

COMMUNICATION

Describing typical problems in life

LEVEL

Intermediate (B1)

NUMBER

EN_B1_1071X

LANGUAGE

English

Learning outcomes

- I can describe a problem and say how it makes me feel.
- I can distinguish between adjectives ending in *-ed* and *-ing* and use them accurately in a sentence.



Warm-up

1. **Discuss:** what problems can we have in these four areas of life?
2. **Brainstorm** as a group, or in breakout rooms. **Think of** at least 3 examples for each!



Work

Money

Health

Personal relationships



Reading

Read the beginning of the dialogue and **answer** the questions below.

Dirk: So sorry I'm late, Lil! I had to call my dad just now. It was his birthday yesterday and I completely forgot – I feel awful about it!

Lillian: Don't be so hard on yourself. These things happen! Although you *are* pretty bad at remembering dates. I just ordered for you – an Americano, right?

Dirk: You're the best! That's not why I'm feeling stressed, though. I'm under a lot of pressure at work.

Lillian: Are you still working a lot of overtime...?



1. Where are Dirk and Lillian?
2. Do you think they know each other well?



Reading

Read the rest of the dialogue and **answer** the questions below.

Dirk: Yeah, but things have got worse since we last spoke. My new boss gets frustrated easily and he keeps taking it out on me.

Lillian: Oh, that's very unfair.

Dirk: It's really annoying. I'm so sick of how he treats me. Especially when I'm working round the clock to meet this deadline!

Lillian: I don't blame you. It's his problem, not yours. I have to say, you do seem exhausted.

Dirk: It's affecting my personal life too. My kids say they never get to see me; I even forgot my dad's birthday!



3. What problems does Dirk describe to Lillian?
4. How are Dirk's problems affecting his personal life?



What do these phrases from the text mean?

I'm **working round the clock** to meet this deadline!

Things have got worse since we last spoke.

I'm so **sick of** the way my boss treats me.

I'm **under a lot of pressure** at work at the moment.

My boss is stressed, and he keeps **taking it out on** me.

- a to make other people feel bad because you are feeling bad
- b to be annoyed about something that has been happening for a long time
- c the situation has changed (in a negative way)
- d to work hard and for very long hours
- e to feel worried or stressed because of external factors



Adjectives ending in *-ed* and *-ing*

Answer the questions about Dirk and Lily's conversation.

Dirk: My new boss gets frustrated easily and he keeps taking it out on me. It's really annoying.

Lillian: I have to say, you do seem exhausted.

Dirk describes his problems at work using a variety of adjectives.

- Identify the **adjectives** that end in *-ing* and *-ed* in the sentences above.
- Which adjectives describe **how a person feels**?
- Which adjective describes **the situation or thing that causes a feeling**?

–ed or –ing?

Put the sentences into the correct category, then **complete the rules** for adjective endings.

1

*She never says how she's really feeling. It's so **frustrating**!*

2

*I don't know what's wrong with me – I'm **exhausted** all the time.*

3

*I get really **annoyed** when my kids don't listen to me.*

4

*I'm quite **worried** about my friend. He's under a lot of pressure right now.*

5

*Our car broke down on the motorway. It was so **frightening**.*

Adjectives ending in _____
describe how a person feels.

Adjectives ending in _____
describe what causes a feeling.



Match the sentences

Match the beginnings of the sentence (1-5) with the correct ending (a-e).

1 My wife keeps...

2 I get really annoyed when...

3 I'm so sick of...

4 Things have got...

5 I feel quite frustrated because...

a ...worse since I saw you last. The doctor says I need an operation on my knee.

b ...telling me I should stop smoking, but it's impossible – I'm addicted!

c ...having no money – I think I need to find another job.

d ...you say things like that – I'm trying my best to change!

e ...he keeps buying expensive things that we can't afford right now.

Talking about a problem

1. **Choose** one of the problems you brainstormed during the warm-up.
2. **Describe** the problem and your feelings. It doesn't have to be a real problem, or about you!
3. **Go around** the class until everyone has spoken at least once!

Work

Money

Health

Personal
relationships

*It's my...
I'm sick of...
I'm under a lot of pressure...*

*I'm worried about...
It's really annoying when...
I get frustrated by...*

*He/she keeps...
It's got better/worse since...*



Don't be so hard
on yourself!



I don't blame
you.



Look, these
things happen.



When might you say
this to somebody? Is it a
positive or a **negative**
thing to say?

Does this phrase show
we **agree** or **disagree**
with someone?

Do you think this
phrase would make
someone feel **better** or
worse about their
situation?



Reacting to a problem

Read the quotes from the text. **Answer** the questions below.



Dirk

**I'm so sick of
how my boss
treats me.**

**I don't blame
you. It's his
problem, not
yours!**



Lillian

Do you agree with
Lillian?

What would you say
to Dirk?

What other phrases
can we use to react
to a problem?

Brainstorm your
ideas as a class!

Describing and reacting to a problem

1. **Choose** one of the roles below. **Make** some notes about your problem and how you feel.
2. Take turns **describing** your problem and **explaining** how you're feeling to your class.
3. Your classmates should **listen** and **react** to your problem appropriately.



Sarah

Works long hours and receives no overtime pay.

Considering quitting.



Jane

Forgot her best friend's birthday last week.

They are no longer speaking to each other.



Eleanor

Husband wants to take a break but she doesn't want to.

Unsure about to do now.



Max

His partner has recently lost her job.

The partner is in a bad mood all of the time.



Brandy

She's just returned to university.

Has 3 children and can't do her work at home.



End of the lesson

Idiom

I'm at my wits' end.

Meaning: I've tried everything, and I don't know what to do.



Additional practice



Vocabulary review

Review vocabulary from the lesson. Which words or phrases did you find the most difficult?
Did you know any of them already?



**to work round the
clock**

**Things have got
worse**

stressful

exhausting

**to be under
pressure**

worried

to be sick of...

**Don't be so hard on
yourself!**

**to take (it) out on
somebody**

**These things
happen!**



Adjectives ending in *-ed* and *-ing*

Fill in the gaps using the adjectives in the red box. You don't have to use all the adjectives.

- 1 I'm _____ about my parents. They are getting old, and they live far away. I don't get to visit them very often.
- 2 That was such a _____ film! I'm _____ that you made me watch it.
- 3 He comes home _____ every night. I keep telling him he should take a break but he won't listen. It's very _____.
- 4 Oh, how _____! I only bought that breakfast cereal last week and it's all gone. Who's been eating it?
- 5 It's _____ having a small kid. It's impossible to get a good night's sleep.

worried
worrying
frustrated
frustrating
annoyed
annoying
exhausted
exhausting
frightened
frightening



Describing a problem

1. **Imagine** you are one of the people in the pictures. **Tell** the class about your problem.
2. Your classmates should **listen** and **respond** to your problem.

I've been having some problems at...

It's left me feeling very...

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8





Read the quote

“

A good friend should also be a good listener.

Do you agree with this statement?

What do you think it means to be a good listener?

What do you think is the most important quality in a good friend?





Discuss



How do people normally react when you tell them about a problem?

Do you know any tips for dealing with a stressful situation?



Reacting to another person's problem

Describe a problem. As Lillian did in the dialogue, your classmates should react and respond to your problems where appropriate.



Well, since the baby arrived, I haven't been sleeping well. I'm exhausted, and it's affecting my work.

My sister gets angry when people don't agree with her. It's impossible to have a pleasant conversation with her!

I keep trying to save money, but I love shopping online. My partner is sick of it – we're supposed to be saving to buy a house together.



Answer key

P.4:

1. A café or restaurant (she has ordered him a coffee).
2. He calls her 'Lil' (a nickname – informal – usually only between friends); She knows what kind of coffee he likes; she says he is bad at remembering dates
3. He is working round the clock to meet a deadline. His new boss gets frustrated easily and takes it out on him. He's under a lot of pressure at work, and it's affecting his personal life.
4. He's working overtime, so he doesn't get to see his family. He forgot his dad's birthday because he is stressed about work.

P.6: 1. (d) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (e) 5. (a)

P.7: 1. frustrated; annoying; exhausted 2. frustrated; exhausted 3. annoying

P.8:

Adjectives with -ing describe the cause of a feeling: sentences 1 and 5

Adjectives with -ed describe a feeling: sentences 2, 3 and 4

P.9: 1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (c) 4. (a) 5. (e)

Additional practice

P.18: 1. worried 2. frightening; annoyed 3. exhausted; frustrating 4. annoying 5. exhausting



Summary

Phrases for describing a problem

- to keep + *ing*, to be sick of...
- It's got better/worse (since)...

When do we use adjectives ending in *-ed* or *-ing*

- Adjectives ending with *-ing* describe the cause of a feeling
- Adjectives ending with *-ed* describe a feeling

Adjectives that end in *-ed* or *-ing*

- annoyed/annoying
- worried/worrying
- frustrated/frustrating

Phrases for reacting to someone's problem

- Don't be so hard on yourself!
- These things happen.
- I don't blame you.



Vocabulary

Don't be so hard on yourself

These things happen

Things have got worse

to be under pressure

to take (it) out on somebody

to be sick of (something)

to work round the clock

to keep + verb (ing)

awful

exhausted/exhausting

frustrated/frustrating

annoyed/annoying

worried/worrying

frightened/frightening

