

Describing problems

SPEAKING

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
EN_BE_3109S

LANGUAGE
English

lingoda

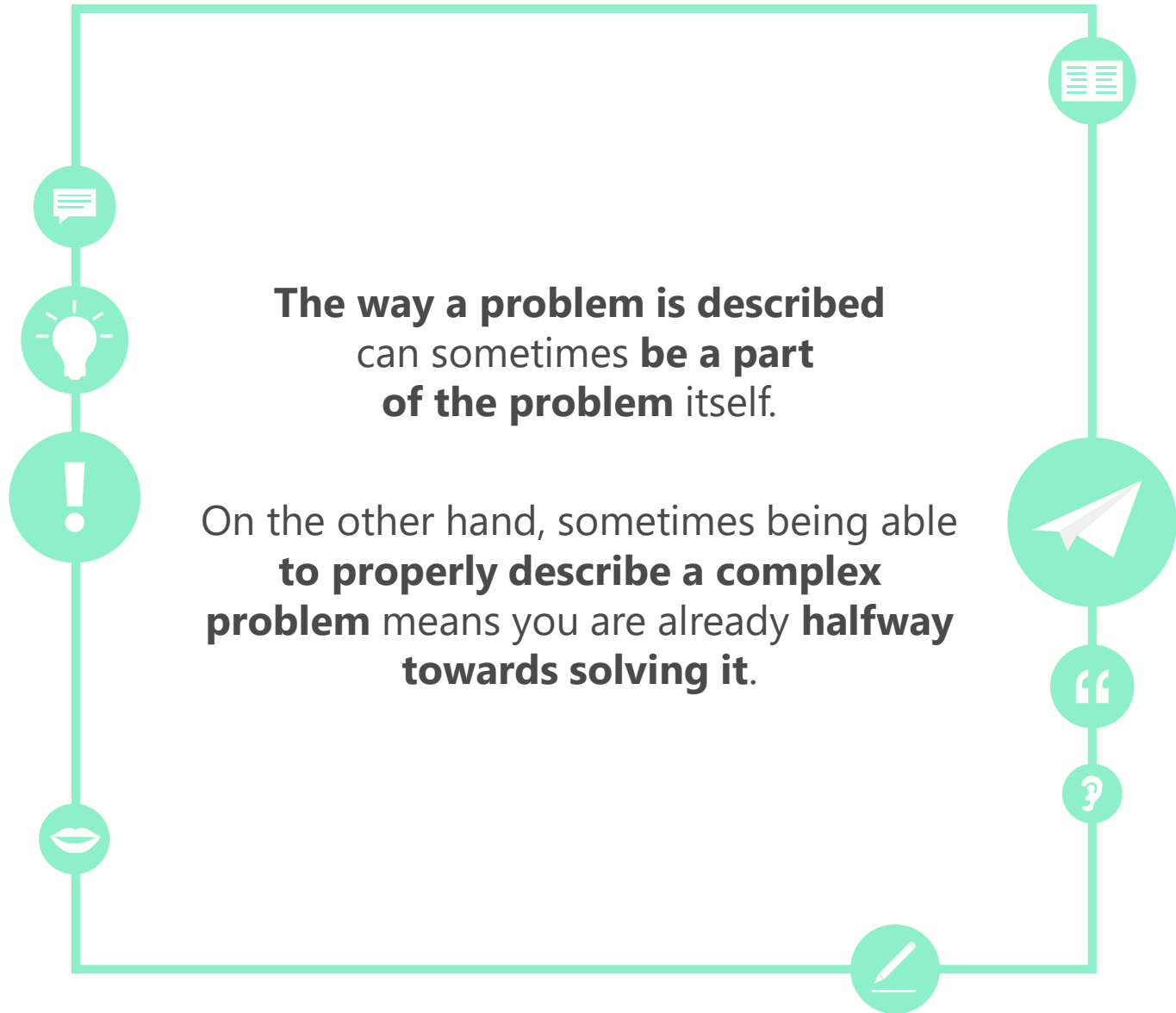




Goals

- Can recognise and understand fixed expressions and collocations to describe problems
- Can utilise technical terms to address complex problematic issues clearly and in depth







Problem solving

**Who helps you out the most when you have a problem?
Does it depend on the type of problem?**





Problem idioms

Look at the two idioms below that are connected to problems. Do you know what they mean? Give an example of when you have been in these situations.

“

He's in a real pickle.

”

“

It's a catch-22 situation.

”





Describing a problem

- Here are some different **phrases** that you can use to **describe a problem**.

the controversy surrounding	The controversy surrounding James is detrimental to the business.
to be controversial	This measure is very controversial.
to be a contradiction in terms	That presents a contradiction in terms.
to pose a challenge	This certainly poses a challenge.
to present a challenge	The new law presents a challenge.



Describing a problem

- Here are some more **phrases** that you can use to **describe a problem**.

to raise an issue	The new law raises an issue.
to go unresolved	The problem went unresolved for years.
a problem arises	A problem arises when we look at both projects together.
to have clear shortcomings	This project has clear shortcomings.
to place obstacles in someone's way	This issue has placed so many obstacles in our way.



Collocations with *difficulty*

foreseeable
difficulties

There are some **foreseeable difficulties** which we should plan for.

insurmountable
difficulties

The **difficulties** might prove **insurmountable**.

to encounter
difficulties

We have **encountered** some **difficulties** but nothing we can't get over.

to experience
difficulties

The team is **experiencing** some **difficulties**.

difficulties lie in...

The **difficulties lie in** the supply chain.

to be fraught with
difficulties

The project was **fraught with difficulties** from start to finish.



Collocations with *mistake*

**a fundamental
mistake**

**a monumental
mistake**

**an unavoidable
mistake**

**a deliberate
mistake**

**to be littered
with mistakes**

**to contain significant
mistakes**

**to acknowledge
a mistake**



**It was all a
mistake!**



Collocations with *mistake*



He made a **monumental mistake** – we had to fire him.

It was a **deliberate mistake**. We certainly can't trust him.



The piece is **littered with mistakes**. I'm sure no one checked it.

You need to **acknowledge the mistakes** you made.





Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps in the dialogue with the following words:
experiencing, lie, arisen, go



A problem has _____ in the department. The atmosphere among the team members is very hostile.

Yes, I am aware of it. The new bosses are _____ difficulties in getting along.



Do you think we can overcome these problems or will they _____ unresolved?

I think we first need to decide where the difficulties _____.





Answer the questions

Have you ever read a document at work that was littered with mistakes? What was your reaction?

Have you ever experienced difficulties with a new team member? How did you overcome them?

Are you comfortable raising issues with your boss? Is there anyone you prefer to go to?

Have you worked on any projects for your company that were controversial?

Have you ever worked on a project which was fraught with difficulties? Did you manage to complete it?

Do you try to acknowledge the mistakes you make and learn from them?



Speaking

**Describe a mistake that you made at work or at university. Say what the mistake was, why it happened and how you fixed it.
Use some of the phrases from the lesson.**





Solving problems

- Here are some **phrases** we use to talk about **solving problems**.

to rectify mistakes	I think we can rectify the mistakes that were made.
to mediate between conflicting parties	John is going to mediate between the conflicting parties.
to iron out difficulties	I'm sure we can iron out these difficulties.
to work around difficulties	We can work around the difficulties together.
to do away with difficulties	Let's do away with these difficulties quickly.
to overcome difficulties	We managed to overcome all of the difficulties.



Collocations with *problem*

to react to a
problem

to deal with a
problem

an irreversible
problem

to alleviate
problems

to tackle a
problem

the crux of the
problem

to address a
problem

The problem
takes up all my
energy.





Collocations with *problem*



We should **deal with this problem** as soon as possible.

The cash injection will certainly **alleviate problems**.



We need to **tackle this problem** head-on.

The **crux of the problem** is that the law is very vague.





Problems

Have you ever had to mediate between conflicting parties at work?

How would you iron out difficulties you were having with a colleague?

Have you ever come up against an irreconcilable problem?

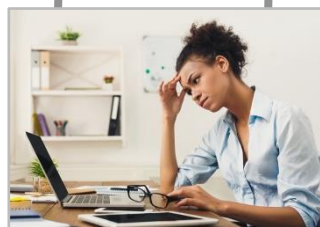
What is the greatest difficulty you have overcome in your professional life?



Problems

Look at both sides of the problem below and think about how you would solve it.

- Your colleague often takes time off to take care of their child. You get left with a lot of their work and think that they should take work home with them when their child is ill.



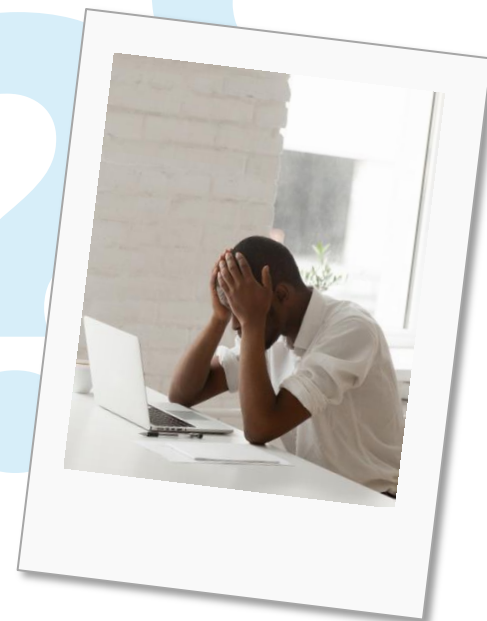
- Your child is often ill. You have to take time off to look after her. You know you leave work for colleagues to do but taking care of an ill child is exhausting.





Role play

**Role play a
dialogue of
solving the
problem on the
previous page.**





Get ready to listen



The next few pages will focus on your listening comprehension.



While you are listening, note down the key points in the situations of the lender and the borrower.

the lender

the borrower





Lending and borrowing

Have you ever had a similar problem to the one in the listening exercise?

Brainstorm some solutions to the problem.





Role play

Role play a dialogue between the two friends who disagree over money. Can you resolve the problem?

Look, there's an issue I need to raise!



The difficulties were not foreseeable.

Student A (or teacher): you lent money to your friend and haven't been paid back yet.

Student B (or teacher): you borrowed money but you can't pay it back yet.



What would you do about these problems?



Your dog chews up everything it can find.

Your friend's son draws on the walls of your house every time he comes over.



Reflect on this lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary**, **phrases**, **language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





Answer key

Exercise p. 11

1. arisen, 2. experiencing, 3. go, 4. lie

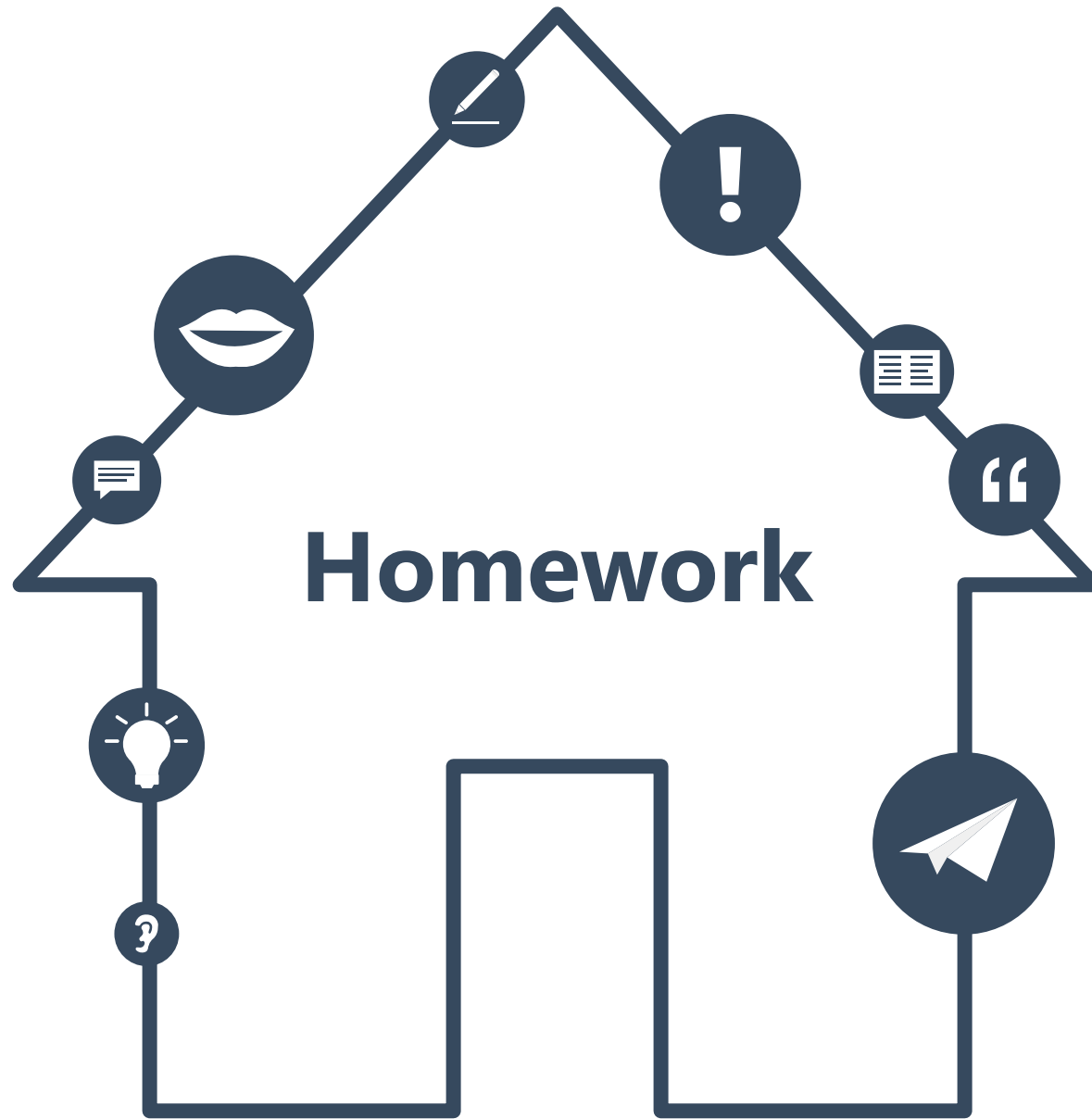


Transcription

Exercise p. 21

Perspective 1 (the lender): One of your close friends borrowed some money from you a month ago to get their car mended. They said they would pay it back after they received their next paycheck, but you know they got paid a week ago and they haven't contacted you yet. You know that your friend has had money difficulties in the past but you were convinced that you could trust him or her.

Perspective 2 (the borrower): You borrowed some money from one of your friends to get your car fixed and, although you promised to pay it back after you got your next paycheck, you had also borrowed money from your sister and decided to pay her back first. You now need to wait until next month before you can pay your friend back.





Complete the sentences

Complete the sentences with your own ideas.

1. An example of an insurmountable difficulty is...
2. I made a deliberate mistake when I...
3. Where I work, problems often arise due to...
4. I am good/not good at tackling problems because...



Writing

Write a description of the mistake you talked about on p. 13. Try to use some of the phrases below.

to make a
mistake

the crux of the
problem

to alleviate a
problem

a fundamental
mistake

to experience
difficulties

to be
controversial





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