

Office language

READING

LEVEL
Intermediate

NUMBER
EN_BE_3904R

LANGUAGE
English

lingoda

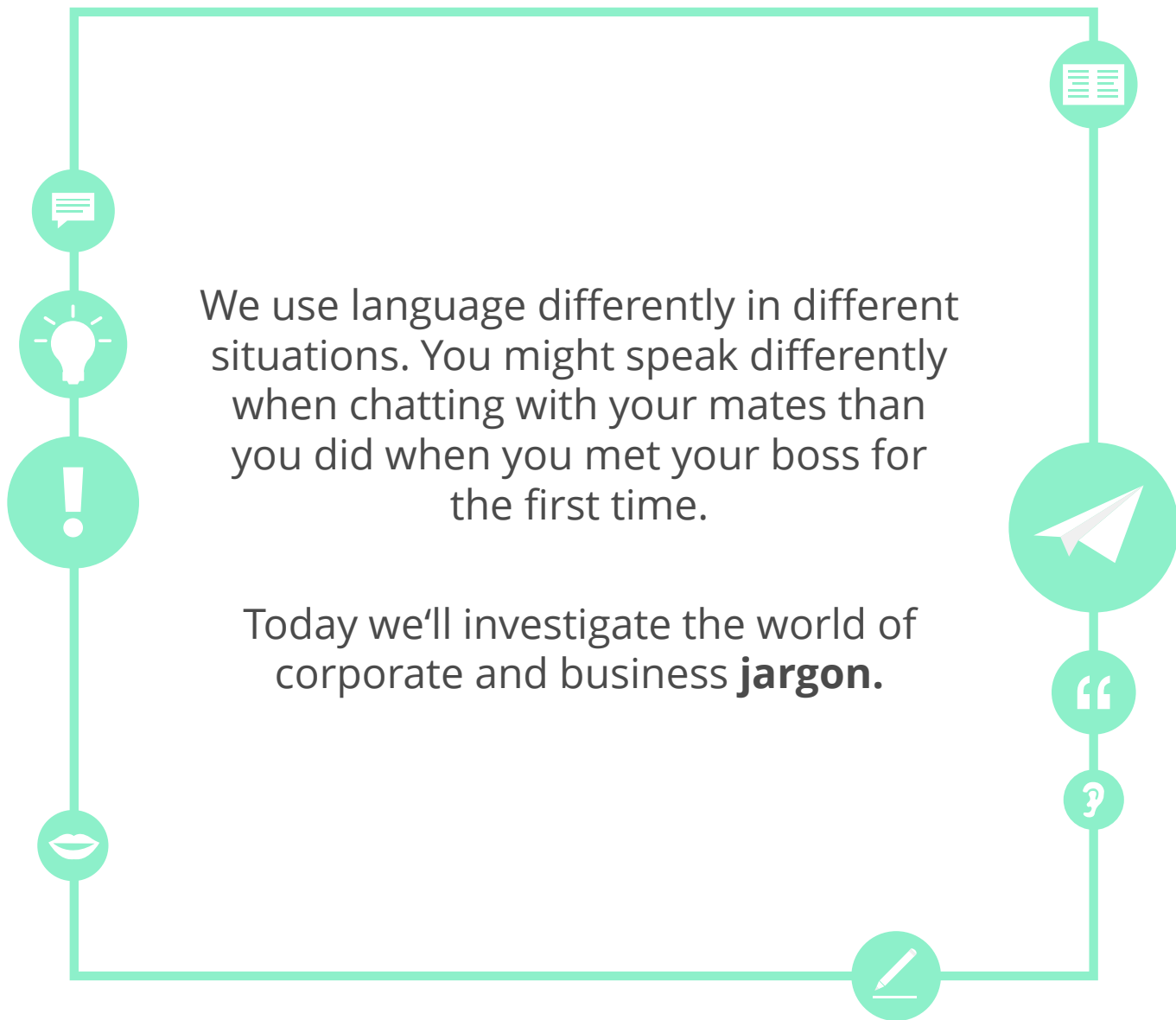




Goals

- Can read and understand the main points of a text about language at work.
- Can identify and discuss what are appropriate tones and styles in spoken and written business communication







Vocabulary review





Sentences



We believe in **performance-based leadership skills**; we'll judge you and guide you based on how you work.

We want to expand our company, so we are exploring **growth strategies**. We are looking at **emerging** markets.



Our office has a **flat hierarchy**, which means each worker is an equally important part of the team.

I am part of a **collaborative network** of graphic designers and we occasionally work together on big projects





Sentences



I have a very laid back workplace. My boss has **flexible ideas** about what business casual clothing means.

I proposed a **cost-efficient** project to gain more customers. It's a new strategy that won't cost much money!



Our magazine has started an **initiative** to gain younger readers.

It started out as a one-woman **enterprise**, but her company soon grew to be the largest in the region.





Vocabulary review slide

world-class

enterprise

outside-the-box thinking

customer-centric

disseminate

cross-functional

collaboratively

cutting-edge





Sentences



I'm part of a **world-class** team of web developers that recently **disseminated** a new program to our audience.

You should be creative and do some **outside-the-box thinking**; you should also work **collaboratively** with others.



I consider myself a **cross-functional** employee. I help others understand our **cutting-edge** technology.

As a **customer-centric** business, we always consider what customers and clients will want.





The language of work

You feel pretty confident in your English skills. However, you might feel differently if you were dropped into a corporate environment, where even native speakers feel like they're speaking a foreign language!

The working world has its own language of **buzzwords** and an alphabet soup of acronyms. You'd understand if someone told you they had a **new, affordable technological product to help solve a problem**. However, you might stare blankly if they told you they had a **cost-efficient, cutting-edge tech innovation**. These two phrases are more or less the same, but the second uses the language of the working world. Once you learn to recognise certain buzzwords and to understand the tone of the business world, corporate communication—whether in a small **enterprise** or a huge corporation—will be a breeze.



Hey mate!

Although highly formal language is becoming less common, it is still typical to use more polite and formal style in written and spoken communication. You wouldn't start an email to your colleague by saying:

Hey mate. How's things? When will you be done with the report?

Instead, you might say:

Hi Jacob, I hope you are doing well. Can you give me an update on the report you're working on?





Different offices, different styles



The level of **formality** in an office depends on the industry and type of workplace. A startup, for example, tends to have a **flat hierarchy** and as a consequence the formality between leadership and employee tends to be smaller. They might have more **flexible ideas** about inter-office communication and roles. Employees might be **cross-functional**, taking on responsibilities from different projects and departments.



Find the problems

- □ ×

To: developmentmanager@goodworks.co.uk

Subject: presentation not ready!

Hey Jamie,

What's up? So...the presentation thing you asked me to do isn't done yet. Sorry! I was going to finish it yesterday but I went to lunch with the team instead. Oops! I want to present on Friday instead of today. Hope that's fine! It's going to be amazing though. I promise.

Rosie

xxx

Rosie is emailing her manager but has not found the right tone. Identify five places where she could change or improve her tone so that it's more appropriate for the workplace.



Rewrite the email

- □ ×

To: developmentmanager@goodworks.co.uk

Subject: my presentation

Dear Jamie,

Can you help Rosie improve her email? Rewrite it here so that the message has a tone and style that is appropriate for the office.



My boss and I...



What is communication like in
your workplace?
Do you talk and write differently
at work than you do at home?
Describe the difference.



Figuring out business buzzwords

Imagine your department has a meeting about **growth strategies**. After the meeting, you get an email that summarises the discussion. Translations into **everyday English** are provided.

Good afternoon, team!

*Thanks for your **outside-of-the-box thinking** (creative thinking) at our meeting today. It was great to discuss possible **initiatives** (ideas) **collaboratively** (all together). We decided to explore **emerging** (new) markets for our unique housewares and cookware brand. Jonas will explore the most **cost-efficient** (affordable) options for expanding into the Japanese market. He'll **disseminate** (share) the information he finds by next week. Our goal is to develop sensible **growth strategies** (plans to grow) while still focusing on our **customer-centric** (friendly to customers) values.*



Let's talk

In addition to this formal, performance-orientated jargon, the business world uses its own set of communication terms. Imagine you get the following voicemail from your manager.

*Hey there! I wanted to **touch base** about your phone call with the Japanese firm. **Can we put our heads together** for 15 minutes later this afternoon? We can **check in** on your progress so far. Also, would you **loop me in** to any email communication you have with them? I appreciate it. Last thing—can we get a **ballpark figure** on how much it would cost to hire a consultant about the Japanese market? Thanks, buddy. Talk soon!*





Loop me in



So, what does he want? In a nutshell, he's used many different words and phrases that describe **communicating, updating, and staying in touch**. To **loop in** for example, means to stay connected and updated on communication. To **touch base** means to meet briefly. To **check in** means to see how things are going. To **put heads together** means meeting face-to-face.



To make business buzzwords more clear, come up with a real-life example for each of the following phrases

an emerging
market for your
company

cutting-edge
technology

a cost-efficient
business model

a growth strategy
for your company

a useful, cross-
functional product

a workplace with a
flat hierarchy



Describing a meeting

Your co-worker was not at the meeting and has questions about what happened. Answer their questions based on the summary email in the text.



What will Jonas do?

What was the purpose of the meeting?

Was the meeting a success?

When will we have information about the Japanese market?



Listen to the voicemail from your manager (teacher), which you also saw in the text. Answer the questions about it.

1. Your manager wants to touch base about _____

- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| a. your performance | b. emails you sent | c. a phone call with a Japanese firm | d. your ideas about the Japanese market |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|---|

2. He'd like to talk for fifteen minutes _____.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| a. tomorrow on the phone | b. face to face this afternoon | c. next week | d. by email later today |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|

3. He'd like to be looped into your email communication in the future. This means you should _____.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. include him on any emails you send | b. tell him about your communication later | c. not bother him | d. let him do all the talking |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------------|

4. Your boss would like an estimate, which he calls a ballpark figure, about how much _____ would cost.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| a. giving you a promotion | b. opening an office in Japan | c. going to Japan | d. hiring a consultant |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|



Telephone your boss

After listening to your boss' voicemail message, you write down a few notes and call him back. Use the notes below and return his call. Make sure you answer his questions and set a time to meet.



A consultant
would cost 100
euros/hour.

Busy this
afternoon, but
free tomorrow
morning.

Should I research
more
consultants?

Learned a lot
about Japanese
market. It seems
promising.



ABCs and CEOs

Unscrambling the **jumble** of letters that you might see in emails and around the office is another **puzzle**. Who or what is a CEO, CFO, CTO, or CIO? Those folks with C in front of their title tend to be important. The **chief executive officer** is usually the top person in charge, the **chief financial officer** is in charge of all things related to money.

Other initialisms you might see include **TYTD**, which stands for **the year to date**, or **W/E** and **W/C**, which are **abbreviations** for **week ending** and **week commencing**. You might see these on documents related to scheduling or pay checks.



Figuring it all out

What's the best way to learn business speak?
If your manager says something confusing like, *I focus on **performance-based leadership***, use the polite language of the workplace—*could you clarify that for me?*

When you **touch base** with your boss, you'll find out this phrase means that he or she will judge you and guide you based on your personal performance. You've shown that you're a **curious** and open employee, and you've learned a new buzzword: it's a win-win!





Activity

Below are some of the business cards you collected at a conference.
Brainstorm what their jobs might be and answer
the questions on the following slides.

Skylar Edwin

VP-Public
Relations
Chase Political
Group

Elliot White

CTO
Williams Whiggins
Investment Bank

Dr. Jane Gillings

R&D Head
Horizon Health
Sciences

Johanna Benson

CEO
GoodWorks
Building and
Development

Cameron O'Dowd

CFO
Holiday Cruise
Lines, Inc.

Fred Lincoln

VP of HR
Capital Staffing Co.



Who is the expert?

1. The chief technology officer is responsible for improving and managing a company's technology. Who would you call to learn about this job?

- a. Elliot White b. Dr. Jane Gillings c. Skylar Edwin d. Fred Lincoln

2. Who probably has a great deal of experience managing a company's money?

- a. Skylar Edwin—VP of Public Relations b. Dr. Jane Gillings—R&D Head c. Cameron O'Dowd—CFO d. Fred Lincoln—VP of HR

3. VP most likely stands for _____.

- a. Vice Principal b. Vice President c. Virtual President d. VERY polite

4. Johanna Benson is the CEO of her company. This means she _____.

- a. Is the highest-ranked employee b. Is probably paid quite well c. has a lot of responsibility d. all of these



Clarify the sentences

The statements on the left use business jargon. Match each one to a simple statement on the right that has the same meaning.

1. Our cross-functional footwear company will revolutionise the shoe world, while providing customer-centric service.

a. We are starting a new transportation project that will help people.

2. We're launching an innovative solution to your transportation needs.

b. Let's talk about how we can work together on this project.

3. Let's touch base and think about how we can collaborate on this initiative.

c. We've made multi-purpose shoes and will focus on customers.

4. We hope to move the needle on global issues by forming a collaborative network of partners.

d. We want to improve global problems by working together.



Buzzwords or just plain English?

Why do you think the business world uses different words and phrases?



What other groups in society have their own special language?



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



Reflect on the goals

Go back to the second slide of the lesson and check if you have achieved all the goals of the lesson.

yes

no





Answer key

Exercise p. 19

Possible answers include

1. Jonas will explore affordable options to expand into the Japanese market, he'll share his findings by next week.
2. The meeting was held to discuss growth strategies for our company.
3. Yes, the meeting was successful. The manager comments on the out of the box creative thinking and says there were good ideas.
4. Jonas will share the information he finds by next week.

Exercise p. 20

1c, 2b, 3a, 4d

Exercise p. 25

1a, 2c, 3b, 4d

Exercise p. 26

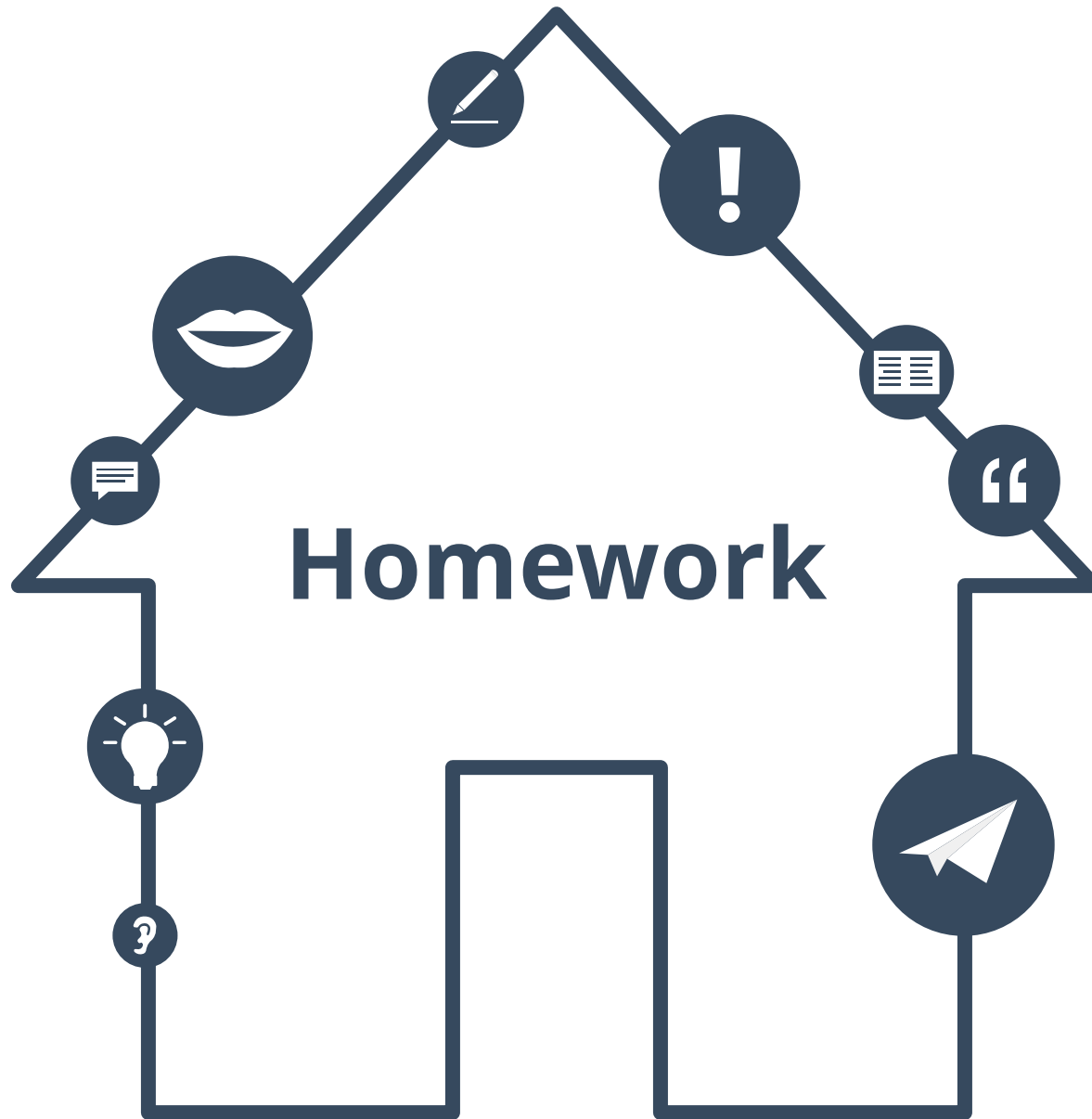
1c, 2a, 3b, 4d



Transcription

Exercise p. 21

Hey there! I wanted to touch base about your phone call with the Japanese firm. Can we put our heads together for 15 minutes later this afternoon? We can check in on your progress so far. Also, would you loop me in to any email communication you have with them? I appreciate it. Last thing—can we get a ballpark figure on how much it would cost to hire a consultant about the Japanese market? Thanks. Talk soon!





Match the title to the job description

A

This position oversees all financial decisions in our world-class political consulting firm. The person in this role is responsible for developing growth strategies for our company's long term profits.

B

This senior-level employee is responsible for managing our company's public image and dealing with questions and issues from the media. They will promote our brand through every channel possible. They report directly to the president.

C

To be successful in this role, you should be an expert in computer technology. Understanding of data security is also essential, as our company develops cutting-edge programs that should remain secret from competitors.

D

Our company seeks a new leader who will lead our growing chain of hotels. This leader should be customer centric in their outlook and be willing to work collaboratively with all departments.

1. CFO

2. CTO

3. VP-Public Relations

4. CEO



Using vocabulary

Practise using business jargon by writing sentences about a place you have worked with the following vocabulary words.

collaboratively

growth
strategies

disseminate

cutting-edge

world class

enterprise



At my workplace...





Homework answer key

Exercise p. 34
1a, 2c, 3b, 4d



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