

Question Bank for Class Test -1

I. Correct the errors in the following sentences

1. We are only five on our team.

There are five of us on our team.

2. I would rather to work from home than come to the office.

I would rather work from home than come to the office.

3. We're used to have a lot of work to do, so meeting the deadline won't be a problem.

We're used to ~~have~~ having a lot of work to do, so meeting the deadline won't be a problem.

4. My client sent me an email but I haven't replied her yet.

My client sent me an email but I haven't replied yet

5. Maybe I'm going to finish this today.

I might finish this today.

6. Please borrow me your badge so I can get into the storage closet.

Please lend me your badge so I can get into the storage closet.

7. I can't finish this by the end of the day. Even though I spend all day on it, I won't finish on time.

I can't finish this by the end of the day. Even if I spend all day on it, I won't finish on time.

8. Probably, I'll go to the beach on Saturday.

I'll probably go to the beach on Saturday.

9. The Old Man and the Sea was written for Ernest Hemingway.

The Old Man and the Sea was written by Ernest Hemingway.

10. Our office is near to the airport, so it will be easy for you to get here.

Our office is near the airport, so it will be easy for you to get here.

11. We have many stuffs to do this week, so I don't know if I can go to English class.

We have a lot of stuff to do this week, so I don't know if I can go to English class.

12. Despite I was tired, I came to work today.

Even though/Although I was tired, I came to work today.

13. If we had a gym here, I can work out after work.

If we had a gym here, I could work out after work.

14. I always try to do things very careful and make sure I do them correct. (two mistakes)

I always try to do things very carefully and make sure I do them correctly. (two mistakes)

15. We have people from all over the world here: India, United States, Venezuela, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, and France. (two mistakes)

We have people from all over the world here: India, the United States, Venezuela, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. (two mistakes)

16. Are we going to have to work overtime again this week? I hope no.

Are we going to have to work overtime again this week? I hope not.

17. Yesterday, he told me that he will send the email after lunch, but he didn't do it.

Yesterday, he told me that he would send the email after lunch, but he didn't do it.

18. My schedule often changes, but I normally work since 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

My schedule often changes, but I normally work from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

19. I thought you were still with Microsoft. When did you stop to work there?

I thought you were still with Microsoft. When did you stop working there?

20. I'm not pretty sure about what we should do.

I'm not sure about what we should do.

21. How long time did you work in the public sector?

How long ~~time~~ did you work in the public sector?

22. Do you know where is the restaurant?

Do you know where the restaurant is?

23. He is well-experienced, so we know that he can do the job.

He has a lot of experience, so we know that he can do the job.

24. Who is in charge to decide which printer to buy?

Who is in charge of deciding which printer to buy?

25. I had a hard time getting in touch with my supervisor. After calling for hours, I finally could get in touch with her.

I had a hard time getting in touch with my supervisor. After calling for hours, I finally was able get in touch with her.

II. Conversion of Simple Sentences to Compound (Double) Sentences

Simple. He must work very hard to make up for the lost time.

Compound. He must work very hard and make up for the lost time.

Simple. To his eternal disgrace, he betrayed his country.

Compound. He betrayed his country, and this was to his eternal disgrace.

Simple. Besides robbing the poor child, he also murdered her.

Compound. He not only robbed the poor child but also murdered her.

Simple. He must work very hard to win the first prize.

Compound. He must work very hard, or he will not win the first prize.

Simple. He must not attempt to escape, on pain of death.

Compound. He must not attempt to escape, or he will be put to death.

Simple. Notwithstanding his hard work, he did not succeed.

Compound. He worked hard, yet did not succeed.

Simple. Owing to ill—luck, he met with a bad accident on the eve of his examination.

Compound. He was unlucky and therefore met with a bad accident on the eve of his examination.

Simple. The teacher punished the boy for disobedience.

Compound. The boy was disobedient, and so the teacher punished him.

III. Conversion of Compound (Double) Sentences to Simple Sentences

Compound. He finished his exercise and put away his books.

Simple. Having finished his exercise, he put away his books.

Compound. Not only did his father give him money, but his mother did too.

Simple. Besides his father giving him money, his mother also did the same.

Compound. He was a mere boy but he offered to fight the giant.

Simple. In spite of his being a mere boy, he offered to fight the giant.

Compound. He must not be late, or he will be punished.

Simple. In the event of his being late, he will be punished.

Compound. You must either pay the bill at once or return the goods.

Simple. Failing prompt payment, the goods must be returned by you.

Compound. The men endured all the horrors of the campaign and not one of them complained at all.

Simple. The men endured all the horrors of the campaign without one of them making any complaint.

Compound. We must eat, or we cannot live.

Simple. We must eat to live.

IV. Conversion of Simple Sentences to Complex

Simple. He confessed his crime.

Complex. He confessed that he was guilty.

Simple. His silence proves his guilt.

Complex. The fact that he is silent proves his guilt.

Simple. He bought his uncle's library.

Complex. He bought the library which belonged to his uncle.

Simple. On the arrival of the mails the ship will leave.

Complex. The ship will leave as soon as the mails arrive.

Simple. He owed his success to his father.

Complex. It was owing to his father that he succeeded.

Simple. He worked hard to pass the examination.

Complex. He worked hard so that he might pass the examination.

Simple. Only Indians are admitted.

Complex. If you are not an Indian you cannot be admitted.

Simple. He succeeded unexpectedly.

Complex. He succeeded although his success was not expected.

V. Conversion of Complex Sentences to Simple Sentences

Complex. He said that he was innocent.

Simple. He declared his innocence.

Complex. That you are drunk aggravates your offence.

Simple. Your drunkenness aggravates your offence.

Complex. Tell me where you live.

Simple. Tell me your address.

Complex. It is a pity that we should have to undergo this disgrace.

Simple. Our having to undergo this disgrace is a pity.

Complex. It is proclaimed that all men found with arms will be shot.

Simple. According to the proclamation all men found with arms will be shot.

Complex. He remarked how impudent the boy was.

Simple. He remarked on the boy's impudence.

Complex. How long I shall stay is doubtful.

Simple. The duration of my stay is doubtful.

Complex. Except that he hurt his hand, he was lucky.

Simple. Except for the hurt to his hand, he was lucky.

VI. Conversion of Compound Sentences to Complex

Compound. Search his pockets and you will find the watch.

Complex. If you search his pockets, you will find the watch.

Compound. Do as I tell you, or you will regret it.

Complex. Unless you do as I tell you, you will regret it.

Compound. The lion was wounded but not killed.

Complex. The lion was not killed although he was wounded.

(=Although the lion was wounded, he was not killed.)

Compound. Waste not, want not.

Complex. If you do not waste, you will not want.

Compound. He saw the danger, but pressed on.

Complex. Although he saw the danger, he pressed on.

Compound. He saw the danger and paused.

Complex. When he saw the danger he paused.

Compound. He aimed at winning the prize and worked hard.

Complex. He worked hard so that he might win the prize.

Compound. He had to sign, or be executed.

Complex. If he had not signed, he would have been executed.

Compound. He is buried near Rome and myrtles grow round his grave.

Complex. He is buried near Rome in a place where myrtles grow.

Compound. He wishes to become learned ; therefore he is studying hard.

Complex. He is studying hard so that he may become learned.

VII. Conversion of Complex Sentences to Compound

Complex. I am certain you have made a mistake.

Compound. You have made a mistake, and of this I am certain.

Complex. I am glad that he has recovered from illness.

Compound. He has recovered from illness, and I am glad of it.

Complex. We can prove that the earth is round.

Compound. The earth is round, and we can prove it.

Complex. I have found the book that I had lost.

Compound. I had lost a book, but I have found it.

Complex. As soon as he got the telegram, he left in a taxi.

Compound. He got the telegram, and immediately he left in a taxi.

Complex. He worked hard so that he might win the prize.

Compound. He aimed at winning the prize and worked hard.

Complex. If he is at home, I shall see him.

Compound. He may be at home, and in that case I shall see him.

Complex. He lost more than he could afford.

Compound. He could afford to lose something, but he lost somewhat more.

Complex. He is more a philosopher than a poet.

Compound. He is something of a poet, but rather more of a philosopher.

Complex. If you do not hurry you will miss the train.

Compound. You must hurry, or you will miss the train.

Complex. Unless we do our work well our master will be angry with us.

Compound. We must do our work well, or our master will be angry with us.

Complex. We sow so that we may reap.

Compound. We desire to reap, therefore we sow.

VIII. DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH

Questions

Direct. He said to me, 'What are you doing ?'

Indirect. He asked me what I was doing.

Direct. 'Where do you live ?' asked the stranger. '

Indirect. The stranger enquired where I lived.

Direct. The policeman said to us, 'Where are you going ?'

Indirect. The policeman enquired where we were going.

Direct. He said, 'Will you listen to such a man ?'

Indirect. He asked them whether they would listen to such a man.

Direct. Do you suppose you know better than your own father?' jeered his angry mother.

Indirect. His angry mother jeered and asked whether he supposed that he knew better than his own father.

Commands and Requests

Direct. Rama said to Arjun, 'Go away.'

Indirect. Rama ordered Arjun to go away.

Direct. He said to him, 'Please wait here till I return.'

Indirect. He requested him to wait there till he returned.

Direct. 'Call the first witness,' said the judge.

Indirect. The judge commanded them to call the first witness.

Direct. He shouted, 'Let me go.'

Indirect. He shouted to them to let him go.

Direct. He said, 'Be quiet and listen to my words.'

Indirect. He urged them to be quiet and listen to his words.

Exclamations and Wishes

Direct. He said, 'Alas ! I am undone.'

Indirect He exclaimed sadly that he was undone.

Direct Alice said, 'How clever I am !'

Indirect Alice exclaimed that she was very clever.

Direct He said, 'Bravo ! You have done well.'

Indirect. He applauded him, saying that he had done well.

Direct. 'SO help me, Heaven!' he cried, 'I will never steal again.'

Indirect. He called upon Heaven to witness his resolve never to steal again.

Assertive sentence

Direct. Rama said, 'I am very busy now.'

Indirect. Rama said that he was very busy then.

Direct. He said, 'My master is writing letters.'

Indirect. He said (that) his master was writing letters.

Direct. He said, 'I have passed the examination.'

Indirect. He said (that) he had passed the examination.

Direct. He said to me, 'I don't believe you.'

Indirect. He said he didn't believe me.

Direct. She said to him, 'I don't believe you.'

Indirect. She said she didn't believe him.

Direct. I said to him, 'I don't believe you.'

Indirect. I said I didn't believe him.

IX. Change the Voice.

. We elected Balu captain.

. I saw him opening the box.

. We must listen to his words.

. Shall I ever forget those happy days ?

By whom was this jug broken ?

. His subordinates accused him of various offences.

. One cannot gather grapes from thistles.

. The telegraph wires have been cut.

X. IDIOMS

a). Action speaks louder than words: People's intentions can be judged better by what They do than what they say.

Example: Without any arguments, we completed our project successfully; after all, Action speaks louder than words!

b) A hot potato: Speak of an issue (mostly current) which many people are talking about And which is usually disputed.

Example: I-Phone is a hot potato.

c) Add insult to injury: To further a loss with mockery or indignity; to worsen an unfavorable situation.

Example: Pessimistic people have a habit of adding insult to injury.

d) At the drop of a hat: without any hesitation; instantly.

Example: On my call, she was ready to help me at the drop of a hat.

e) Back to the drawing board: When an attempt fails and it's time to start all over.

Example: Twice Veena had to go back to the drawing board for her new project Again.

f) Ball is in your court: It is up to you to make the next decision or step.

Example: The manager told the employees that now the ball was in their court.

g) Barking up the wrong tree: Looking in the wrong place. Accusing the wrong person.

Example: Nisha was barking up the wrong tree for her demotion.

h) Beat around the bush: Avoiding the main topic. Not speaking directly about the issue.

Example: People with less knowledge and low confidence always beat around the Bush.

l) Best of both worlds: All the advantages.

Example: My decision of joining this institute is best of both worlds.

j) Burn the midnight oil: To work late into the night, alluding to the time before electric Lighting.

Example: During exams, students burn the midnight oil.

k) Can't judge a book by its cover: Cannot judge something primarily on appearance.

Example: Interviewers were surprised to realize the knowledge of a student coming From rural background; you really can't judge a book by its cover!

l) Caught between two stools: When someone finds it difficult to choose between two alternatives.

Example: I was caught between two stools when I got the offer letters of two renowned companies at a time.

m) Cry over spilt milk: When you complain about a loss from the past.

Example: Mr. Sharma from our team always cries over the spilt milk.

n) Curiosity kills the cat: Being inquisitive can lead you into an unpleasant situation.

Example: Viren gets into trouble as he becomes too curious about the things; he fails To understand the fact that curiosity kills the cat.

o) The show has come to an end: It's all over.

Example: The show has come to an end due to disputes among family members.

p) Every dark cloud has a silver lining: Be optimistic, even difficult times will lead to better days.

Example : Mr. Tripathi had a loss in business, but he did not lose hope as he believed That every dark cloud has a silver lining

q) Kill two birds with one stone: to accomplish two different things at the same time.

Example :My trip to Germany will kill two birds with one stone. I will do my work as Well as have a great time with my family

r) Castles in the air: Imaginary schemes

Example :My friend builds castles in the air and actually does nothing to accomplish It.

s) Once in a blue moon: Happens very rarely.

Example :Decisions regarding the development of our country happen once in a blue Moon.

XI. Phrases

Get You Through Any Business Interaction

If you want to succeed in the world of business, English is a very important language to know, especially in today's connected world.

To get you started in the global English language, it is a good idea to know some important business English phrases and idioms.

And you can learn 172 of them in this post!

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Sounding Authentic: 22 Business English Phrases and Idioms for All Occasions

1. [Get a business off the ground](#)

The business has been registered with its own name, the employees are hired and the product or service is ready to be offered to the public. In other words, the owner *got his or her business off the ground*.

For example:

- “After finding the right investors and securing enough capital (money to start with), we finally **got our business off the ground** and opened our first store in Toronto.”

2. [From the ground up](#)

Similar to the last one, if you build a business or project from zero or from the bottom, you're starting *from the ground up*.

For example:

- “Have you read the news about the enterprising 12-year-old who’s building her business **from the ground up**?”

3. [Long shot](#)

Imagine you’re throwing a dart from a long distance. What are the chances of it hitting the bullseye (the exact center of the target)?

A *long shot* is an idiom that’s usually used to describe something that has a very small chance of happening or succeeding.

For example:

- “Landing such a high-paying job is a **long shot** but I’m still going to give it a try.”

4. [Bring to the table](#)

To *bring* [something] *to the table* means to bring something of use or benefit (skills, experience, etc.) to a job or business activity (project, meeting, etc.).

For example:

- “We need someone on the team who can **bring** project management experience **to the table**.”

5. [Learning the ropes](#)

Imagine that you’re on a sailboat. The first thing you would learn is how to tie knots and work the sails. In other words, you would learn how all the ropes work!

To learn the ropes means to learn how to do your job or a particular task, especially if you have no prior experience. Because of this, it is commonly used when referring to new employees in training.

If you change it to say “to teach someone the ropes,” you can use it to describe a boss or more senior person helping a new employee understand their role and responsibilities.

For example:

- “Hey Paul, how’s your new job?”
“It’s great but I’ve only been there for two weeks so I’m still **learning the ropes**.”
- “I’ve got a great manager who’s been **teaching me the ropes**, so I’m learning quickly!”

6. [Learning curve](#)

A *learning curve* is used to describe the progress someone has to make to gain experience or learn a new skill set. A steep learning curve indicates the task may be difficult and therefore take more effort.

For example:

- “She is welcome to join our team, but there will be a steep **learning curve**.”

7. [Go the extra mile](#)

To *go the extra mile* means to give more effort or do more than what’s expected of you.

For example:

- “Anyone would be glad to have Pam on their team. She’s a great team player and is always willing to **go the extra mile**.”

8. [A win-win situation](#)

You might hear that something is a *win-win situation*, or that something is *win-win* in both business and regular English. The phrase describes a situation where everybody involved in the event or deal benefits from the outcome.

In business, it is often used during negotiations or trades, where both parties receive something that they need from the other.

For example:

- “The deal is simple, we give them office space and they give us the new equipment that we need.”
“It sounds like a **win-win situation** to me!”

9. [Overplay your hand](#)

Be careful that you don’t *overplay your hand*. Being overly-confident about your work and your chance of success may actually disadvantage you.

For example:

- “My cousin **overplayed his hand** and ended up losing his job.”

10. [Get down to business](#)

Business meetings usually begin with some small talk while waiting for everyone to arrive. When it’s time to start seriously focusing on the actual work, it’s time to *get down to business*.

For example:

- “We’ve got plenty of topics to cover in today’s meeting so let’s **get down to business**.”

11. [Get down to brass tacks](#)

Again: let’s get on with the business at hand. You might hear this at the start of a business meeting, after some brief introductions or socializing.

For example:

- “Now that everyone’s here, **let’s get down to brass tacks**.”

12. [A ballpark number](#) / [figure](#) / [estimate](#)

This phrase, like many other business expressions, is related to sports. The *ballpark* is the sports ground or stadium where baseball is played.

Giving a *ballpark figure* means giving an estimate of the value, time or number of something. It is used when the specific amount or number is not yet known or agreed upon but an estimate is required.

A ballpark is very large! So, this expression is specifically used for giving a very rough estimate or a large range in value.

For example:

- “To give you a **ballpark figure**, the new project will take between one and three months to complete.”

13. [The bottom line](#)

You may know that the last or bottom line on a financial statement is the most important. It shows the total profit or loss. So the phrase *the bottom line* is used in general to refer to the final outcome, or the most important point to consider.

For example:

- “It’s true that we’re very short-handed, but **the bottom line** is we must still deliver the project on time.”

14. [Smooth sailing](#)

Think of the business as a sailboat. The skies are blue and the water is calm. When everything is going well and without any problems, we call it *smooth sailing*.

For example:

- “Once the company overcame the country’s bureaucracy, it was **smooth sailing** from then on.”

15. [The big picture](#)

The big picture means to look at the overall view of something, or the situation as a whole and not the details.

For example:

- “I think his presentation was too long and detailed. He should’ve just given us **the big picture**.”

16. [In a nutshell](#)

Have you seen a nutshell? Think of how small it is and how little it can hold. So, *in a nutshell* means in summary, or in as few words as possible.

For example:

- “This book is about successful businesspeople and how they reached the top. **In a nutshell**, it’s about how to grow a successful business.”

17. [Gray area](#)

The color gray is between black and white. When something is in a *gray area*, it means the situation isn’t certain. In a gray area there are no clear rules and it’s difficult to say if it’s right or wrong.

For example:

- “You have many good points in your proposal but there’s one **gray area** we need to discuss.”

18. [Red tape](#)

Nobody likes to encounter red tape when they’re trying to do their work. *Red tape* refers to excessive regulations and rules that you need to comply with before you can get your work done.

For example:

- “Our project is stalled because we ran into some **red tape**.”

19. [The wrong end of the stick](#)

To succeed in business, it’s helpful to have good knowledge of business phrases and idioms. So hopefully these business expressions will prevent you from getting *the wrong end of the stick*. This phrase refers to a total misunderstanding of a situation, plan or idea.

For example:

- “Jackie’s not in charge of this project... Mark is. Seems like you got **the wrong end of the stick**.”

20. [Walking papers](#)

If you are given your *walking papers*, it means you have received a notice that you are being fired or laid off from your job.

For example:

- “Did you hear? The boss just gave Brett his **walking papers!**”

21. [Back to square one](#)

Back to square one simply means to start over, or to go back to the beginning.

For example:

- “I wish I’d saved my spreadsheet before the server crashed. Now I have to go **back to square one.**”

22. [Call it a day](#)

When your work has been completed for the day, or when you decide to stop working on an activity, you can *call it a day*.

For example:

- “Now that we’ve completed the outline for the new project, let’s **call it a day.**”

Talk About It: 7 Phrases Related To Communication

1. [Word of mouth](#)

Word of mouth refers to the spread of information verbally. In regards to business, it usually refers to people telling other people about your business, product or service.

Note that this expression is commonly used to talk positively about something.

If someone has a good experience with your product, then they may tell their friend about it, and that friend might tell another friend and so on—and before long, everyone is talking about your product! This is known as *word-of-mouth marketing*.

For example:

- “Hi, if you don’t mind me asking, how did you find out about our shop?”
“I heard about it through **word of mouth**. Everybody kept telling me how great your products are!”

2. [Touch base](#)

This is another business phrase that comes from a sport. In baseball, the bases are where the batter runs to after striking the ball. In business English, to *touch base* means to briefly connect with or re-contact someone.

This contact is often short and just used to check in with somebody. For example, if you are working with a colleague on a project, you can *touch base* with them about their progress, or about a part of the project that you are waiting for them to finish.

You will find that this expression is often used in emails.

For example:

- “Hi Sarah, I just wanted to **touch base** with you to see if we’re still scheduled to complete the first phase of the project by next Monday.”

3. [On the same page](#)

To be *on the same page* means to be in agreement or to hold the same views about something with others.

This is a very common English expression and is used frequently in both everyday English and business English.

You might also hear this expression formed as a question: “Are we on the same page?” This is the same as asking, “Do we agree?”

For example:

- “Next month we need to cut spending by 20%. Are we all **on the same page** about this?”

4. [Play hardball](#)

Anyone who *plays hardball* is tough, ruthless and will not take “no” for an answer. [Negotiating with these types](#) can be a real challenge!

For example:

- “Joe’s the nicest guy I know, but he can **play hardball** when he needs to.”

5. [Generate buzz](#)

When a company uses clever marketing strategies and gets potential customers talking about a product, possibly even before it’s released, it’s called to *generate buzz*.

When thousands of people talk about a company, they are buzzing like bees. When people talk, there’s a better chance that they will go check out what all the buzz is about.

For example:

- “Before its summer release, the movie was already **generating a lot of buzz** in the media.”

6. [Meet up](#)

To meet up means to come together to talk. **Meet up** is usually used for [short, informal meetings with a small group of people](#).

It is often used with prepositions such as “in,” “at” and “with” to tell where, at what time or with whom you will meet up.

For example:

- “Since we have a few problems to discuss, let’s **meet up in** my office.”

7. [Schedule a meeting](#)

A **schedule** is a plan of times and events, but it can also be used as a verb. The verb **to schedule** means to plan a date and time for a certain event.

To schedule a meeting means to choose a date, time and place to meet with another person or a group of people.

For example:

- “Let’s **schedule a meeting** for this Tuesday to discuss any problems.”

All Together Now: 7 Expressions About Teamwork

1. [There’s no “I” in team](#)

There’s no “I” in team means that no one particular person takes all the credit for the achievements of a group effort. It’s kind of a cute phrase because the word “team” is truly not spelled using the letter “I.”

For example:

- “**There’s no “I” in team**; we failed at this project together.”

2. [Team player](#)

Lots of companies look for strong *team players* when they are hiring. They want someone who gets along well with others and supports a collaborative work environment.

For example:

- “I love doing projects with Kate because she’s such a great **team player**.”

3. [Step up to the plate](#)

Yep, here’s another of those baseball-themed business English expressions!

If you *step up to the plate*, you take on a role or responsibility—usually a difficult one that others don’t want. This is a quality that companies look for in strong leaders.

For example:

- “After the sales numbers dropped last quarter, David really **stepped up to the plate** and turned things around for the company.”

4. [Pass the buck](#)

Someone who passes the buck probably isn’t a great team player, and they’re definitely not a good leader.

When you *pass the buck*, you make excuses and pass blame to someone else if things don’t go as planned.

For example:

- “Josh lost us that client, but he tried to **pass the buck** to Samuel.”

5. [Form a team](#)

It means gathering a group of people to work on the project.

For example:

- “The first thing a project manager does is **form a team** of staff who are best for the project.”

6. [Team up with](#)

Similarly to the above, it means joining together to work as a team.

For example:

- “Sometimes on a big project, you may need to **team up with** other companies.”

7. [Pitch in](#)

To pitch in means to join in to help with a job or project.

For example:

- “Everyone will have to **pitch in** their ideas. We need each team member to share five ideas at the meeting on Monday.”

Time is Money: 15 Phrases About Time and Deadlines

1. [From day one](#)

This means “since the beginning.” You often hear the phrase *from day one* used in the workplace to talk about something that has been true since the very first day a project or business began.

For example:

- “I hope management realizes that our deadlines are very tight. We need to hire more people immediately. We’ve been short-handed **from day one**.”

2. [The eleventh hour](#)

The eleventh hour is used to describe something that’s done or happens at the last minute.

For example:

- “The project manager won’t be pleased about them changing the design at **the eleventh hour**.”

3. [Need it yesterday](#)

If your manager says, “*I need it yesterday*,” they don’t expect you to construct a time machine. Sure, it would be great fun to fly around in “The Tardis” catching up on a seemingly never-ending to-do list, but your manager really means, “This should have been done sooner. I need it right now.”

For example:

- “Where is that report? **I need it yesterday**. I’m going to be late for the meeting now.”

4. [ASAP](#)

Here’s a business English acronym you might be familiar with: *ASAP* stands for “as soon as possible.” Unsurprisingly, in business contexts, you’ll hear *ASAP* quite often—it’s as common in [administrative vocabulary](#) as in marketing and everywhere else!

For example:

- “Please tell Mr. Huang to call his client back **ASAP**.”

5. [24/7](#)

When under pressure, many employees say they are working 24/7: 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This doesn’t mean they are actually working all day, every day, of course.

The term 24/7 is used to express hard work and long hours, usually in the hopes of avoiding finishing projects at the eleventh hour.

For example:

- “This marketing project is killing me. I’ve been working **24/7** and it just won’t end!”

6. [To pencil it in](#)

This expression is used to talk about setting a date for an upcoming event—like a meeting, presentation or lunch—that might not happen on the scheduled time or date.

Since you are only using a pencil (and not something more permanent like a pen), you are leaving open the possibility of canceling or rescheduling the event.

For example:

- “Hi Maria, can we meet next Tuesday at 1 p.m. to chat about the upcoming campaign?”
“I’m not too sure about my schedule. Let’s **pencil it in** and see closer to the date, ok?”

7. [Start from scratch](#)

This term is used when you need to start something new from nothing.

For example:

- “Since we will be **starting from scratch** on this project, we will make the plan as we go along.”

8. [Define the phases](#)

This expression means to break down the project into smaller parts, or phases.

A **phase** is one part in a series of actions or events. For example, in a library project, the design phase comes before the building phase.

For example:

- “We must wait for the project team to **define the phases** before we can start work.”

9. [Set deadlines](#)

It’s used when you need to set the dates when a job must be finished. A **deadline** is a date or time when a completed job is due, and **set** means “to make” in this phrase.

For example:

- “We have **set deadlines** for each phase except the design phase. Does anyone know how long the design will take?”

10. [Meet the deadline](#)

To meet a deadline means that you finish the task by the deadline. For example, say you need to send in your job application by Friday at 3:00.

To meet the deadline, you send in your job application on Friday at noon. If you send in your job application on Friday at 4:00, you did not meet the deadline (because you were too late).

For example:

- “We may have to work longer hours to **meet the deadline.**”

11. [Behind schedule](#)

It means that something is overdue or will be done later than planned

If your project was due on Monday, but it is now Thursday, you are **behind schedule**. The project was supposed to be finished by now, but you’re still working on it.

For example:

- “When the project manager hears that the project is **behind schedule**, she will want to know the reason why.”

12. [Ahead of schedule](#)

To be completed earlier than planned.

Imagine that today is Monday and your project is due on Friday. If you finish it tomorrow, on Tuesday, then you’ve finished it early and are ahead of schedule.

Good job!

For example:

- “The project manager is happy that the project is **ahead of schedule** and thanked the team for their hard work.”

13. [According to schedule](#)

It means that everything is going as planned.

You are doing a good job, there are no delays and everything is going as planned.

For example:

- “If the project goes **according to schedule**, you can expect a nice bonus this year.”

14. [On schedule](#)

This phrase means that you are finishing each task on time and not expecting any delays.

For example:

- “If we can solve all these problems quickly, we will still be **on schedule** to finish the project by the end of this month.”

15. [Target date](#)

It means to have a date to complete something by that time.

For example:

- “If we keep missing the **target dates**, this project will not be completed on time.”

And Money is Time: 15 Expressions About Money and Finances

1. [On a shoestring](#)

When you do something *on a shoestring*, you’re working on a tight budget or with very little money.

For example:

- “It’s going to be a challenge doing such a big project **on a shoestring** but we’ll try our best.”

2. [Sleeping partner](#)

You certainly don’t want to get the wrong end of the stick when your boss introduces you to a sleeping partner. This is a person closely connected to the company who may even be financing it, but there is no—I repeat, *no*—romance going on.

A *sleeping partner* gets this term because they’re not actively helping to manage the company, though they are invested in it.

Another term for this is *silent partner*.

For example:

- “Oh, he doesn’t really have any say in the way we work. He’s just a **sleeping partner**.”

3. [Cash cow](#)

Cash cow is a term for a product or investment that provides a steady income, usually an amount that far exceeds the initial startup cost.

For example, the Coca-Cola company sells a lot of products from juices to teas to energy drinks, but the original Coke is likely their cash cow.

For example:

- “These new products are just additional profit. The **cash cow** is our line of cameras.”

4. [Deep pockets](#)

This isn’t a reference to extreme tailoring! It means help in the form of a wealthy investor or group of investors.

In other words, someone with *deep pockets* simply has a lot of money to spare.

For example:

- “Let’s ask Mrs. Henderson for help. She has **deep pockets**.”

5. [Go belly up](#)

If a project or business goes *belly up*, it has failed to generate profit. This could result in bankruptcy or [the company going into receivership](#).

For example:

- “That new restaurant closed down already because they went **belly up**.”

6. [Take a bath](#)

Here’s one of those business expressions with a comparison that doesn’t really make sense. Taking a bath can be a refreshing, relaxing thing. But not in the business world.

If you *take a bath*, it means you suffered a heavy financial loss.

For example:

- “The landlord is taking a bath on his property. He has no tenants!”

7. [Tighten your belt](#)

Just swap the word “belt” for “budget,” and this will be easy to remember. If you *tighten your belt*, you are cutting extra costs and trying to keep your budget lean (small; skinny).

If your company took a bath and losses are severe, it could lead to cuts being made. The company and employees will have to tighten their belts, or reduce how much money is spent.

For example:

- “We’re going to have to **tighten our belts**. Unfortunately, our sales last month weren’t as nearly as high as usual.”

8. [A slice of the pie](#)

When profits soar, you can guarantee employees will be looking for a share of the wealth, or a *slice of the pie*. This business English expression simply refers to a portion of profits or benefits.

An alternative expression is *a slice of the cake*.

For example:

- “She wants a bigger **slice of the pie** because she knows she’s the best employee.”

9. [The lion’s share](#)

The lion’s share is the “bulk” or “majority” of something.

Many well-run businesses reward hard work and it is only right that those employees who put in the most time, energy and effort should receive the lion’s share, or the bulk of the profits.

For example:

- “Paul has been here for 25 years and definitely gets **the lion’s share** around here.”

10. [Golden handcuffs](#)

While they may sound like some sort of toy, *golden handcuffs* (not real handcuffs) are financial incentives given to employees in order to persuade them not to leave a company.

For example:

- “Unlocking your **golden handcuffs** will give you much greater peace of mind.”

11. [Golden handshake](#)

Many executives have golden handshake clauses in their contracts. A *golden handshake* refers to a financial package that the executive will receive if they lose their job.

For example:

- “Mr. Smith’s **golden handshake** served him well. He got \$100,000 when he left the company last year.”

12. [Kickbacks](#)

The corporate world is tough. It may be tempting to beat out the competition by giving *kickbacks*, or payments for special favors (like winning a contract).

But kickbacks are often unethical or even illegal—especially if they [could be classified as bribes](#)!

For example:

- “The company is facing a government investigation because they think the executives are getting illegal **kickbacks**.”

13. [Create a budget](#)

To make a plan on the amount of money to spend and how to spend it.

For example:

- “We need to **create a budget** that includes the travel expenses of the project team.”

14. [Stay on budget](#)

To keep within the amount of money you plan to use, and refuse to spend more

Here is yet another phrase where the noun, **budget**, can’t be used in its plural form (budgets).

For example:

- “The project manager has reminded us that to **stay on budget**, we must remember to keep the costs as low as possible.”

15. [Increase the budget](#)

Add more money to the amount you planned to spend

The opposite of this phrase is to **decrease the budget**, which means to take away from the amount of money that you planned to spend.

For example:

- “Management has agreed to **increase the budget** to cover the cost of testing the new car.”

Doing the Work: 30 Phrases Related To Business Projects

1. [Back to the drawing board](#)

To go *back to the drawing board* means to start over, and look at a failed idea in a new way. You can also use this phrase when you need to rethink a decision.

This expression is commonly used to motivate a team of employees to rework a failure. You can imagine a group of employees removing a failed design from a whiteboard and drawing a new idea. They are starting again by literally going back to the drawing board!

For example:

- “We didn’t sell any units of our new product.”
“OK, let’s go **back to the drawing board** and design a new one.”

2. [To brainstorm an idea](#)

To *brainstorm an idea* is to openly discuss an idea with your colleagues in a relaxed and free environment.

This is commonly called a *brainstorming session* or simply *brainstorming*. The purpose of brainstorming in business is to explore ideas in an open-minded and non-judgmental environment.

For example:

- “Hi everyone, in this meeting we’re going **to brainstorm ideas** for this year’s new product. Please feel free to share any ideas you have.”

3. [Give the green light](#)

This term means to give the signal to begin. Think of this as a traffic light turning green when you’re driving.

What do you do when the light is green? That’s right, green means go.

This expression means you can go ahead and now begin the project.

For example:

- “We can’t start the project until management **gives the green light**.”

4. [Kick off](#)

To kick off means to officially start the project. This phrase is also used in sports.

In football and soccer, the game will **kick off** (begin) when a player kicks the ball to start play.

For example:

- “As soon as we **kick off** the project, we will be very busy.”

5. [To think outside the box](#)

To think outside the box means to think in a creative way that is not typical or traditional. You can use this expression in business when you are talking about ideas.

If someone tells you *to think outside the box*, then they are telling you to think of a creative solution or idea that may be unexpected or not obvious.

You can imagine the “box” as a traditional and obvious solution and *outside the box* as a more creative or abstract solution.

For example:

- “For our new advertising campaign, we really had to **think outside of the box** to come up with something that hadn’t been done before.”

6. [Fifty-fifty](#)

Fifty-fifty simply means dividing something into equal parts so that both parties get 50%.

For example:

- “Since I’m as busy as you are, let’s split the work for this project **fifty-fifty**.”

7. [Get the ball rolling](#)

This phrase means to start a new project or business activity.

It can also be used to describe a small action that leads to the beginning of something. This usually starts with one person. For example, a person can *get the ball rolling* by doing a small task that will eventually become part of a bigger project.

For example:

- “For our meeting today, Allie will **get the ball rolling** by talking about our budget goals for this quarter.”

8. [Get off the ground](#)

To *get* [something] *off the ground* means to start doing a job or project, usually after much discussion or planning.

For example:

- “Months after looking into how to boost declining sales, we were finally able to **get** our aggressive sales campaign **off the ground**.”

9. [Hit the ground running](#)

To *hit the ground running* is to begin a task or project with lots of energy and enthusiasm. The expression is commonly used when talking about a new project or idea that requires immediate, fast and lively action.

It is also used when talking about taking advantage of an opportunity.

For example:

- “We really need to **hit the ground running** with this idea and get our product on the shelves before someone else does.”

10. [Corner the market](#)

When a company becomes more successful than their competitors in developing a product or service, we say they have **cornered the market**. It's another way of saying they control the market.

Think of this business as a boxer in the ring. It's got its opponent in the corner, who can't move out of the way. Its opponent can only put their gloves up in defense. They are cornered, just like the competitors of the company.

For example:

- “In only a short time, the company has been able **to corner the** high-definition television **market**.”

11. [Behind the scenes](#)

This phrase is used to describe something, usually work, that's done or that happens away from public view.

For example:

- “Organizing a roadshow may look easy, but do you have any idea how much hard work we've put in **behind the scenes**?”

12. [Knuckle down](#)

Your boss doesn't want you to chit-chat and waste time! They want you to *knuckle down*, or concentrate on your work and get it done.

For example:

- “All right, quit joking around. We need to **knuckle down** and finish this report.”

13. [Run around in circles](#)

To *run around in circles* means to keep doing something without achieving any real results. In other words, you're doing a lot of unnecessary work but not getting anywhere.

For example:

- “The deadline is coming up, but we’ve been **running around in circles** because the client keeps changing their mind about the design.”

14. [Get up to speed](#)

Did you take some time off from work? Or, did you miss the last meeting?

Either way, you will have to *get up to speed* with everything that you need to know. This expression means to catch up on information, changes or updates that you have missed.

You can also say that the person who is teaching you the missing information is *bringing you up to speed*.

For example:

- “It didn’t take me long **to get up to speed** with the new laws as my co-worker explained them to me perfectly.”

15. [To keep an eye on the ball](#)

Imagine you have stepped into the stadium with the baseball bat in your hand. Thousands of people are cheering your name but, in your head, you are thinking about one thing: You need to keep your eye on the ball.

To *keep an eye on the ball* means to focus on your task or goal closely. It can also be used to encourage someone to pay attention or to watch out and maintain a high level of alertness.

For example:

- “When it comes to business negotiations, you really need to **keep an eye on the ball**.”

16. [Hands are tied](#)

If red tape causes a delay in your project, you’ll have to tell your manager that your *hands are tied*. There’s just nothing you can do about the unfortunate situation.

For example:

- “Sorry, we have to extend the deadline. The client hasn’t returned my call yet and my **hands are tied**.”

17. [Go down the drain](#)

A drain is a hole where liquids and waste are sent away. For example, there’s a drain in your sink, shower and toilet.

To *go down the drain* means that your effort, work or money is wasted or lost.

For example:

- “If this sales campaign doesn’t succeed, all our hard work will **go down the drain**.”

18. [By the book](#)

Doing something *by the book* means doing it strictly according to the rules, policies or the law.

For example:

- “I don’t think John will listen to your suggestion. He insists on doing everything **by the book**.”

19. [Above board](#)

You want to do things *above board* (the ethical and honest way) in business.

- “We only do things **above board** here. If you want a job, you need to apply like everyone else.”

20. [To cut corners](#)

If you are *cutting corners*, then you are not giving your project everything that you should. It means skipping some steps to achieve an outcome as quickly or as cheaply as possible. It is used in a negative way, because something that's done by cutting corners might be missing an important part, use cheap materials or not be as good quality overall.

For example:

- “The company **cut corners** when making their camera, so it's very cheap but it stops working after a few months of use.”

21. [Put a plan into action](#)

This phrase is used when you want to say that you are starting to use a plan or idea.

For example:

- “If we **put this plan into action**, we may need more time and more people.”

22. [Plan ahead](#)

To think carefully before taking action.

For example:

- “The project manager's advice is to **plan ahead** so that the project will go smoothly.”

23. [Make a plan](#)

To create a way to do something.

For example:

- “How should we advertise this new product? Let's **make a plan** now.”

24. [Stick to the plan](#)

To refuse to change from what you have decided, no matter what happens.

For example, you and your friend have decided to go to a movie Friday night. On Friday afternoon, your friend calls to say there is a sale at your favorite store.

She asks if you want to go shopping instead. You decide to **stick to the plan**, meaning that you will still go watch the movie.

This is another phrase where the noun, **plan**, can't be used in its plural form.

Even if you have many plans, you should still say “**stick to the plan**,” not “stick to the plans.”

For example:

- “Changing the design now will take too much time. Let's just **stick to the plan**.”

25. [Review the plan](#)

To inspect or look carefully again at the plan.

For example:

- “If we want to include all these new ideas, we will need to **review the plan**.”

26. [Tasked with](#)

The verb **to task** means to give a task (small job) to someone. However, this verb is almost always used in the passive form with the preposition “with,” which looks like this: *have/has been tasked with*.

In that form, the whole phrase means to be given a task.

For example, if I have been tasked with calling 20 clients today, that means someone else gave me the job of calling 20 clients.

For example:

- “Your team has been **tasked with** finding out why there are so many customer complaints.”

27. [Outsource a task](#)

The verb **to outsource** means to send out the company’s work to someone outside the company. For example, if you own a small restaurant, you may cook the food yourself but **outsource** the desserts to be made by a local baker.

For example:

- “Since the project team is busy, it might be a good idea to **outsource some tasks** to another company.”

28. [Target to complete](#)

The phrase is used when you plan to finish something.

For example:

- “We must **target to complete** phase 1 before [the year-end holidays](#) when most people will be on vacation.”

29. [Achieve the target](#)

To succeed in reaching a goal.

For example:

- “The project team can expect a free lunch if they **achieve the target** this month.”

29. [Wrap up the project](#)

To finish the project.

For example:

- “Okay, everyone, let’s check all the paperwork and clean up the project room, then we’ll be ready to **wrap up the project**.”

30. [Sign off the project](#)

To formally approve and accept the project as finished.

For example:

- “All that remains now is to **sign off the project** and take the whole project team out to celebrate.”

