

ETpedia

Business English

500 ideas for Business English teachers

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10
Years of
ETpedia

2024 marks the 10-year anniversary of the launch of *ETpedia*! In that time, 6500 practical tips and ideas have been shared across 12 different titles. Each title in the *ETpedia* series is divided into units containing 10 bite-sized tips and ideas to give you real practical help with planning and preparing for your lessons. To celebrate the 10-year anniversary, we are sharing 10 collections of ideas across 2024!

Here, you can explore 10 practical ideas from *ETpedia Business English*, which is every business English teacher's complete encyclopaedia, with 500 tips and ideas to help you get the most out of your students. Enjoy 10 ideas from across the book below!

10 Ideas

Unit 6: **10** tips for teaching one-to-one and small groups

Idea: 5. Seating arrangements

For small groups and one-to-one classes, seating arrangements can be very important. For groups, make sure you take into account the personalities and any hierarchy issues. Ensure the layout allows for communication, but also permits you to stand up and present if necessary. In one-to-one classes you may prefer to work from sheets of A2 or A3 or with a tablet or laptop rather than standing up at a whiteboard.

Unit 9: **10** tips on carrying out a needs analysis

Idea 5. Pie-chart completion

A good way of collating needs in a group and to show the group how varied the needs are is to ask them to complete a simple pie-chart. They all draw a large circle and slice it up into the different areas they want to cover on the course. You can give them a choice comprising Grammar, Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Meetings, Telephoning, Writing, Socialising, Presentations and Specific language. The percentages they choose for the different areas will be reflected in their pie-charts. You can then collate these wishes into a group pie-chart reflecting the contents of the course as asked for by the participants.

Unit 15: **10** activities for the topic of WORKPLACES and COMPANIES

Idea 8. Rules and regulations

Many workplaces have a number of rules and regulations which need to be illustrated and explained to new starters and visitors. One way to do an activity on this topic is to write some rules on the board, such as:

- ▶ *Employees must wear a security badge at all times.*
- ▶ *All staff have to wear a uniform.*
- ▶ *Visitors cannot enter the building unless accompanied by a member of staff.*

Students work on their own or in pairs and decide which of the rules are true for their workplace and which need to be rewritten. This activity is a good follow-up to a lesson on modals of obligation (*must, have to, cannot, etc.*). At higher levels a little humour can be introduced with some unofficial rules being introduced or some non-rules such as '*Employees should feel happy at all times*'.

Unit 18: **10** activities for the topic of MONEY and FINANCE

Idea: 8. Connect four

This vocabulary activity is a way to recycle and review recently taught vocabulary. First of all, demonstrate the activity by writing the following 16 words randomly around the board: *pay, sell, purchase, borrow, cash, cheque, card, transfer, bank, ATM, post office, currency exchange office, fall, rise, decline, fluctuate*. Ask students to connect the sets of four words and name the category. The four categories are: financial verbs, ways of paying, locations for money, and financial trends. Next, give four post-it notes or pieces of paper to each student and ask them to write four different words on them that are connected in some way. After all the students have written their four words, they put their words randomly around on the board or spread around a table. Then, the students must decide which words are connected and name the category. Note that this activity can easily be adapted for many other business topics.

Unit 19: **10** activities for the topic of CULTURE

Idea: 9. Critical incidents

Critical incidents are descriptions of situations where a problem occurs in a business situation and students have to speculate what the cause of the problem is. You will find many examples of these online by searching with the words *Cultural Critical Incidents*. For example, here is an example of a critical incident: *A German business person has to telephone his colleague in the UK once a week. His English colleague always starts the phone conversation by asking him about his week, the weather and his family. This irritates the German but he is too polite not to answer all his colleague's questions. What's the problem?*

Put students in small groups and ask them to discuss what they think is going wrong here and how it might be avoided in the future. One possible explanation might be: *In England it's typical to start off a conversation with plenty of small talk and questions about general topics before getting down to business. In Germany, however, it's more common to quickly get down to business.*

Unit 30: **10** fluency activities for Social English

5. One-minute topics

A simple fluency warmer for a lesson is to have a box full of pieces of paper with different topics to talk about. These could include general topic headings such as 'sport' or 'films' or more specific headings such as 'your favourite day of the year' or 'the least interesting aspect of your job'. Students work in pairs and take turns to pick a piece of paper out of the box. They have one minute to talk about the topic while their partner times them. If they manage to speak non-stop for a minute they get a point. Then they swap roles and the other student has a go. You can update the topics in the box from time-to-time with new topics; in fact, if you choose topic areas recently covered in class then it's a good way to revise recently taught language.

Unit 37: **10** tips for organising in-class presentations

Idea: 4. Create three questions

Instead of writing comprehension questions yourself, tell the students in the audience the title of the presentation and say a few words about the general topic. Then ask them to write down three questions before the talk that they expect the presenter to answer. During the presentation itself, students in the audience listen out for answers to their questions and note them down. At the end, if any of their questions remained unanswered, they can ask them at the end.

Unit 40: **10** practice activities for business grammar

Idea: 7. Comparatives and superlatives for talking about products

Finding out about the products and services your students are involved in is a natural way of practising comparatives and superlatives. Write a table on the board with key information about three products including details about size, weight, price and other features. You can also use the photocopiable table on p166. Ask students to write in the details of one of their company's products and then add information about two competing products. With pre-work students or students who don't have products, ask them to research three competing products for homework such as three different types of mobile phones. They can quickly find this kind of information on price comparison websites.

The next stage is for students to present their three products to a partner and summarise the main differences using sentences with comparative or superlative forms. For example: *Our model is lighter/more efficient/less complicated than this one. It's also the cheapest.* You could also make this an information gap activity by giving the student who is listening the task of filling in a blank table about the three products.

Unit 41: **10** ways to teach business vocabulary

Idea: 4. Missing letters

Getting students to guess words with some letters missing is also a good way to practise vocabulary. You can remove the vowels, the consonants, or simply the first and last letters. In this example of office words the first and last letters are missing.

1. _il_ 2. _es_ 3. _am_ 4. _hon_ 5. _ape_
6. _hai_ 7. _oo_ 8. _ous_ 9. _e_ 10. _arpe_

(Answers: 1. file 2. desk 3. lamp 4. phone 5. paper 6. chair 7. door 8. mouse 9. pen 10. carpet)

Unit 45: **10** business writing sub-skills

Idea: 2. Register and formality

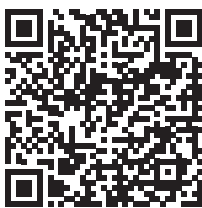
Students find it hard to recognise the level of formality in writing and to produce it themselves. You could take one text and rewrite it either more formally or less formally and ask students which is the more formal. They could also list the reasons why. Another useful exercise is to take different phrases (see Unit 44) and have them try to match phrases with the same meaning but decide which is more formal. For example, here's an extract from such an exercise:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Dear Mr Thorn | A. Great to hear from you again. |
| 2. Thank for your letter which arrived yesterday. | B. Hi Geoff |
| 3. I'd be delighted to join you next week. | C. It'd be great to see you next week. |

(Answers: 1b, 2a, 3c. 1-3 are more formal)

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