

Dealing with delays

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL
Upper-intermediate

NUMBER
EN_BE_3606X

LANGUAGE
English

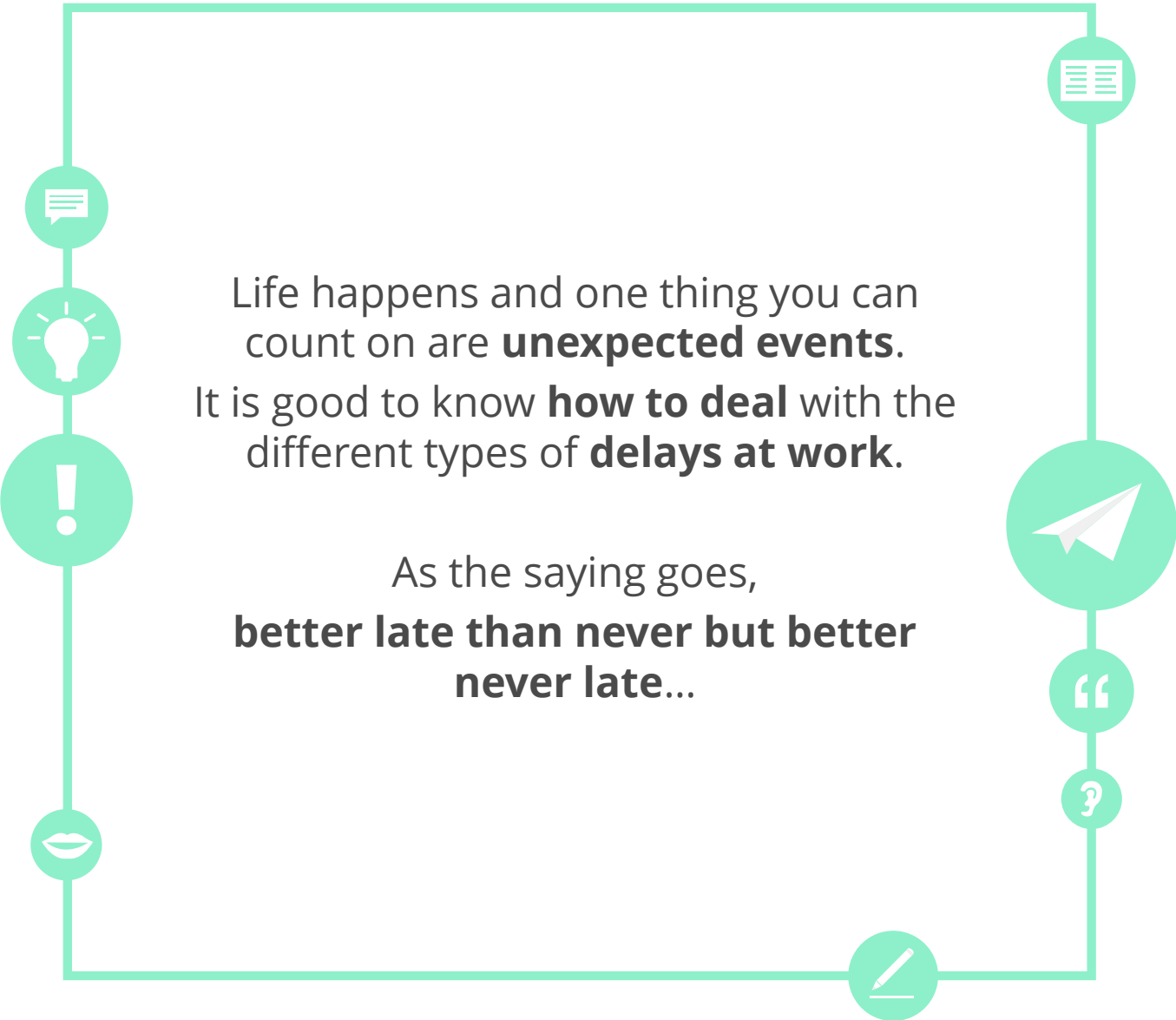




Goals

- Can understand typical expressions and vocabulary associated with different types of delays
- Can use new structures to write and inform clients about delays





Life happens and one thing you can count on are **unexpected events**. It is good to know **how to deal** with the different types of **delays at work**.

As the saying goes,
better late than never but better never late...



Are you familiar with these time expressions?

due to

unexpected

ahead of time

on time

poor estimation

in time

to be tied up

To be tied up is a phrase that can be used with any activity that keeps you from some other activity. It means you are busy and not free yet.



I was **tied up in** traffic.
The bad traffic jam was due to an accident on Route 4.

running late

To be **running late** means that you are delayed and not going to make it on time or in time for something. It is an expression that is often used when someone is on their way but delayed. It is not usually used with long delays.



Sorry I am **running a little late**. You are only **running a few minutes late**, don't worry, I am **running really late**.
I've been held up for about an hour and am literally running.

to come out of nowhere

To come out of nowhere is an expression that means something happened that you would have never expected. Sometimes it can also refer to something someone says or does as well.



That car **came out of nowhere**. It's a good thing that we did not have an accident!



The client's complaints **came out of nowhere**.

I appreciate your understanding

The expression, **I appreciate your understanding**, is often used in a formal context and is placed at the end of messages or interactions. It expresses hope that someone will relate to your circumstance or issue.



I'm afraid you might need more time to finish the training.
I appreciate your understanding and look forward to hearing from you.



New vocabulary and sentence examples

ETA

What is your **ETA**? (**estimated time of arrival**)

unanticipated

There was an **unanticipated** delay. I did not expect this traffic.

ASAP

We have an urgent problem. Call me ASAP! (**As soon as possible**)

flight delay

This airline always seems to have **flight delays**.
We have important business to tend to so in the future we shouldn't use it!

car crash

Apparently there is a huge **car crash** on Route 4 and now we are in bumper to bumper traffic. It must have been a horrible accident.

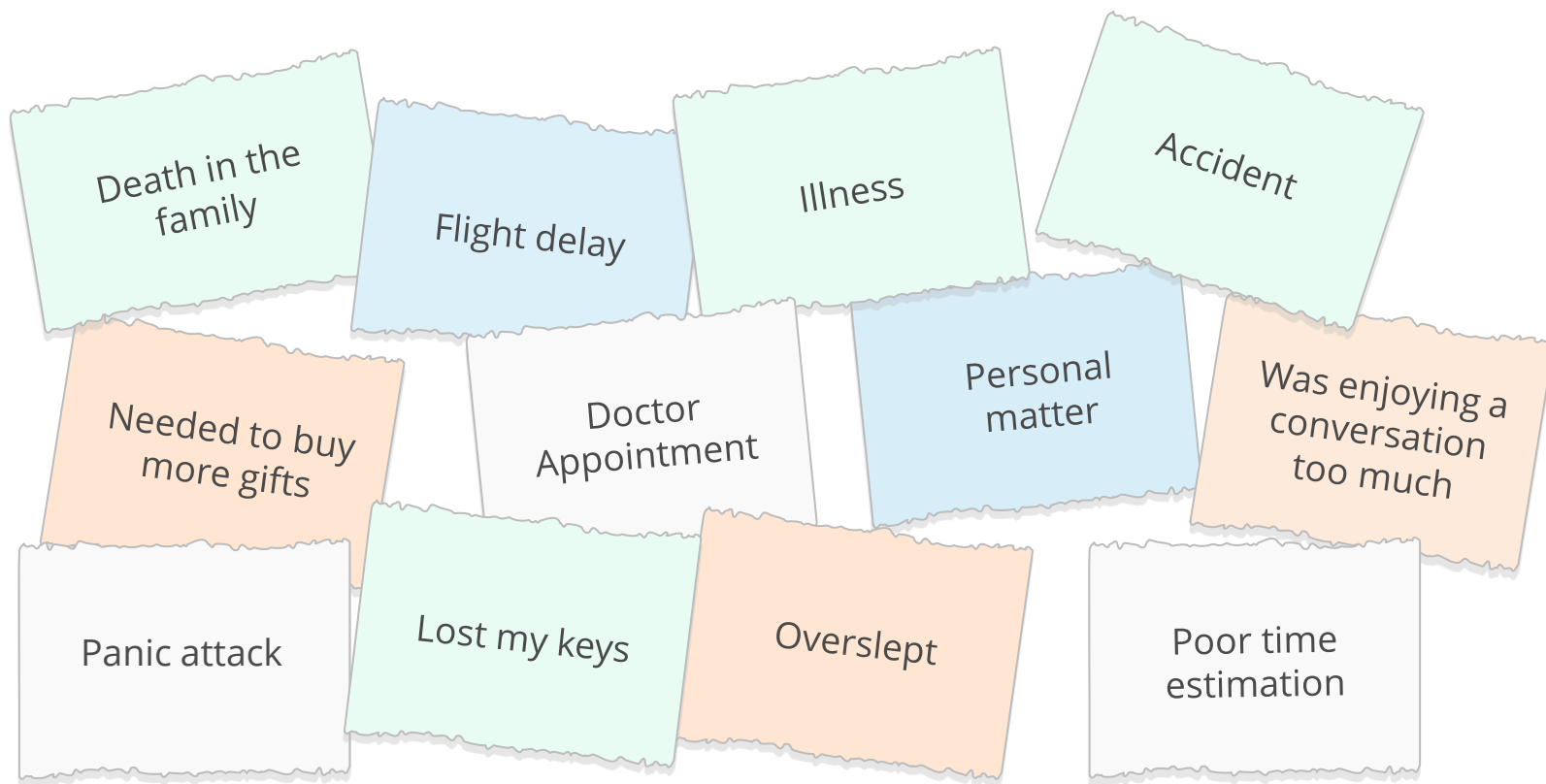
traffic jam

There is a **traffic jam** on Route 4. My car has barely moved in 1 hour.



Good reasons for delays

Certain reasons for being caught up or late are unprofessional. Find reasons for being late or missing a deadline that would not be understood by a boss or supervisor. Why are they not professional?





Good reasons for delays

Can you come up with good reasons why people may be delayed? Make up some below but also make up a few reasons for being late that should not be shared with your boss.





Texts between employees and employers

Hi Don,

There have been unexpected delays.

My ETA is now 12pm. If I am not there by 12:15, please call me. This car trouble came out of nowhere but I'm on my way ASAP. So sorry to inconvenience you. Thanks, Pamela.

- **No problem, Pam. Drive safely. We want you in one piece. If I have to start the meeting without you, we can brief later today. Don.**

Dear Jessie,

I underestimated how long these slides would take me to finish. Would it be possible for me to extend the deadline? I really want to do quality work and at this rate, I feel like I am rushing rather than making it the best possible product. Please let me know your thoughts and thanks in advance for your understanding. Kat.

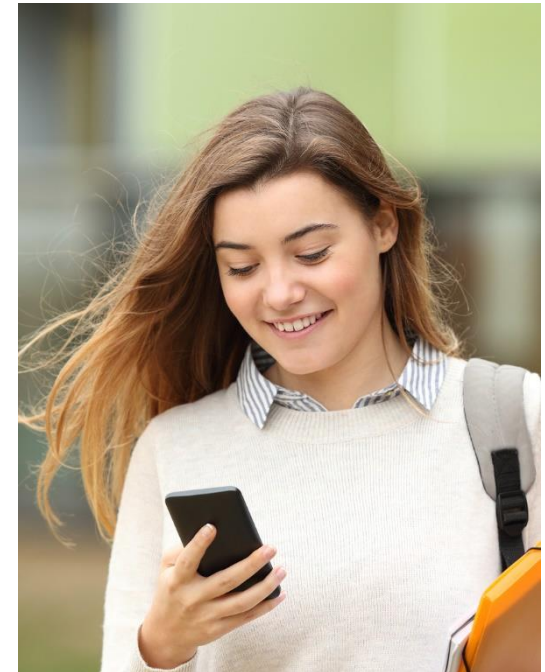
- **Dear Kat, Unfortunately we need to make this deadline work. Let's set up a quick meeting to review this. I appreciate that you want to produce better quality products and we can make a more feasible schedule next week okay? JP.**



Situation

Write a text to your boss informing her that you are running late. Explain the situation briefly but politely and state your current ETA.

Hi _____, _____.
My current _____.
_____.



Remember to always overestimate your ETA so you don't have to send too many updates afterwards.



Situation: polite phrases for delays

Add a phrase to the previous message you sent. Can you shorten it for a text? Feel free to make up some of your own.

I am afraid
that...

I am sorry to
inform you
that...

I apologise for
this
inconvenience.

Unfortunately,
I'm unable to
make it in time
due to...

There is an
unexpected
delay here...

Thanks for your
understanding.

A vertical list of ten horizontal lines for writing, with a blue vertical line on the left side.

ahead of time

Ahead of time is an expression that means before a deadline, meeting or event. When you get somewhere early, it means that you are there ahead of time. You have raced with time to the destination and have minutes to spare. Someone can also know something ahead of time.



I got here **ahead of time** and now I don't know what to do.
I wish we had known ahead of time that you were going to be late.

to get things back on track

to get a project back on schedule

To get things **back on track** generally expresses the desire to move ahead and fix the problem so that focus is maintained and success is achieved.

To **get a project back on schedule** means that a project needs to be organised again in order to meet a given deadline or reach a target.



We need to **get back on track** and get this project **back on schedule** in order to meet our goals this month.



Create a dialogue using new vocabulary



Becky: Hi Sarah, can you tell our client that I'm running late for the meeting?

Becky:

Becky:

Becky:

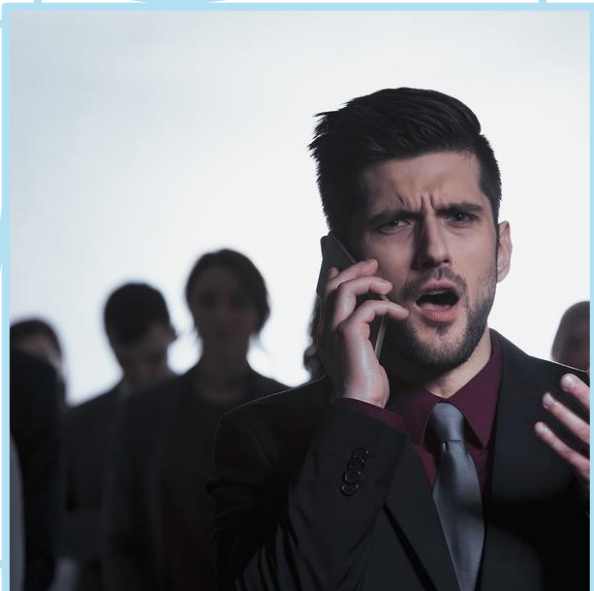
Sarah: Sure Becky, but what do you want me to tell them ?

Sarah:

Sarah:



Create a dialogue using new vocabulary



How do you think the client will react?

Is it fair for Sarah to communicate someone else's problem?



Sample letter to a client

Date

To: **Company Name**
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear **client**,

The framework for our project has changed due to the unexpected damage that hurricane Rachel has caused. We are very sorry about this delay and the changes we need to make. Some of these changes involve revising the budget and assessing our losses due to Rachel.

If the new budget can be met soon, we would be able to meet a new deadline of July 1st. If not, we will find a way to work through this and rethink our options. Please let us know when you have time for a meeting. We are confident that these issues will be resolved. We hope that you have not been otherwise affected by storm Rachel. Thanks for your continuous faith in our company. We wish you and your family a safe and warm holiday.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sender

Company Name
Address
City, State, Zip





Write a letter to a client

Write a letter to a client explaining that a project will be delayed. Provide an explanation, an apology and something positive for the client to focus on.



Listening

Your teacher will read the excerpt from slide 29.

Listen and look for sentences that sound unprofessional and rude. Take notes whenever you hear a rude sounding sentence. Share your thoughts with your teacher.



received, thanks.

out of the office

There are certain ways of letting people know that you cannot respond to their emails as quickly as you usually do. One way to do this is to turn on the automatic reply function in your email settings. An automatic message saying *I'm out of the office but will be back by...* can be sent to anyone that sends you a message.

Another way of quickly letting someone know that you have received their message is to simply write *Received, thank you* in a short email back to them.



I am **out of the office** and will not be able to respond to emails until (date or time). Thanks for your patience.

urgent

time sensitive

You can mark your messages or emails as urgent.

This is effective when you are running late for something important and prefer to email rather than call or text. Of course, the best way to make sure a message is heard is to call and leave a voicemail.

Marking emails as **urgent** lets people know that it is a time sensitive issue.



Subject: **URGENT!** Please read ASAP.
Your message has been marked as urgent.



This project is very **time sensitive**.
If we don't meet this deadline, then we will lose our client.



Brainstorm

Try to think as an employer and an employee and answer the following questions:

What kind of projects at work are very time sensitive?
Why?

What if you needed more time to pay your employee?

What form of communication would you use to inform
of problems? Why?



Practice speaking

**Practise telling the different people below that you are delayed.
How many ways can you express that you are going to be late?**



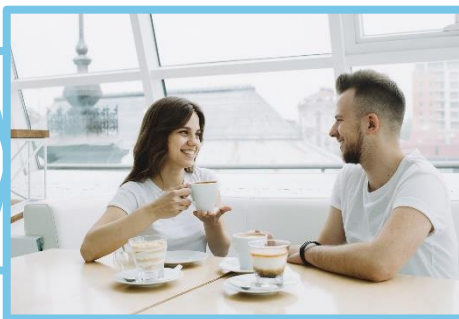
Your boss



Co-worker



A client



Family member



Reflect on the lesson

Complete these sentences with the vocabulary you have learnt during this lesson.

1. I am sorry there has been an _____ problem.

2. Thank you very much for your _____.

3. I am afraid I'll be late today. I am _____ so late!

4. I'll be there _ _ _ _!

5. I'm on my way. New _____ is 10am.

6. We were just informed about the _____. The airline's updates are online.

7. We are stuck in a _____ jam.

8. I wish I could be there but I am _____ at home with the kids and can't _____ time for the launch party.



Reflect on this lesson

Think about everything you have seen in this lesson.
What were the most difficult activities or words? The easiest?



If you have time, go over
the most difficult slides again



Answer key

Exercise p.26
1. unexpected, 2. understanding, 3. running, 4. ASAP, 5. ETA, 6. flight delay, 7. traffic,
8. caught up/make it on



Transcription

Exercise p. 21

Sorry I can't come to work today. I really am tired and the project is not interesting. Plus you are barely paying me enough for the time I spend to be worth the effort. Unfortunately I have lost momentum in this project. I am unsure I will be able to finish it by the deadline. I've already spent two of my weekends trying to finish something for a tiny amount of money. Unexpected delays have made it difficult for me to meet the criteria. I'm sorry for the lack of communication and hope we can come to a better understanding about the workload and compensation expected.





Practice explaining why you are late or delayed

Write your own excuses for being late using the vocabulary from the lesson.

1.

2. ...

3.

4. ...

5. ...

6. ...

7. ...

8. ...



Homework

Write a letter to an employee (someone you have hired) using the following words.

Delays

Due to

Out of nowhere

Urgent

Lack of
communication

Ahead of time





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