

BASIC BUSINESS KEY PHRASES



Effective Communication
series



ECSP*L*ICITE

Formations en communication en langues
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BASIC BUSINESS KEY PHRASES

Welcome

This booklet is designed to help you when exposed to business situations in English.

We advise you to keep it within easy reach and to read it regularly.

Please contact ECSPLICITE if you have any questions.

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Basic Business Key Phrases, by Laurent Sorgato
is a book from the series *Effective Communication*

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A joint venture
To merge with – A merger

1.3. Where is the company based?

The company **is based** in New York.

The headquarters **are located** in New York.

The offices are very modern.

Another office **is situated** in Boston.

To be based in...
To be located in...
To be situated in...

1.4. What kind of company is it?

A service company. We provide different services.

A manufacturing company. We manufacture a wide range of products.

We produce a small range of products.

We sell electrical goods.

ECSPLICITE - BASIC BUSINESS KEY PHRASES

1. COMPANY (2)

1.5. Is it a big company?

Our turnover last year was \$40 million.

Our profits were \$4 million.

We have a workforce of 40,000.

We employ 3,000 people worldwide.

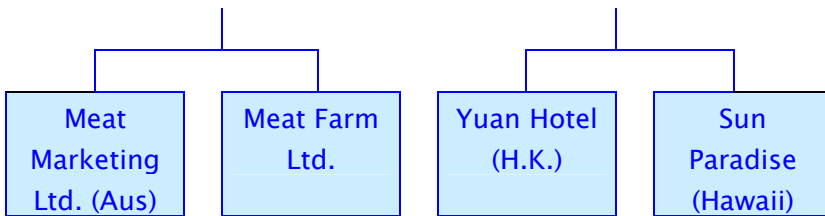
We have 3,000 employees in our headquarters.

Checklist
To employ
Employee
Employer

GRAHAM INC.

Meat Product Ltd.

G.I. Tours Ltd.



2. JOB

2.1. How is the company structured?

The company is split into two divisions: chemicals and gas.

The organization is very flat – only three levels / layers.

2.2. Texax Incorporated

There are seven departments.

- . Finance: purchasing – customer accounts
- . Marketing: sales – after-sales – advertising – public relations
- . Production: packaging – distribution – quality – maintenance
- . Human resources [HR]: personnel – training – salaries – pensions

- . Computing: Information Systems [IS] – Information Technology [IT]
- . Research and development [R & D]
- . Legal: law – lawyer – legislation – contract

2.3. What do you do exactly?

I'm the Managing Director. **I'm responsible for** managing the company.

I'm a public relations manager. **I deal with** the media.

I'm a project leader. **I'm involved in** many projects.

I'm a sales manager. **I'm in charge of** sales.

I'm an engineer. **I take care of** maintenance.

I'm a consultant. **My job is to advise** companies. **I give advice.**

I'm a supervisor. **I supervise** people.

I'm a secretary. **I have to handle** many telephone calls.

I'm a trainer. **One of my tasks is to** train managers.

2.4. A typical day

I leave home. ^ I get to the office. ^ I have a look at the mail.
 ^ I write a letter and send an email. ^ I talk to my secretary. ^
 She assists me. ^ I make some telephone calls. ^ I check my
 diary and fix a meeting. ^ I do some work. ^ I have lunch. ^ I
 prepare a presentation. ^ I go to a meeting and give a
 presentation. ^ I finish work. ^ I leave the office. ^ I get home.

I like travelling / the challenge / solving problems.
 I don't like the administration / paperwork / the long hours /
 dealing with angry customers.

To work for – a company
 To work in – a department – city
 To work with – a person
 To work on – a project

2.5. Job

To have a job

To do a good job.

2.6. Work

I work for Macrohard.

I work in the Personnel Department.

I work with a person from Japan.

At the moment I am working on a new salary system.

3. MANAGEMENT (1)

I manage fifty people.

I am a manager.

A managerial position / post

UK	US
Board of Directors [a board member]	Executive Board [a board member]
Chairman	President
Managing Director	Chief Executive Officer / Senior Vice President
Marketing Director	Vice-president Marketing
Sales Manager	Sales Director

3.1. Management

Senior / Middle / Junior

He is her boss.

She is his deputy.

She is deputizing for him.

3.2. People

He is an executive.

This is his assistant.

Colleague / Co-worker / Counterpart / Superior / Subordinate

3.3. Management verbs



3. MANAGEMENT (2)

3.4. The manager

I increase profit.

I improve company performance.

I cut costs.

I focus on core business.

I analyze problems. A good analysis.

I solve problems.

I find a solution to a problem.

I take decisions. I decide.

I motivate people. Motivation is high.

I inform. I give information.

I communicate with my staff. Communication is good.

I am a good communicator.

I support staff. I give support to staff.

I organize and plan.

Checklist	
<i>Verb</i>	<i>Noun</i>
Improve	Improvement
Analyze	Analysis
Solve	Solution
Decide	Decision
Motivate	Motivation
Organize	Organization
Meet	Meeting
Develop	Development
Discuss	Discussion
Increase	Increase

Well-organized	Well-planned
Badly-organized	Badly-planned

4.2. The Personnel Manager is responsible for...

Terms of employment and pay – Recruitment – Working conditions – Employee career development – Employee relations [union / management] – The company pension scheme – Training [training course / a trainer / a trainee] – Health and safety

4.3. Pay

I earn \$288,000 a year. This is my annual salary.

My monthly salary is \$24,000.

Wages were traditionally paid weekly.

I received a 5% pay rise last year. [pay cut]

A sales representative gets a commission.

Consultants charge fees.

After a business trip, you must claim expenses. [fill in a form]

Company car

Insurance

FRINGE BENEFITS

Telephone

Luncheon vouchers

4.4. The recruitment process

The company advertised. ^ A person applied for the job. ^ The company sent an application form. ^ The applicant completed the form. ^ The company invited people for interview. ^ The company interviewed. ^ The company drew up a shortlist of good interviewees and rejected unsuitable applicants. ^ There was a second interview. ^ The company offered the job. ^ The person accepted the job. ^ She joined the company. ^ She was promoted to head of department. ^ But she left the company after two years.

4.5. Employment strategy

Hire =/= Fire

Recruit =/= Dismiss

Take on =/= sack

To make redundant

The company made 1,000 staff redundant because of financial problems.

5. SALES AND MARKETING (1)

For each product, the marketing department creates a marketing mix: the four Ps.

A company sells products to customers.

Clients buy a professional service.

Consumers buy products in shops.

5.1. Product: to sell a product which the customer wants

It is important to identify and then meet the needs of the customer.

We can customize our products to the needs of the customer.

We have a large product range.

This product life cycle is very short.

We bring out a new model after one year.

We will launch this product next month.

This is our biggest selling brand.

Our customers show brand loyalty.

To customize - customized

To tailor - tailor-made

5.2. Place: to supply the product to the customer

We supply many different companies. We are the supplier.

We distribute our products through shops and supermarkets.

We have many distributors.

I am responsible for organizing distribution.

I use a company [a carrier] to transport the goods to the shops.

This company delivers on time.

The shop receives a delivery.

Manufacturer



Wholesaler



Retailer

5. SALES AND MARKETING (2)

5.3. Promotion: to inform and attract the customer

I am responsible for promotion.

We promote the product in different ways.

Trade fair – a stand

Brochure / Leaflet / Mailshot

A television commercial

Exhibition / Exhibitor / Exhibit

Key words

I am responsible for **advertising**.

We **advertise** on television and in the newspapers.

An advertisement is very expensive.

We create **an advertising campaign** for a product.

We use **an advertising agency** to create the campaign.

To market

Market share

a product

Niche

Market trends

A market: develop / enter / penetrate

Saturated

MARKET

Booming

Marketing technique / strategy

The market

Market research

Market leader

Depressed

5.4. Price: to choose the right price for the product

I am responsible for pricing policy.

I must fix the price at the right level.

We have a high price strategy so our products are more expensive.

It can be dangerous to overprice.

If you reduce your price to a level below your competitors, then you undercut the competition.

Average

Sales target

To sell

Sales forecast

Sales figures

After sales

SALES

Excellent

Sales representative

A seller

Seasonal

A sale

Poor

Period

SWOT: this is a tool used in marketing to analyse the status of a product or company.

You analyse: **Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats**

ECSPLICITE - BASIC BUSINESS KEY PHRASES

6. FINANCE (1)

I am the Finance Manager. I work in the Finance Department.

It is important for a company to manage its finances.

It must establish financial controls.

The company is in a healthy financial situation.

We don't have any financial problems.

The company will finance a new training programme.

To finance - to fund - to pay for

Checklist

To finance

Finance manager

Financial problem

Finances

6.1. Making money

We made a profit last year. [to make a profit]

Profits are up 20%.

Before tax profits are \$40,000,000 [gross profit]

After tax profits are \$15,000,000 [net profit]

I buy for \$10

I sell for \$25

I make a profit of \$15

The profit margin is \$15

This company is very profitable.

This company made a loss.

This company had big losses.

We invested a lot of money.

It was a big investment.

Budget

I am **responsible** for the budget.

I **decide** the budget.

I **fix** the budget.

I **have a budget** of \$40m.

I am **over budget**.

I am **under budget**.

6.2. Documents

Profit and loss account – How the company has operated over a period of time.

Balance sheet – What a company owns [assets] and owes [liabilities].

Cash flow statement – The flow of money into [income] and out of [salaries, etc.] a business.

An invoice – A bill stating how much you must pay for a service or product. We send invoices each month. We invoice each month.

Debt = -

Credit = +

6. FINANCE (2)

6.3. Results

First quarter – Quarterly – Half-yearly – Annual

Turnover – Total income or revenue of a company for a period of time.

Sales – Sales of the new product are very good / pleasing / disappointing.

6.4. Other indicators

A good business must control its fixed costs [some do not change e.g. rent on a building] and variable costs [some change with more production e.g. cost of raw materials].

Overheads – A word for regular costs like rent, electricity, salaries etc.

The money a company pays to shareholders from profits is a dividend.

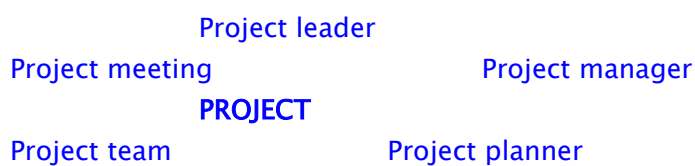
6.5. Finance verbs – a good year

We had a big profit. We earned a lot of money from our new product. We spent one million dollars on training. The company bought a new computer system. We paid four million dollars for the system. We reduced costs and saved three million dollars. We invested one million dollars in a new production line. We wasted fifty thousand dollars on project 3000. The auditor audited the company. He did an audit.

ECSPLICITE - BASIC BUSINESS KEY PHRASES

7. PROJECTS

A project is work separate from the normal work of an organization. It has a target, a budget and a date when it must finish – a deadline.



Project organization

7.1. Project 2000

We plan. ^ We set a budget. ^ We run a feasibility study. ^ We get good results. ^ We get the green light. ^ We create a team. ^ We organize a schedule. ^ We allocate resources. ^ We decide manpower. ^ We start. ^ We begin construction [we construct]. ^ We subcontract. ^ We make good progress. ^ Construction lasts one month. ^ We begin installation [we install]. ^ We run into a few problems. ^ We solve the problems. ^ We complete the project on time [finish]. ^ We meet the deadline.

If you shelve a project, then you stop it for a period of time. Then you start it again.

If you scrap a project, you stop and do not start again.

A pilot project is an experimental project.

A successful project – An unsuccessful project

Checklist

To plan

To have a plan

A planner

Planning

7.2. Time

A project planner

We plan to begin next week.

Work is due to begin next week.

Work is scheduled to begin next week.

A milestone is an important point in a project.

We will reach our first milestone when we complete construction.

A step is smaller than a stage / phase. Our first step is to organize a meeting.

Schedule

We are behind schedule = late

We are ahead of schedule = early

We are on schedule = on time

The schedule is very tight = a lot to do in little time

Budget

We are on budget = good

We are under budget = good

We are over budget = bad

The train arrived on time. On time = according to schedule

I arrived in time to have a cup of coffee. In time to = early in order to do something

8. TECHNOLOGY (2)

8.3. Computing verbs

You turn on the computer / you switch on the computer.

You turn off the computer / you switch off the computer.

You must save new documents.

You can save onto the hard disk.

You can save onto the floppy disk.

You can also copy data from hard disk to floppy disk.

If you are not careful, you can lose data.

You need to remember your password.

Then you enter your password.

If you want to use new software, you must install / load it.

You can upgrade your computer by adding memory.

You should also run a program to check for any virus or bug.

8.4. Internet

I surf the Internet.

I send email.

I use a search engine to browse the World Wide Web (www).

I download interesting information.

Internet Society

On-line commerce

E-business

Telecommuting

Telemedicine

Home shopping

Video-on-demand

9. BUSINESS: UP AND DOWN (1)

9.1. Describing change

9.1.1. Up

To go up

To increase an increase

To rise a rise

To grow a growth

To raise

Sales went up



Sales are going up



Sales will go up



Last year	Now	Next year
There was an increase in sales	There is an increase in sales	There will be an increase in sales

9.1.2. Down

To go down

To drop a drop in

To fall a fall in

To decrease a decrease in

To slump a slump in

Sales went down ↓	Sales are going down ↓	Sales will continue to go down ↓
Last year	Now	Next year
There was a decrease in sales	There is a decrease in sales	There will be a further decrease in sales

9.1.3. Other

To improve an improvement

To get better

To get worse

To recover a recovery

To remain stable

To fluctuate a fluctuation

To level out

To reach a peak to peak

To hit a low a low

9.2. Speed of change (adjective / adverb)

Rapid / Rapidly

Steady / Steadily

Gradual / Gradually

Slow / Slowly

9.3. Degree of change (adjective / adverb)

Dramatic / Dramatically

Significant / Significantly

Moderate / Moderately

Slight / Slightly

9.4. Prepositions

To stand at – Sales stood **at** 2,000 units in January.

From... to – Sales increased **from** 2,000 units **to** 7,000 units in July.

By – Sales increased **by** 5,000 in July.

Increase of... over – There was an increase **of** 10,000 units over last year.

10. PRODUCTION / PRODUCTS (1)

I am a production manager. I am responsible for production. In the factory we have three production lines. The production process is very high-tech. We produce many different products. Productivity is very high.

10.1. The production process

The supplier delivers the raw materials.

We keep our stock in a warehouse.

We have an inventory of products in the store.

In the factory, we assemble the products on an assembly line.

We control the quality.

We look for faults or defects.

Quality control is very important!

We pack the product. Packing is done manually / automatically.

We use different types of packaging.

At the loading bay we load the finished product onto trucks.

We store stock in a warehouse.

Checklist

To produce = to manufacture

Production = manufacturing

A production line - manager - process

Productivity - a producer - a factory

10.2. Machines

I operate this machine. We have a lot of machinery.

I operate the controls on this panel.

I am an engineer. I maintain the machinery.

Sometimes a machine breaks down. A breakdown

I repair the machine.

Once a year, I service the machine.

Checklist

Verb

Operate

Maintain

Break down

Repair

Service

Noun

Operation

Maintenance

Breakdown

Repair

Service

10. PRODUCTION / PRODUCTS (2)

10.3. The product – questions and answers

I am a designer. I design the product. This is my design.

These are the specifications. What are the dimensions? What is the size? How big is it?

How long is it? It is 1m long. Its length is 1m.

How wide is it? It is 1m wide. Its width is 1m.

How high is it? It is 1m high. Its height is 1m.

How much does it weigh? It weighs 10 kilos. Its weight is 10 kilos.

How heavy is it? It is very heavy. It is very light.

10.4. Product features – adjectives

A feature = a special part or quality of a product.

This product has many features. It is suitable for young children. It is...

quiet comfortable small
 modern cheap old-fashioned
 fast – quick – slow efficient safe
 reliable user-friendly popular
 portable

WARRANTY / GUARANTEE

This product has a warranty / a guarantee = a written promise to repair or replace the product.

The product is under warranty / guarantee = the manufacturers must repair.

To guarantee = to promise: I guarantee I will deliver on Monday.

A guarantee = a promise: I give you my personal guarantee.

11. THE WORLD OF BUSINESS (1)

11.1. Trade

The US is an important trading partner for Japan.

The US does a lot of trade with Japan.

Trade relations are good.

Britain trades with many countries.

The UN imposed trade sanctions.

WORLD MAP



An import duty is a tax on imported goods.
The EU protects its own market with import duties.
The EU protects its own markets. Some people call this protectionism.

11.2. Industry

Manufacturing industry – The manufacturing sector
Automotive / Construction / Computer / Defense [US spelling] / Electronics / Pharmaceuticals / The service sector / Financial services / Banking / Insurance / Tourism

Industry

Tourism is an important industry.
We produce industrial products – products for industry.
He is a leading industrialist.

11. THE WORLD OF BUSINESS (2)

11.3. The role of government

An industry owned by the government is state-owned.

It is part of the public sector, not the private sector.

A government can nationalize: can change a private company / industry to a nationalized company / industry. This process is nationalization.

A government can privatize: can change a national company / industry to a private company / industry. This process is privatization.

Nationalize	Privatize
Nationalized	Privatized
Nationalization	Privatization

Many countries are deregulating / liberalizing the telecoms industry. [To reduce regulation]

To liberalize – liberalization is the process.

To deregulate – deregulation is the process.

11.4. Business and the economy

The US economy is very healthy.

Japan has economic problems.

She is an economist.

She studied economics at university.

Her car is not very economical.

Key economic indicators: inflation / interest rates / unemployment.

ECONOMIC

Policy Problem

Boom Recession

Checklist
Economy
Economic
Economist
Economics
Economical

Economy	
Healthy	Unhealthy
Strong	Weak
Stable	Unstable

12. COMMUNICATING IN BUSINESS (1)

12.1. Communicating verbs

Verb

- Say – He said that he wanted more information:
“I want more information.”
- Tell – She told his secretary to cancel the meeting:
“Cancel the meeting!”
- Speak – He spoke to his boss about the problem:
“We have a problem.”
- Talk – They talked about the problem:
“What can we do?”
- Ask – She asked me to send an email:
“Can you send an email?”
- Answer – I answered his question:
“What time is it? – Ten o’clock.”
- Listen to – He listened to the radio news.
- Hear – She heard some interesting information.

12.2. Meetings

I have a meeting today. It is in meeting room 26.

I have to meet my boss.

I will go to the meeting after lunch.

You need a person to chair [to control] a meeting.

This is the chair – a chairman or chairwoman.

People who go to a meeting are participants. You participate in a meeting.

A secretary usually takes the minutes.

The chairman introduces the agenda.

He lists the items on the agenda.

The participants propose ideas.

People agree or disagree.

The chair summarizes. [To make a summary]

Finally, they make a decision and close the meeting.

To arrange

To organize

To hold

To have

To cancel To postpone
MEETING
To re-arrange To delay
To start To end
To resume To adjourn

Meetings

To propose	To make a proposal
To suggest	To make a suggestion
To recommend	To make a recommendation

Adjectives

A long / short / quick / brief / useful meeting

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12. COMMUNICATING IN BUSINESS (2)

12.3. Telephoning

My home number is...

My work number is...

The international code

Area / city code

The switchboard

The line is engaged.

To telephone
To call
To ring
To make a phone call

Message

May I leave a message?
Would you like to leave a message?

Phrases

May I speak to...

This is... calling.

The reason I'm calling is....

It was nice speaking to you.

12.4. Social – Communication Problems

Problem

Excuse me, I don't understand.

I'm sorry but my English is not very good.

Pardon me? I didn't hear what you said.

Solution

What did you say, sorry?

Excuse me, could you repeat that?

Sorry, what does... [word]... mean?

13. DOCUMENTS

13.1. Document verbs

To read / To write / To look at / To examine / To send / To receive / To get / To amend / To change / To note down

13.2. Letter words

To enclose – I enclose a copy of the report.

- To enquire – I am writing to enquire about your prices.
- To apologize – I apologize for the delay.
- To complain – I am writing to complain about...
- To confirm – I will confirm by fax / letter / email – I will confirm in writing.
- To request – Could you send me some information? = a request
- To demand – Please send payment immediately. = a demand

If something is urgent, it is important to deal with it immediately / straight away.

13.3. Documents

- Agenda – A list of points for discussion at a meeting
- Annual report – A financial statement from the company
- Letter – An example of written communication: formal / informal letter
- Letter of credit – A bank document which pays for goods
- Memo – An example of internal company communication
- Sales report – Document with sales information and/or analysis
- Email – Electronic correspondence
- Minutes – Notes from a meeting
- Newsletter – Internal information document
- Order form – A customer completes an order form to place an order
- Manual – A guide on how to use a product or service [user guide]
- Fax – Common form of electronic communication – fax machine
- Contract – A document which two companies sign to have an agreement
- Catalogue – A publication with product price and list
- Brochure – Contains pictures and information about a company and its products
- Curriculum vitae – You send a Curriculum Vitae or CV to an employer when you apply for a job.

13.4. Written Communication

The start	The end	U.S.
Dear Sir / Madam	Yours sincerely	Sincerely yours
Dear Mr.		Best regards
Dear Mrs. [married woman]		[informal]
Dear Miss [single woman]		
Dear Ms [status unknown]		

13.5. Requesting

- I would be grateful if you could...
- I would appreciate it if you could...
- Please could you...

Close

Thank you for your help.

Please contact us again if you have any further questions.

News – Good

I am delighted to inform you that...

News – Bad

Unfortunately,...

Reference

Thank you for your letter dated....

With reference to your letter dated...,

Further to your letter dated...,

14. BUSINESS TRAVEL

14.1. A business trip

You drive to the airport. ^ You park the car. ^ You check in with your luggage. ^ You go through passport control. ^ You wait for your flight. ^ Your flight is called and you go to your gate. ^ You show your boarding card. ^ You board the plane. ^ The plane takes off a little late. ^ The plane lands. ^ You arrive ten minutes early. ^ Mr. Smith meets you at the airport. ^ He drives you to your hotel. ^ In the morning you take a taxi to the company. ^ You arrive on time.

Checklist	Checklist
Railway	To travel
Airport	A travel agency
Subway	A business trip
Hotel	A journey
Taxi rank	

A taxi will collect you in the morning.
A taxi will drop you off in the evening.

14.2. Questions

How long does it take to get to New York?

It takes three hours.

How far is it?

It is not far. / It is a long way. / It is 3,000 km.

14.3. A company visit

You arrive at the main gate ^ You show your ID (identity) card ^ The security guard lets you through ^ You enter the main building ^ You walk to the reception desk ^ You give your name to the receptionist ^ You have an appointment with Mr. Flicker ^ You sign your name in the visitors' book ^ You pin your badge to your coat ^ You find the elevator ^ You go to the top floor ^ Mr. Flicker's secretary meets you ^ She takes you to Mr. Flicker's office ^ Mr. Flicker welcomes you and shakes your hand

14.4. Social questions and answers

Greetings

How do you do?	Pleased to meet you.
How are you?	Fine, thanks. And you? [old friends]
Hi. Good to see you again.	Same here. [old friends]

Small talk

How was your trip?	Fine, thanks. No problems.
Is this your first time in the US?	No, I was here in 1997.
Where are you staying?	I'm staying at the Ratz Hotel.
How's the weather in Boston?	Very good.

Polite offers

Would you like a coffee?	Yes, thank you.
Milk? Sugar?	Black with two sugars.
May I take your coat?	Thank you.