INTRODUCTION

In the mid-1990s business English was already being described by St John and Johnson (1996) as “the fastest growing area of ESP [English for specific purposes]” (p. 1). The field has continued to flourish, as evidenced by the great number of newly published materials on business English and a growing body of research into the nature of this field. One challenge for business English practitioners from such growth is that it has become increasingly difficult to keep up to date with all the new materials and insights from research. The purpose of this volume is to enable practitioners not only to put into practice teaching ideas from colleagues in various teaching contexts all over the world, but also to raise their awareness of the current trends and issues in the field and ways of taking these into account, as appropriate, in their own teaching.

Business English means different things to different people. Many teaching professionals see it as a subset of ESP, with its own approaches and methodologies, but others may have a different perspective. For example, learners may see business English as simply a term used to describe the lingua franca that they need to operate effectively in a globalized workplace. Training managers in corporations may have a financial outlook: business English is the language that adds value, the language that affects the bottom line. Even among teachers there are different opinions. Some see business English as primarily about teaching the language used by business people in their day-to-day work, whereas others may include business content, business communication skills, and intercultural communication competence as well. Similarly, teachers working with immigrants in an ESL context may have quite a different view of business English from teachers working in an EFL context.

Despite the difficulty of defining business English in a precise way, three different teaching and learning contexts do seem to stand out. The first is the tertiary education context, in which most learners are pre-experience; that is, they have not yet spent time in the posteducation world. The second is what might be called adult education. The primary difference between tertiary and adult education is that the business English course in adult education is not part of an academic program; such a course is typically offered in a language school. Learners in these situations may be pre-experience or in-work and may be paying for the course themselves. The third context is corporate training, which focuses primarily on in-house needs and tends to deal with very specific contexts and topics. By definition, the learners in this context are in-work, although not necessarily job-experienced. In some corporate contexts such training may be informal and takes place in the workplace rather than in a classroom.

It is important to remember that these contexts are not necessarily as clear-cut as this description might suggest. There is often overlap or variation, and indeed some teachers (and learners) will experience all three contexts, perhaps even
simultaneously. It is not hard to see why Bargiela-Chiappini and Zhang (2013) describe how “the notion of “Business English” has been adopted in local contexts to reflect often very different circumstances” (p. 193).

This volume is not only a celebration of the variety of contexts in business English, but also a celebration of many of the innovations and trends that have been appearing in the field. These include activities informed by research, activities which focus on language and/or communication skills, activities which emphasize the learner’s own responsibility for learning, and activities which make use of technology and the Internet. One particularly noticeable characteristic is that while contributors come from different countries and contexts, all activities can be adapted to suit local situations.

The activities have been grouped into six categories:

- Part I: Understanding Stakeholders
- Part II: Spoken Business Communication
- Part III: Written Business Communication
- Part IV: Working With Authentic Materials and Language
- Part V: Intercultural Perspectives
- Part VI: Promoting Learner Autonomy

In using the book, readers will realize that many activities, with their multiple aims and suggested options, may fit equally well into another category. Readers will probably find that some activities in the book are not totally unfamiliar—this reflects the nature of our profession, which often spreads ideas by word of mouth as well as through books, magazine articles, blog posts, newsletters, and conference proceedings, and which often prefers incremental innovation to dramatic change. Yet we believe that many readers will find in this collection new topics to include in their teaching, new activities for teaching familiar topics or new methods and tools to implement activities. One caveat, however, is that activities involving the use of technology or some websites may in time appear old and outdated. In such cases we have tried to ensure that those activities will continue to offer something even if a recommended website no longer exists or a particular piece of software has been superseded.

Finally, we would both like to say a big thank-you to all the contributors, without whom this book could never have existed. They have all freely donated their ideas and their time to make this collection possible. We would also like to make a special mention to all those who have given us useful suggestions and feedback, in particular, Chris Bowie, Joseph V. Dias, and Adele Fenstermacher. It is our hope that, through the variety of activities and options provided by the contributors, readers will find themselves having a wider repertoire of teaching strategies and being more aware of the key trends in the field. Most important, we hope that this book will inspire readers to think of more new ways of teaching business English and make their teaching both more effective and rewarding.

REFERENCES


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REFERENCES


Part I: Understanding Stakeholders

Needs analysis is an important feature of curriculum development in business English, and the literature abounds with accounts of approaches and recommendations in this area (Ellis & Johnson, 1994; Flowerdew, 2013; Friedenberg, Kennedy, Lomperis, Martin, & Westerfield, 2003; Hulta, Vogt, Johnson, Tulkki, & Hall, 2013; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Reeves & Wright, 1996). In the three teaching and learning contexts that we have identified—tertiary education, adult education, and corporate training—there are different stakeholders, who provide unique perspectives that can inform or determine the course content. In some teaching contexts, business English teachers play an important part in determining the syllabus; in others, teachers have to follow a predetermined syllabus and may not see needs analysis as relevant to them. In fact, although the influence of business English teachers on the syllabus can vary, their course implementation can always benefit from a better understanding of the stakeholders in their teaching context. What these teachers need is an eclectic approach which brings in a range of perspectives and ways of gathering information about learners’ needs.

The types of needs and stakeholder perspectives of relevance in different teaching and learning contexts can be quite different. In a tertiary education context, stakeholders may include education ministries as well as local faculty. Learners will be entering different professions and different discourse communities, which can make target needs very difficult to ascertain. In adult education, a single class is likely to consist of learners working in different companies and fields, and the learners themselves may have different needs and wants. In such cases the main problem may be not only the identification of target needs, but the search for the compromise which suits everybody in the course. In corporate training, key stakeholders may include department heads, business partners, and clients; understanding the company and its business is thus an important part of the process. Yet despite this complexity, it is important to remember that needs analysis is generally recognized as an ongoing process of information gathering and analysis, not something which happens only before the course begins. Much can be learned and analyzed after the course has begun, either from the learners themselves or from other stakeholders mentioned above.

This section provides some activities and ideas that business English teachers can use in their teaching to gain a better understanding of stakeholders in different contexts. The stakeholders whose perspectives are addressed in this section include future employers of pre-experience learners, the employers and clients.
of in-work learners, and the learners themselves. The needs covered include not only target needs and professional communication needs, but also the subjective needs of the learners.

REFERENCES


Helping Pre-experience Learners Understand Workplace English Needs

Clarice S. C. Chan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>High-intermediate +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Pre-experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Build awareness of English needs in the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>An online forum platform (optional)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the introduction to this volume states, in the field of business English three different teaching contexts can be identified: tertiary education, adult education, and corporate training. Whereas in-work learners in adult education or corporate training may be well aware of their workplace English needs, pre-experience learners in a tertiary education context may not have a clear idea which field they will enter after graduation and what they will need to use English for in the workplace. Yet this uncertainty does not mean that there is little these learners can discover about their future needs. This activity provides several ideas for projects in which teachers can encourage learners to identify their own needs. Through these projects, learners can gain a better understanding of the workplace and identify the skills that they need to work on.

PROCEDURE

1. Find out from the class how many learners have a target field that they would like to enter after graduation. This may be a specific profession, a particular industry, or even a perceived future role or function.
2. Group the learners according to their target fields. Those who do not have a target field in mind can be grouped together to form a general group.
3. Ask the groups to make a list of what they might need to use English for in their target fields (e.g., writing product descriptions, writing reports, negotiating with suppliers, giving sales presentations, emailing clients, handling...
6. Do you use English for your social media interactions? _______________________
________________________________________________________________________

7. How do you feel when speaking and writing in English? Why? _______________
________________________________________________________________________

8. Do you hate making mistakes? ____________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

9. What do you consider a mistake in your English? How do you know you have
made a mistake in English? _______________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

10. If you could wake up in the morning and speak English differently, what kind of
English would you speak? Why? ___________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

11. Who would you want to speak English like? Who are your role models? _______
________________________________________________________________________

12. Would you consider having role models who are not British/American? Why
might this be helpful? _____________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

13. On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree), how much do you
agree with the following statements? :
   a. It is more important to be communicatively successful than to be grammati-
cally accurate.
   b. If I want to be a successful English user, I must learn to speak like a British
or American person.
   c. I think my own accent is part of who I am, and I wouldn’t want to lose it
completely when speaking English.
   d. People who need English for business should speak it perfectly, otherwise
they look unprofessional.

Learner-Generated Role-Plays
Magnus Coney

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Low-intermediate +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>In-work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Get a better understanding of the situations in which learners use English at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>30–45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>Less than 5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Handout with Table 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many coursebooks contain examples of role-plays for learners to perform. These are generally well planned and provide learners with plenty of support, including role cards, background texts, and graphs to refer to. The disadvantage is that these usually require learners to be someone they are not, usually someone created by the author with a completely different job and working for a completely different company. Role-plays based on learners’ working environment are much more useful, and because they are meaningful to the learners, the activity becomes truly communicative. Most important, the information from this kind of learner-generated role-play can help teachers understand the situations in which learners use English in the workplace and hence provide more relevant input and tasks.

PROCEDURE
1. Ask learners to think of a recent situation at work in which they spoke
English. Suggest that they pick a situation in which they perhaps had some
difficulties in communicating exactly what they wanted to say.

2. Provide them with a card containing the following categories to complete
with information about the person they were speaking to in the situation
they chose in Step 1. Learners will exchange their completed cards and use
them for the role-plays in the next step.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The situation (meeting, phone call, etc.):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of the person I spoke to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with me (formal, informal, neutral):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My objectives for this situation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information I wanted to communicate in this situation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information I wanted to find out in this situation:</td>
</tr>
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</table>

3. Ask learners to get into pairs and nominate themselves A and B.

4. Tell the As to give their card to their partner. Tell the Bs they are going to perform as the person described on the card, but first give them time to think about what they want to say and to ask their partner any questions, such as the following:
   a. Where did you talk to this person?
   b. How did the exchange start?
   c. Did you talk about anything personal first?
   d. Did you have the information I wanted?

5. The As can also prepare what they want to say (performing as themselves) and ask you any questions they might have.

6. After a few minutes, initiate the role-plays. While the learners are speaking, monitor and record any errors or useful examples.

7. Repeat the procedure with the As performing from the Bs’ handouts. Monitor as before.

8. Provide feedback on language points.

9. Ask students to swap partners and repeat the role-plays, incorporating items from the feedback stage.

10. After learners have completed the role-plays, collect the cards to help yourself understand their needs.

**CAVEATS AND OPTIONS**

Future tasks can be designed on the basis of the information collected in Step 10.
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<td>Information I wanted to find out in this situation:</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Anecdote Circles
Evan Frendo

Levels Intermediate +
Context In-work
Aims Assess target needs
Understand workplace context

Preparation Time 10 minutes
Class Time Variable
Resources None

Teachers need to know about the contexts and situations that in-work learners operate in if they are to deliver effective training interventions. Simply knowing that learners take part in meetings or negotiations is not enough. In this activity we see how anecdote circles (see www.anecdote.com) can be adapted for the business English classroom. The activity requires learners to talk about their real-life experiences in the workplace in order to help the teacher assess needs. The teacher’s role is to facilitate and listen rather than control and direct what is happening.

PROCEDURE
1. Tell learners that they are going to talk about their experiences in the workplace. This will require them to tell stories about people and situations they have come across. The idea is not to give opinions or pass judgment, but simply to talk about what happened. Explain that your role as teacher will be minimal—you will interrupt only to ask questions and clarify where necessary. Tell learners that your aims are to find out more about what they do at work and hence to help design the course content.

2. Set the theme. This should ideally be related to situations where the learners (or their coworkers) have needed to use English in the workplace in order to communicate. Use phrases such as these to get learners remembering:
   a. Think about the last time you (or your coworker) had to look after a visitor from another country. What did you do together?
   b. Do you remember the last meeting you had with your client/superior? Did it go well?
   c. Have you ever had to give a presentation in English? Was it successful?
   d. Do you often socialize with your sub-suppliers? Where do you go?
   e. When did you last discuss a contract with a customer? Were there any problems?
   f. What happens in the quality control meetings you have every week? Was last week’s meeting typical?

3. Give learners time to think about what they want to say.

4. Ask individuals to tell their stories or talk about their experiences. Start with “Can you tell us about it?” If necessary, follow up with questions containing emotive words, such as “Did you enjoy it?” or “Were you nervous at all?”

5. Listen and facilitate when necessary. Do not interrupt or ask too many questions. Allow learners to finish their stories. Do not dominate the session. The idea is to get learners telling their stories to the group, not to you as the teacher. Leave the language feedback to another session or to the end.

6. Thank the learners. Congratulate them on their stories and on the sharing they did, and make sure that they understand how it will help you design a better business English course. Ask learners to comment on the activity itself and whether they found it worthwhile. If you feel that it is necessary, give language feedback.

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS
1. If learners find it difficult to elaborate, elicit more stories by asking for examples or inviting someone else to contribute. If necessary, change the theme.

2. This activity works best in groups of four to eight. If there are too many people, not everyone will be involved or be able to contribute.

3. Be aware that some issues can become very emotive. Your aim is to keep to stories and experiences, rather than letting argument and conflict take over.

4. It is a good idea to record the session if possible. This will allow you to listen again and focus on language issues you might want to raise with the class in the future. It will also allow you to listen again and focus more on specific situations and events which you might want to understand so that you can develop relevant training materials in the future.

5. Follow up by asking individuals to give you more information or details as necessary so that you can design your materials (e.g., ask for a copy of the meeting minutes, the contract that was discussed, or the type of restaurant that was visited).
Anecdote Circles

Evan Frendo

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CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. Many online versions of newspapers include a comments section or a blog for reader responses. For a less formal version of this activity, the focus may be on reading, analyzing, and writing comments or blog posts. The advantage of comments and blog postings is that they are immediately published and may receive responses from other readers.

2. Lower level learners may need more time analyzing letters to the editor to find more effective ways to write their own letters.

3. Lower level learners also may need to spend more time outlining each of the letters they write to focus on the writing process.

4. This activity provides opportunities for peer editing after writing the practice letters and the final letter. Peer editing may be done as an in-class exercise or as homework.

5. Learners may present their article and how they approached their letter to the editor to the whole class.

6. The activity may be spread out over more class sessions to allow for teacher feedback and multiple drafts. This may be especially beneficial for lower level learners.

Prezumés: Résumés With Pizzazz

Susan Kelly

Levels Intermediate +

Context Pre-experience and in-work

Aims Develop business writing skills
Develop brainstorming skills

Class Time 30–40 minutes

Preparation Time 20–30 minutes

Resources Classroom computer with Internet access and a projector
Computers and Internet access for learners

All job hunters planning to find work in the digital era with lots of competition need to stand out. Creating résumés using Prezi, the cloud-based animated presentation software, helps them achieve this aim. By creating such a prezumé, learners develop brainstorming, writing, and editing skills.

PROCEDURE

1. Ask learners if they have seen or used Prezi, and explain that prezumés are a new way to present professional background and skills to prospective employers and colleagues.

2. Show learners examples of prezumés by going to www.prezi.com and searching for “prezumés.”

3. Learners brainstorm their accomplishments, skills, and references.

4. Learners share their brainstorming with a partner or small-group members.

5. Learners sign up for an account on www.prezi.com and view the how-to videos under Learn & Support.

6. Learners create a prezumé that describes their education, work, and volunteer experience using concise phrases, inviting images, PDF files, sound files, and YouTube videos.
CAVEATS AND OPTIONS
1. Learners can peer edit each other’s prezumés.
2. Learners can add their prezumés to web pages or LinkedIn profiles.
3. Learners can present their prezumés in class.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING


APPENDIX: Guide for Learners’ Prezumé Brainstorming
(Sample prezumé: http://prezi.com/74bbkfuq3qe/desktop-prezume-by-susan-kelly)

You may create a handout or project a slide with these items in class.

- Using active verbs, make an outline for the jobs you’ve had.
- Make a list of any volunteer or extracurricular activities you’ve done. Even if you volunteered for just a day, list it.
- List your skills and achievements (e.g., languages spoken, TOEFL score, computer skills, certifications, Employee of the Month).
- List the universities you’ve attended and your major(s). Include any awards, special projects, workshops, honors, clubs, and offices held (e.g., vice president of the Student Union, feature editor of the school newspaper).

Writing Direct Fundraising Letters
Lisa Leopold

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Increase awareness of the fundraising genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>15–20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>A direct fundraising letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handout (Appendix)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This lesson draws on research in discourse analysis (Upton, 2002) to teach learners to analyze the moves and persuasive characteristics of direct fundraising letters in the United States. Because fundraising letters are a culturally imbued genre, the strategies writers use to persuade their readers are not universal, yet analyzing the fundraising correspondence from one culture reveals key characteristics about how that society views philanthropy—an insight into that society’s paradigm which is of paramount importance to all learners in their development of intercultural communication skills. Those learners entering careers in the nonprofit sector, public relations, or marketing will see immediate relevance to studying this genre, yet all learners will benefit from analyzing the persuasive strategies a writer uses to connect with the reader, as a means to first understanding and then persuading an audience from a different cultural paradigm. This lesson aims to strengthen learners’ understanding of how fundraising letters are composed in the United States and to help learners compose a persuasive fundraising letter for this audience.

PROCEDURE
1. Distribute to learners a direct fundraising letter (for example, from the mail, the Internet, or the Indiana Center for Intercultural Communication Fundraising corpus). Facilitate a discussion according to the questions in the Appendix.

2. Invite learners to select a worthy charitable cause. Have teams of three to four learners write a fundraising letter to persuade a U.S. reader to donate to this cause, using the persuasive strategies learned in the analysis activity.
Email 2
I was just writing you because I recently started a new job and was wondering if you could help me out. I’m selling personal lines insurance for an independent agent out of [LOCATION] called [INSURANCE AGENCY NAME]. I would love to get the opportunity to talk to you about your insurance (home and auto) and to see if I could get you a better value for your money.

Discussion points
First sentence: Past progressive tense (“was writing” and “was wondering”); softener (“just”); modal (“could”). Presents a buffer before the specific request in the third sentence.
Third sentence: Modal (“would”); incentive (“better value”)

APPENDIX C: Request Scenario
You are a business analyst and you need last year’s total employee travel expenditures from your coworker in finance in order to complete a proposal for your supervisor. You know your coworker quite well and are friendly with him at work. This request shouldn’t take him very long; however, you need it by tomorrow, which could be an imposition. Write a request email asking for this information.

Connect With Business Networking Websites
Julia Sarris

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
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<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Any</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Learn American English business vocabulary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Write for networking purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>2 hours minimum for a complete profile</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>20–30 minutes</td>
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<td>Resources</td>
<td>Computer and Internet access for each learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer, projector, and Internet access for teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Business and professional websites (e.g., LinkedIn, Xing, Ziggs, Networking for Professionals) are free or low-cost networking resources. Individuals can use these websites to create and post professional profiles online, network with others in their field, and search for employment opportunities. Many large, international companies also use these websites to seek new employees. Although in some ways similar to social media, these sites are purely business and professional networking sites rather than social sites.

This activity is designed for English language learners to create a professional profile on a business networking website and to include appropriate content. This in turn will enable learners to keep abreast of their field and network for new employment opportunities.

PROCEDURE
1. Become familiar with the business networking website that will be used, and create your own profile on that site. Learners should bring their résumé to expedite completing their own profile; this activity can easily follow a résumé-writing activity. If learners have already completed a résumé, Steps 3 and 4 may be abbreviated or omitted.
2. Project your own business networking website profile, and discuss the website with the class.
3. Demonstrate how to create and edit a profile.
4. Give a summary outline to learners (see Appendix). Learners work in pairs or small groups to write their own background summary. Depending on available computer resources, this can be done on a word processor or on paper.

5. Correct spelling and grammar, and assist with vocabulary as appropriate (e.g., résumé in the United States is CV elsewhere).

6. Learners then go to the business networking website and create their account.

7. Learners begin filling in their profile with your guidance. Guide them in completing profile sections briefly and clearly, as follows:
   a. Education: specific universities attended, degrees/diplomas attained, and major/courses of study
   b. Work history/professional experience: jobs, dates, locations, and specifically what the job entailed and what the learner accomplished; explain/teach learners to use the following:
      • Sentence fragments (e.g., Managed 10 employees)
      • Action verbs to describe experiences (e.g., Hired and managed staff of 10)
      • What learners accomplished in each job (e.g., Led a team of eight that increased sales by 9% last year)
   c. Expertise/skills: two or three items in which the learner is particularly talented, such as corporate taxation, stock fund management, or website development
   d. Language skills/international experience
   e. Language fluencies (e.g., English: good oral, excellent written; Spanish: oral and written, fluent)
   f. Amount of time spent living in a country other than the learner’s native country (e.g., Raised in Canada; attended one year of university in Barcelona, Spain)
   g. Personal information (address, phone number, and email)

8. Demonstrate making connections or contacts by sending learners requests. Learners should then send requests among each other to practice this process (each website uses different terminology to describe this process; you should use the terminology of that website).

9. Demonstrate, and learners should practice, searching for jobs. Devote time for this practice at the beginning or end of each class.

Caveats and Options
1. You must be very familiar with the business networking website used in this activity and be prepared to demonstrate how it works.
2. Learners who are less familiar with using technology can be paired with learners who are more familiar. Learners without their own computers can be paired with learners who do have their own computers.
3. The creation of a profile can be started in class and completed outside of class.
4. You can use your own profile and the profiles of others to teach specific business grammar forms as well as specific business vocabulary, such as work history, career goal, position, references, qualifications, skills, experience, and expertise.

Appendix: Professional Profile
Name

Background summary (a few sentences about what you have done in your current and previous jobs)

Work history/professional experience (a list of current and previous jobs, including job title, company name, location, and dates; this should be identical to the résumé/CV)

Skills and expertise (a list and brief description of specific skills and areas of expertise from the résumé/CV)

Other options include languages, projects, professional organizations, and so on. These should correspond to skills from the résumé/CV.
4. Give a summary outline to learners (see Appendix). Learners work in pairs or small groups to write their own background summary. Depending on available computer resources, this can be done on a word processor or on paper.

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APPENDIX: Professional Profile

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Work history/professional experience (a list of current and previous jobs, including job title, company name, location, and dates; this should be identical to the résumé/CV)

Skills and expertise (a list and brief description of specific skills and areas of expertise from the résumé/CV)

Other options include languages, projects, professional organizations, and so on. These should correspond to skills from the résumé/CV.
Part IV: Working With Authentic Materials and Language

The motivating effect of authentic materials in language teaching has been shown in a number of studies (e.g., Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Gilmore, 2011; Peacock, 1997; Swaffar, 1985). In business English, according to Ellis and Johnson (1994, p. 157), “the authentic material that is most useful will be produced by companies for use by their employees, for client information, or for general publicity.” Although it has been acknowledged that authentic materials can make teaching motivating and effective, the challenge for many business English teachers is knowing how to use them effectively in their teaching.

With the proliferation of the Internet, it is fairly easy to find a great many authentic materials of relevance to business English learners. These materials can be in different modes (written, spoken, multimodal) and contain a wide range of information, such as company profiles, product information, market trends, and business news. Having said this, examples of authentic business-to-business (B2B) communication, such as emails, proposals and negotiations, can be difficult to find outside corporate training contexts, probably for reasons of confidentiality. Two possible exceptions are the EnronSent Corpus and the Business Letter Corpus, which contain B2B emails and letters.

In this section, readers can find activities where authentic materials are used to facilitate skills practice and to help learners learn more about the business world. The authentic materials used in these activities include not only those produced by companies (e.g., company websites, commercials, infomercials), but also nonbusiness materials such as government websites, movies, and so on.

This section also contains several activities focusing specifically on the kind of language feature that is found in authentic business texts. As some materials evaluation projects show, published materials do not always teach realistic language (Chan, 2009a; Williams, 1988). Some researchers have demonstrated how real-life data can be deployed to familiarize learners with business language in use (Chan, 2009b; Koester, 2010). From the activities that make use of corpus data of authentic business correspondence and samples of authentic business letters, readers can see how corpora and authentic business texts can be exploited in their teaching of the lexicogrammatical and pragmatic features of business texts.
REFERENCES


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**Introduction to Pitching a Business Idea or Service**

*Angela Bailey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Job-experienced and in-work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Become familiar with the form and function of a pitch presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate other real-life pitches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Synthesize information from content sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create a personalized list of form and functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>1–2 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>Variable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Computer with Internet access for each learner</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handout (Appendix A)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Whiteboard</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Markers</td>
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</table>

Pincus (2007) defines pitch as a quick and succinct summary of what a business does that is “one of the most effective methods available to reach new buyers and clients with a winning message” (para. 3). The skill of persuasion and the ability to persuade under pressure are important for language learners and even more so for business professionals. This stand-alone activity provides the foundation through YouTube videos and Internet reading for the preparation of pitching a business idea or service.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Provide the handout (Appendix A) to learners, and begin the session by reviewing the handout tasks and working with learners through the first video (answers provided in Appendix B).

2. Let learners work on the rest of the content to finish Task 1.
With nearly 2,500 proposals submitted for the [NAME OF CONFERENCE], but with space for only about 950 concurrent sessions, many proposals could not be selected, including yours.

**How the rejection is softened:** States the rejection after objective information about the competitiveness of the selection process, emphasizing that rejection was more common than acceptance; uses the passive voice (“many proposals could not be selected”); uses “could not” to show compulsion rather than willingness; uses “could not” + positive verb “selected” rather than the negative verb “rejected”; embeds the rejection in a clause.

**NOTE:** Help learners notice the similarity among these rejections of a conference proposal. Both begin with the competitiveness of the selection process before stating the rejection with the term “not” + positive verb “selected.”

**APPENDIX C: Revising Rejections**

From a prospective employer writing to reject a job candidate

**Original:** We have rejected your application for the business analyst position.

**Revised:** Although we were impressed with your qualifications, I regret to inform you that we have selected another candidate whose professional experience more closely matches the requirements for the business analyst position.

**How the revised rejection is softened:** Begins with a compliment and a subordinate clause; uses “regret” to express empathy; casts the rejection as a matter of fit rather than qualification; states whom they have selected rather than whom they have rejected to accentuate the positive.

From a university admissions officer writing to reject admission to a prospective candidate:

**Original:** You have been denied admission to the MBA program at [NAME OF UNIVERSITY].

**Revised:** We received more than 10,000 applications for 1,250 openings for the 20xx–20xx MBA program at [NAME OF UNIVERSITY], making this an extremely competitive year in which we unfortunately had to turn down many qualified candidates. It is with regret that I write to inform you that your application for admission was not among those selected this year.

**How the revised rejection is softened:** Emphasizes the competitiveness of the admissions process; uses “unfortunately” and “regret” to express empathy; uses “turn down,” a more euphemistic phrase than “reject” or “deny”; uses the compliment “many qualified candidates”; uses “not” + positive verb “selected” rather than the negative verb “rejected”; states the rejection using the passive voice; uses “this year” to leave open the possibility that the candidate might wish to reapply another year.

Crowdsourced Funding: Choosing a Start-Up to Invest In

Alexandra Dylan Lowe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>High-intermediate to advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Pre-experience and job-experienced/university or in-work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Develop speaking, negotiating, and persuasive writing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work in teams to develop a rationale for choosing a start-up in which to invest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>45–60 minutes</td>
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<td>30 minutes</td>
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</table>

Crowdsourced funding allows entrepreneurs to reach a funding goal by using the Internet to appeal for small contributions to a wide online community. One popular crowdsourced funding platform is Kickstarter, a website where small business owners in creative industries such as film, technology, food, fashion, gaming, and publishing can post short videos describing their project and set a goal for the amount of funding they are seeking to raise from backers who visit the site. This activity introduces learners to the language of real-life entrepreneurs and to the challenges of convincing funders to invest in an actual business start-up.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Before class, go to www.kickstarter.com. Select three Kickstarter videos to show in class. You can browse the site by category of project, check out Staff Picks, or explore products and services that were recently successfully funded. For job-experienced learners, you can select Kickstarter videos based on learners’ professional or business background.

2. In class, ask learners to discuss how small business innovators go about raising money. Do learners know anyone who has tried to launch a small business? What are the challenges? What sources of funding are typically available to small business start-ups? What sources of funding are typically foreclosed?
3. Explain that Kickstarter is one option for funding creative business projects. Show the three preselected Kickstarter videos. Review any challenging vocabulary.

4. Put learners in groups of three or four. Ask them to imagine that they have a total of $1,000 to invest in one or more of the Kickstarter projects. Ask them to rank the three products or services they saw in the videos in terms of their market appeal and the entrepreneurs' likelihood of success. They then have to decide how they will invest their $1,000: Will they spend it all on one project? Will they divide it among the three projects? If so, how? Why?

5. Invite learners to come to the board and write their ranking of the three projects and the relative amount of funding they would invest in each.

6. Invite the groups to explain and defend their decisions. Ask if anyone wants to change their mind about their investment decision based on the class discussion.

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. For an additional speaking activity, ask learners to explore the Kickstarter website for homework. Ask them to choose a project that they find interesting and present it to the class. Ask the class to vote on the top three most intriguing projects.

2. As a persuasive writing activity, assign the Kickstarter website for homework. Ask learners to select a project they find interesting and write a one-paragraph summary of why they would choose to invest in that project. Have learners swap their summaries in small groups and choose the most interesting project.

3. The FAQ section at the end of each project’s write-up provides great opportunities to practice English question forms.

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**Critical Reading**

Adi Rajan

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Evaluate business articles by assessing adequacy and detecting flaws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Access to the Internet</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In competitive business environments, accepting ideas and opinions at face value is potentially dangerous and expensive. If learners want to think critically and make informed business decisions, they can’t afford to be passive recipients of information. This lesson helps professionals question information gleaned through reading, evaluate its validity, and use it effectively for business decision making.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Divide the class into small groups, and ask them to discuss which new business trend or buzzword is currently trending on social media sites. Ask learners to share trends that have caught their attention (e.g., “gamification,” big data, frugal innovation) and identify one for discussion.

2. Ask learners to share their thoughts on the business trend. Do they think it’s a fad?

3. An Internet search may throw up hundreds of thousands of references to this buzzword, but are all of these texts credible? The arguments presented in these texts may contain a variety of flaws.

4. Distribute a cut-up version of the Appendix, which contains types of flaws and their definitions. Ask learners to work with a partner to match the flaw to its definition.

5. Inform learners that they have 5 minutes to go online and find an article or a blog post on this business trend in their domain or industry (e.g., gamification in life sciences). Encourage them to access articles through social media sites such as LinkedIn and Twitter.