from the three articles. Remember to use the correct part of speech and verb tense in each case. You'll find the answers below.

- The organization works on the _____ that all members have the same rights.
- All 52 states in the USA operate with a high degree of _____.
- HR _____ all foreign applicants that don't have official working visas.
- The company _____ of staff taking unnecessary taxis to meetings.
- The government is highly _____ about reports of internal corruption at the executive level.
- His income is considerably higher than the _____ average.
- He was _____ by two men wearing masks and asked to hand over his money.
- If I'm short of money, I can always _____ Jim to give me a loan.
- I find Jack rather _____. It's difficult to be real friends with him.
- As Susan is unemployed, she's _____ on her parents at the moment.
- We try to treat our students as _____.
- Most of the staff in the office feel _____ when the boss is around.

ANSWERS:

- Principle
- Autonomy
- Screens out
- Disapproves
- Sensitive
- National
- Confronted
- Rely on
- Superficial
- Dependent
- Individuals
- Uncomfortable

SOLUTIONS

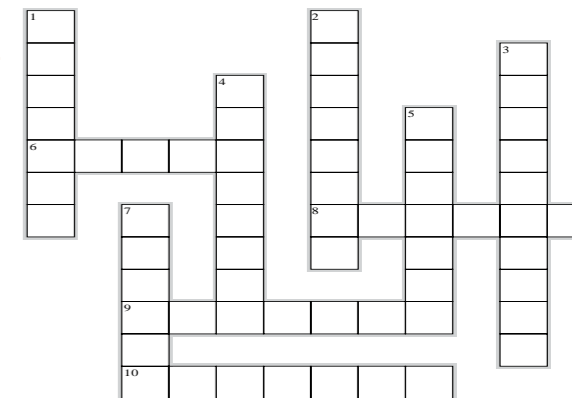


Across:

- The publisher has _____ restrictions on the use of its content.
- To gain _____ to the site, please login with your assigned username and password.
- His boss has _____ him very badly ever since he started working at the company.
- Eating all the cake yourself was very _____ indeed!

Down:

- She was _____ to the US Senate in 2004
- Mr Chu is always _____ so don't be late!
- Teachers are _____ about their pay and conditions.
- The _____ aim of the project is to provide fresh water for the village.
- The government has _____ all access to Twitter.
- The pay and _____ of nurses has improved.



China Censors News and Photos of Hong Kong Protests

Thousands of people in Hong Kong have been protesting over the past few weeks, calling for more freedom from China in choosing their next leader.

The protests have been reported on all over the world, but people living in mainland China have been getting a different story.

Most people there only have **access** to the information that the government wants them to have - TV, newspapers and the internet are all **tightly controlled**.

You don't get social media like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Instagram has recently been **blocked** - to stop people from seeing photos of the protests. And more recently **censors** also blocked the website of BBC, Britain's **national broadcaster**.

Photos of police **confronting** young pro-democracy protesters are **sensitive** in China, because it's a reminder of Tiananmen Square, in which Chinese **authorities cracked down** on student protesters on June 4, 1989.



China is concerned that the situation in Hong Kong may **encourage** other cities in China to seek more democracy.

Meanwhile, Taiwan activists are supporting the Hong Kong protests which makes China particularly **uncomfortable**.

Key Vocabulary

access (noun) the right or opportunity to use or see something

tightly (adv.) controlled and obeying all rules completely

controlled (verb) limited the number, amount, or increase of something

blocked (verb) prevented movement

through or past something

censors (noun) people who remove parts of something, such as a book, movie, or letter, that you they do not want someone to see

national (adj.) relating to the whole of a country

broadcaster (noun) the owner of a

radio or television station

confronting (gerund) standing in front of (someone) face to face and acting in a threatening and frightening way

sensitive (adj.) likely to cause people to become upset

authorities (noun) official groups or government departments with power

to control particular public services

cracked down (phrasal verb) took strong action to stop something

encourage (verb) if something encourages an activity, it supports it or makes it more likely

uncomfortable (adj.) causing or feeling unease, anxiousness



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Understanding US Attitudes and Practices

Though America has a **culturally diverse society**, we can describe some **common characteristics**.

Americans firstly see themselves as **individuals**, and secondly, they see themselves as members of a family, community, or other group.

They do not like being **dependent** on other people, or having other people depend on them. Some people from other countries may see this attitude as **selfish**. However, most Americans see it as a healthy freedom from the **constraints** of their family or **social class**.

Americans always **treat** each other in a very informal way, even if there are big differences in age or social class. For people from other cultures, this type of behaviour may show a lack of respect. For Americans, it shows a healthy **disregard** for **social ritual**.

Non-Americans may view friendships among Americans as **superficial**. Because Americans can **rely on** themselves they can survive without a deep involvement with many other people.

Also, Americans tend to **compartmentalize** their friendships, having their "friends at work," "friends at school," and so on. This is sometimes



seen by foreigners as being unable to be friends. In America it is seen as a normal way to be happy in a changing society.

Americans always try to be **punctual**. They organise their activities by means of schedules. As a result they may seem to be in a hurry, always running from one thing to the next, and are not able to relax and enjoy themselves. It is their way of making sure that things get done.

"Success" in US society is often measured by the amount of money, **status**, or possessions a person has. Some cultures see this as a lack of understanding of the **spiritual** side of human life.

Key Vocabulary

culturally diverse society (phrase) a society with many different types of cultures represented among the people

common characteristics (adj.) qualities belonging to or shared by others

individuals (noun) people who think or behave in their own original way

dependent (adj.) needing the support of someone in order to live in a good way

selfish (adj.) putting oneself before others

constraints (noun) things which control what you do by keeping you within limits

social class (phrase) a group of people with the same economic and social position

treat (verb) behave towards someone in a particular way

disregard (noun) lack of consideration or respect for something

social ritual (phrase) a set of fixed actions performed often in a particular society

superficial (adj.) (of a person) never thinking about serious or important things

rely on (phrasal verb) depend confidently or put full trust in someone else

compartmentalize (verb) separate something into parts and not allow those parts to mix together

punctual (adj.) arriving or doing something at the expected, correct time; not late

status (noun) official position, especially in a social group

spiritual (adj.) relating to deep feelings and beliefs, especially religious beliefs

Finishing Email Well

Endings should do what they signify, i.e. end the document. They should echo the main idea of your email, give your final thought, and build goodwill.

Some email endings just finish the business at hand:

- ✓ The enclosed charts will answer your questions about the ratings. Please retain for your files.
- ✓ If you wish to change your reservations, please call 2738 2893.

Other closings show thanks:

- ✓ I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support.
- ✓ We appreciate your patience during this transitional time for our company.

Many closings seek future gain and focus on tomorrow:

- ✓ We look forward to serving you again.
- ✓ I look forward to receiving your application soon.
- ✓ Our representative will stop by within the month to discuss your current office needs.

Still others entice or persuade. Well written and strong, such closings can summarise your message creating greater overall clarity. They should be relevant and friendly:

- ✓ Investing in this software will further your options as your business continues to expand.
- ✓ Improving the English language skills of your CS staff will enhance your global reputation.

So whether you wish to just finish the business at hand, show appreciation, seek future gain, or persuade, your close should sum up your message. Here are a few tips to help you with your closings:

Keep your closing positive

Reinforce the good news or confirm the agreement. Show your continued interest in the common enterprise:

- ✓ Serving you is our top priority and we await your next request.

Avoid apologising for bad news

If the news is bad and you have struggled to build a satisfactory compromise, don't ruin it with an ending apology that reminds the reader of the cause. Writing:

- ✗ Again, let me apologise for the late arrival of your special order

...cancels your previous careful explanation.

Don't invite further conversation unless you want such continued involvement

If, however, you have added facts that might be useful and you welcome an expanded conversation, then write:

- ✓ If you would like further information, please call.

Be wary of the word "hope"

- ✗ I hope this is satisfactory

...might imply that it is not. You've just suggested that perhaps you should have done better. Try something more positive like:

- ✓ I know you will appreciate the new document when it arrives. We have enjoyed working with you on this project and look forward to more collaboration.

Be wary of the phrase "I regret"

If you do regret, try to find a more positive way to say it. And if you don't regret having to fire the accounts clerk or demand a refund for faulty goods, why say you do? Here's an example sentence to avoid:

- ✗ I hope you will understand our position and I regret that we cannot help any further.

Close with a complete sentence

Email should close with a complete sentence. Examples include "I remain," "Hoping to hear from you," and "Wishing you the best," and many other such phrases. Rewrite these phrases to make them complete sentences.

Avoid clichéd endings

These closings are now so over-used they have become boring:

- ✗ If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.
- ✗ If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

Write instead:

- ✓ If you have any questions, please call me on 27184738.

Thanking

Thank you for your interest in the company. We appreciate your continued support.

Offering Help

If you would like any more information, please call me on 27363627. Please feel free to call me if any of my instructions are not clear.

Making Promises

We will send the contracts as soon as we receive them. I assure you I will discuss this with and call you back later today.

Referring to a Meeting

I look forward to meeting you on July 28, when these issues can be discussed in further detail. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my proposal with you in further detail.

Asking for Action

I would be grateful if this matter could be settled immediately. I would appreciate it if you could invoice us before the end of this month.

Requesting Document Return

Please sign the enclosed and return to us before September 15. If the enclosed contract meets your approval, please sign it and return it to us September 15.

Referring to Enclosures

I hope you find the enclosed useful. The enclosed brochures describe in more detail our range of....

Apologising and Rectifying a Problem

Please accept our apologies for this misunderstanding. We apologise for this oversight and would like to assure you ... We deeply regret any inconvenience this misunderstanding has caused you.

Expressing Urgency

As this matter is now urgent, we would appreciate a prompt reply. Due to the urgency of the situation, I would appreciate receiving your advice as soon as possible.

Giving Recommendations or Suggestions

We strongly recommend that you follow these instructions. We would suggest a neutral colour scheme.

Business Writing Skills

Good Document Design and Structure

Imagine it's payday at work at Bentalls Co., and when you open your pay envelope, you see the following notice with your salary cheque:

ORIGINAL NOTICE

MONEY DEDUCTED FROM YOUR WAGES TO PAY CREDITORS



When you buy goods on credit, the store will sometimes ask you to sign a Wage Assignment form allowing it to deduct money from your wages if you do not pay your bill. When you buy on credit, you sign a contract agreeing to pay a certain amount each week or month until you have paid all you owe. The Wage Assignment Form is separate. It must contain the name of your present employer, your social security number, the amount of money loaned, the rate of interest, the date when payments are due, and your signature. The words "Wage Assignment" must be printed at the top of the form and also near the line for your signature.

Even if you have signed a Wage Assignment agreement, Bentalls will not withhold part of your wages unless all of the following conditions are met: you have to be more than forty days late in payment to what you owe, Bentalls has to receive a correct statement of the amount you are in default and a copy of the Wage Assignment form, and you and Bentalls must receive a notice from the creditor at least twenty days in advance stating that the creditor plans to make a demand on your wages. This twenty-day notice gives you a chance to correct the problems yourself. If these conditions are all met, Bentalls must withhold 15% of each salary check until your bill is paid and give this money to your creditor. If you think you are not late or that you do not owe the amount stated, you can argue against it by filing a legal document called a defense. Once you file a defense, Bentalls will not withhold any money from you. However, be sure you are right before you file a defense. If you are wrong, you have to pay not only what you owe but also all legal costs for both yourself and the creditor. If you are right, the creditor has to pay all these costs.

COMMENTS

At a glance your eyes can tell:

- That the document consists at least two major sections.
- That the bold face headings quickly let readers know the topic of each paragraph.
- That the blank space organizes the paragraphs and provides a brief rest for the eyes.
- That numbered and bulleted lists will make it easy for employees to check off all the details they're posed to include on the form.

Effective business documents do not happen by accident. They are designed, planned and created with the audience in mind.

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COMMENTS

This poorly written document is confusing and hard to read. It was not designed with the reader in mind. Its author may have saved some time initially by getting the information out quickly, but in the long run, s/he is actually quite foolish.

Guess who is probably going to have to handle the forms when they come back from the employees? And would it surprise us if most of the forms were filled out incorrectly or full of blanks where information should be?

Now look at the same information but this time, in a form designed with the audience in mind. Would you be able to understand what management wants you to do the first time you read the notice?

REVISED NOTICE DESIGN AND STRUCTURE

Money Deducted from Your Wages to Pay Creditors



When you buy goods on credit, the store will sometimes ask you to sign a Wage Assignment form allowing it to deduct money from your wages if you do not pay your bill.

Have You Signed a Wage Assignment Form?

When you buy on credit, you sign a contract agreeing to pay a certain amount each week or month until you have paid all you owe. The Wage Assignment Form is separate. It must contain:

- The name of your present employer,
- Your social security number,
- The amount to money loaned,
- The rate of interest,
- The date when payments are due, and
- Your signature.

The words "Wage Assignment" must be printed at the top of the form and also near the line for your signature.

When Would Money Be Deducted from Your Wages to Pay a Creditor?

Even if you have signed a Wage Assignment agreement, Bentalls will not withhold part of your wages unless all of the following conditions are met:

1. You have to be more than forty days late in payment of what you owe,
2. Bentalls has to receive a correct statement of the amount you are in default and a copy of the Wage Assignment form; and
3. You and Bentalls must receive a notice from the creditor at least twenty days in advance stating that the creditor plans to make a demand on your wage.

This twenty-day notice gives you a chance to correct the problem yourself.



Handling Customer Complaints: 8-Step Process

DIALOGUE

- Manager:** How can I help you, Mr Park?
- Mr Park:** I'm angry right now because I have some serious complaints about this cruise I bought and your staff, Ms Li, is not being very helpful.
- Manager:** OK. Well, please take a seat and tell me about your concerns. I'm sure we can get this sorted out.
- Mr Park:** Well, first of all, I was told that the cruise was all inclusive. But when we got there, we found we had to pay for certain things.
- Manager:** Oh, well I can see how that might have surprised you. Let me show you the cruise brochure here. OK. Now, as you can see, it lists specifically here the things which are included in the price: the airfare, the cost of the room and most of your meals, excluding special dinners which are optional and the occasional excursion to shore.
- Mr Park:** Oh yes. OK. I see that. And the shows?
- Manager:** Well, again, the policy is that most shows are included in the price but sometimes special shows require an additional fee. But these shows are always optional, as are the special dinners. How was the food, by the way?
- Mr Park:** Actually, it wasn't bad. They had quite a wide selection of choices and my wife is rather picky. She generally found things she liked.
- Manager:** And you had some other concerns, sir?
- Mr Park:** It was mainly to do with the size and quality of the rooms. They were nothing like the photos.
- Manager:** Yes, that's a serious problem. We do try hard to make sure our promotional photos are up-to-date. I believe you looked at these photos?
- Mr Park:** Yes, that's right. The rooms...they looked some what like that, but much smaller.
- Manager:** Things in photos do often look larger than in real life. However, I can see how you might have been surprised if your room was too small.
- Mr Park:** Mainly, you see, it had to do with my bad back. The beds were so uncomfortable.
- Manager:** Oh, ok! And when you're on vacation, you certainly don't want to be suffering from a bad back! Must have been frustrating!
- Mr Park:** It was a bit.
- Manager:** Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. Since the first issue might simply be a case of misunderstanding or, perhaps, the charges weren't specifically explained to you from the booklet you have, and since the beds might not have been up to your standard, how about if we offer you a 20% discount on your next cruise?

Key Phrases

Listening

I see.
OK.
I understand.

Addressing the Customer

Could I help you, please?
How may/can I help you?
May I ask what seems to be the problem?
What seems to be the problem?

Acknowledging

I see what you mean.
I'm sorry about that...
Yes, that must have been inconvenient.

Stating the Company's Position

It's not company policy to extend credit....
It's strict company policy to enforce....
We always demand payment in full by...
We never allow....

Saying 'Yes'

Yes, I can do that for you.
Certainly, I'll do that for you now.
I really don't think that's going to be a problem.
No problem. I'll get that sent out to you right away.

Saying 'No'

I'm afraid we're unable to do that for you.
I'm sorry but I'm not in a position to authorize that.
Unfortunately, we cannot accept this document.

Apologising

I'm very sorry.
This is very unfortunate.
Please accept our apologies for...
We (do) apologise for the inconvenience.
I'm (really) sorry to hear that.

Assuring / Promising Action

I'll do everything I can.
That's going to be difficult...but I'll certainly do my best.
I'll have it corrected right away.
We'll reimburse you for the damage.
I'll look into the possibilities of a refund.
I'll look into it immediately.
I'll get back to you within two hours.
I assure you we will rectify the situation as quickly as we can.

Finishing

Is there anything else you'd like me to do for you?
Thank you for letting us know about this.
Please feel free to call me if you have any other questions.

Language Considerations

Using Polite Language

It is very important when dealing with customers, that the language you use is as polite as possible. This is essential in maintaining good customer relations, but also diffuses potentially disruptive situations. Below is a list of some commonly-used phrases with their polite alternatives.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| LESS POLITE: | What's the problem? |
| MORE POLITE: | What can I help you with? |
| LESS POLITE: | I'm not satisfied. |
| MORE POLITE: | I have some concerns. |
| LESS POLITE: | You probably misunderstood me. |
| MORE POLITE: | Perhaps I didn't explain it clearly. |
| LESS POLITE: | You should have read the booklet. |
| MORE POLITE: | It might have been better to... |
| LESS POLITE: | Next time, you'd better... |
| MORE POLITE: | It might be a good idea to... |

This last phrase 'you'd better', is something a mother might say to her child: "You'd better go and clean your room," and NOT one that an adult uses with another adult.

Remember that the level of politeness or rudeness has much to do with your facial expression, tone, and body language. Smiling, avoiding actions like raising your voice, pointing or pounding on things is (in any culture) the best way to avoid seeming impolite.

Being Tactful

In business, some things are better left unsaid. For example, when someone asks a question to which we do not know the answer, we may be tempted to simply say, "I don't know"; however, in business we are paid to know or find out. We need to respond honestly but in a way that maintains the customer's good will.

The following responses are six examples of things not to say along with their tactful alternatives.

1. "I don't know."

A better way to answer would be, "I'll find out and get back to you as soon as possible. Can I reach you at this number?" Follow up quickly.

2. "We can't do that."

Say something such as, "That is a difficult one. Let me find out what we can do about that." Don't remind the customer of what you can't do. Repeating negatives won't help.

If you really are unable to help, calmly explain the company policy or procedures. If possible, ask the

customer what they would like for you to do. Satisfying the customer is often easier than we fear.

3. "You will have to..."

Customers do not have to do anything; they can take their business elsewhere. Say, "Here is how we can help with that" or "I will have the person in charge of that contact you. Is this the correct telephone number?" Follow up.

4. "Hang on, I'll be right back."

It is better to say, "It may take a minute or two. Can you hold?" Wait for an answer.

5. "No."

The word "No" used alone is very negative. It conveys total rejection. We can usually turn any answer into a positive one, such as, "We can...no charge (or for a minimal fee)."

6. "That's not my job."

Our job description usually does not matter to the customer. We can say, "Come with me and we will find someone who is in charge of that."



When you see a customer approaching you with a complaining look on his or her face, it is not time to get defensive. You do, however, want to be prepared. Here are some suggestions for dealing with the complaining customer as you take steps to solve his or her problem.

8 Steps for Handling Customer Complaints

There are eight basic steps to handling customer complaints effectively:

1. Show you are listening to their complaint.
2. Offer your apologies.
3. Let the customer know that the matter will be fully investigated.
4. Understand the problem from the customer's point of view.
5. Take control by staying calm and do not argue with the customer.
6. Identify a solution to the problem, if possible.
7. Offer and agree a solution with the customer.
8. Note what needs to be done and make sure what you promise gets done.

The Situation

In the dialogue on the right a customer, Mr park, is complaining about a recent holiday he bought from a travel agent. Mr Park has already complained to a customer service associate but wasn't very happy with the way she dealt with his complaint. Now, he has asked to speak to the branch manager.

In the dialogue, the manager follows the eight basic steps above and is able to resolve the complaint to Mr Park's satisfaction. Read the dialogue and see if you can recognize the different steps.

APOLIGISE
GIVE ASSURANCES
STAY CALM
OFFER A SOLUTION
TAKE CONTROL
LISTEN

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English Around the World



This month we spoke to Miriam Vizer from Israel about her experience using English. Miriam works as a senior sales representative for an Israeli drug company and spends a lot of her time in Asia and South America giving presentations to doctors and medical consultants about the drugs that her company manufactures. This is what Miriam had to say about her use of English.

"I've been learning English since I was five years old when I first went to primary school. The medium of instruction for all our lessons, except English, was in our native language, Hebrew. English was taught in English. We were not allowed to speak any Hebrew in class – not even to ask a question if we were confused about something. We simply had no choice but to think in English.

By the time I was 12 and attending secondary school, my English was quite fluent. Having to think in English was the key to such quick progress – I never translate from Hebrew into English. At secondary school I just focused on expanding my vocabulary and powers of expression.

At work, however, I need to write a lot of formal business documents and give presentations in English. This isn't something that they teach you at school and despite my fluency I needed to learn the skills necessary to write and present in a professional manner. An intensive online course in Professional writing skills helped me to get to the level I needed for writing. And my company hired a business English consultant to teach a group of us presentation skills. Presenting to the group and the trainer and getting feedback was so useful – they even filmed us so we could analyse our own performances.

I would highly recommend an English skills-based course for anyone in business that needs to speak or write English, whatever his or her fluency. Even native speakers could benefit!!"

A man walks into a shop and sees a cute little dog. He asked the shopkeeper: "Does your dog bite?"

The shopkeeper said: "No, my dog doesn't bite."

The man tried to stroke the dog and the dog bit him.

"Ouch!" he said, "I thought you said your dog didn't bite!"



The shopkeeper replied: "That is not my dog!"

A woman got on a bus, holding a baby. The bus driver said, "That's the ugliest baby I've ever seen!"

In a temper, the woman slammed the coins into the fare box and took an aisle seat near the back of the bus.

The man seated next to her sensed that she was angry and asked her what was wrong.

"Did you hear what the bus driver said to me? He insulted me," she replied angrily.

The man sympathised and said, "Why, he's a public servant and shouldn't say things to insult passengers."

"You're right," she said. "I think I'll go back up there and tell him what I think of him."

"That's a good idea," the man said. "Here, let me hold your little monkey."

Business English Apps



The Economist (iphone . android . free)

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.co.economist>
The app gives you free access to the editor's selection of the six must-read articles from each week's edition of this great business magazine. Improve your reading and vocabulary!



Popplet (iphone . android . free)

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/popplet/id374151636?mt=8>
Popplet can be used to improve your presentation and team-working skills. Use the app to learn, capture your ideas, organise your thoughts and collaborate with other users.

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Questions answers and tips with Dr English

If you have any questions that you would like to have answered by Dr English then email us: editor@languagekey.com

Q I'd like to know how is the possessive of a noun formed that ends in 's'?

A The apostrophe follows the 's' when the possessive noun, whether singular or plural, ends in 's'. For example: **Technicians' and secretaries' salaries are listed as direct costs.** And: **Mr Jones' report was considered to be unacceptable.**

Q Which words are capitalised in the headings of reports and in the subject headings of emails, notices, circulars and business letters?

A The first word and all other main words of all the documents you mention are capitalised. Articles (**a, an, the**), short prepositions (**to, of, from**, etc.) and coordinate conjunctions (**and, but, so, for, or, nor, yet**) are not capitalised unless they appear as the first word. Here's an example of a heading of a report: **Evaluation of the Staff Overtime Scheme.** And here's an email subject heading: **Things to Consider for the Meeting on October 10.**

Q Could you please explain to me how we should make numerals plural?

A The plural of a numeral is formed by simply adding a lowercase 's' to it (without an apostrophe): **in the early 1980s, temperatures in the mid-20s, counted off by 2s**, etc.

Q May a paragraph contain only one sentence? To me a single-sentence paragraph doesn't look right.

A Yes. In fact, a paragraph with a single sentence is very emphatic because it stands out compared to other longer paragraphs which may surround it.

The general rule is, however, a paragraph should include one main point. If you change the point, you should use a new paragraph.

Q When may words like 'however', 'further', 'therefore', and others be used with a semicolon?

A Transitional words and phrases like **thus, therefore, on the other hand, for example, nevertheless, further, indeed, however**, and others may be used with semicolons to clarify the relationship between the thoughts: **We don't want to fine you; however, if you miss the deadline again, we will have to.**

Simpler conjunctions like **and, yet, but, so, for**, and **nor** are not used with semicolons.

Q When a sentence ends in brackets (....), could you tell me where the full stop is placed?

A If only a part of the sentence is enclosed by the brackets, the full stop is placed outside the closing bracket: **Janet used a topic from The Language Key magazine ('Clear and Concise Writing').**

If the whole sentence is enclosed in brackets, the full stop is placed inside the closing bracket: **(See appendix 4 for detailed data analyses.)**

Problem Words and Phrases

Due to the fact that

Using this phrase is a sure sign that your sentence is in trouble. Did you mean **because**? **Due to** is acceptable after a linking verb (**The team's failure was due to illness among the stars.**); otherwise, avoid it.

Each and every

Use one or the other, but not both.

Firstly, secondly, thirdly, etc.

Number things with **first, second, third**, etc. and not with these adverbial forms.

Lots or lots of

In business writing, avoid these colloquialisms when you can use **many** or **much**. Remember, when you do use these words, that **lots** of something countable are plural. Remember, too, that a lot of requires three words: **He spent a lot of money** (not **alot** of).

On account of

Use **because** instead.

Per / As Per

Use **according to** instead. Instead of writing, **'We did it as per your instructions'**; write **'We did it according to your instructions.'**

So as to

Usually, a simple **to** will do. Instead of writing, **'I worked late so as to finish my report'**; write **'I worked late to finish my report.'**

Kind of or Sort of

These phrases are fine to use in informal situations, but in business writing, substitute **rather** or **slightly**. (**We were kind of pleased with the results.** = **We were rather pleased with the results.**)



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