

## Describing issues, discussing options, and taking action

### About you

Think about the issues and challenges that you have to deal with in your job. Form pairs and ask each other the questions below. Make notes so you can report back to the class.

1. What are some common issues or problems that you and your colleagues deal with in your jobs?
2. How do you deal with such issues? Do you have meetings to discuss them?
3. What is a recent issue you or your colleagues had to deal with?
4. What was the background to that problem?
5. What action did you or your colleagues take to solve the problem? Was it successful?

### Practice: Describing issues, discussing options, and taking action

Work in pairs. Use the background information and the speech bubbles below to make a conversation.

The CEO of a company that produces electronics keyboards has called a meeting with his production manager. He wants to talk about one of their suppliers, a company called AudioTec.

<p>1 ... AudioTec. What are your thoughts?</p>	<p>2 Well, I'm sorry to say ...</p>	<p>3 ... So what are our options?</p>	<p>4 One thing we could do is ...</p>
<p>5 ... perhaps we could ...</p>	<p>6 ... I think we should ...</p>		
<p>7 Okay, well I'll call ...</p>	<p>8 And I'll email ...</p>		
<p>9 Right, and if ... we'll ...</p>	<p>10 ... there are ...</p>		
<p>11 Okay, well let's ...</p>			



## Background information

### The CEO

- regularly hears complaints about AudioTec products.
- suggests arranging a visit to the AudioTec factory.
- will contact someone to arrange a meeting.
- wants to find a new supplier if quality doesn't improve.
- wants to meet the same time next week to discuss progress.

### The production manager

- knows of some serious AudioTec quality issues.
- suggests giving AudioTec a list of production standards.
- thinks that sitting down with AudioTec engineers is a good idea.
- will send AudioTec expected quality standards.
- knows of other quality manufacturers they could use.

## Back to you

You are going to have a conversation with a partner. One of you is a regional supervisor and the other is a shipping manager responsible for a small fleet of delivery trucks.

Look at the notes for your role below and plan your conversation. You can use information here or your own ideas. You may also be able to use ideas from your own experience. Look at the language study section below to get some ideas if you need to.

### Student A      Regional supervisor

You are responsible for delivery of goods to convenience stores and supermarkets in your region. You are concerned about an increased number of complaints from store managers regarding late deliveries. You are meeting with the shipping manager to find out more about the issue, discuss options, and decide on the actions to take. Think about how you will structure the conversation and what suggestions you might be able to make. For example: changing routes, starting earlier, adjusting delivery schedules.

### Student B      Shipping manager

You are responsible for a small fleet of trucks that deliver goods to convenience stores and supermarkets. Your drivers are complaining that multiple construction projects around the city are causing diversions that result in delays in delivery. You are meeting your boss, the regional supervisor, to discuss the issue and decide necessary action. Be prepared to explain the problem and provide ideas that could help solve the problem. For example: checking traffic updates, using a real-time navigation system, opening another depot, adding staff.

## Teacher's Notes

### Describing issues, discussing options, and taking action

#### About you (10 min)

Think about the issues and challenges that you have to deal with in your job. Form pairs and ask each other the questions below. Make notes so you can report back to the class.

6. What are some common issues or problems that you and your colleagues deal with in your jobs?
7. How do you deal with such issues? Do you have meetings to discuss them?
8. What is a recent issue you or your colleagues had to deal with?
9. What was the background to that problem?
10. What action did you or your colleagues take to solve the problem? Was it successful?

- Ask students to think about issues that they and their colleagues have to deal with in their jobs. If they can't think of anything, make suggestions such as:
  - customer complaints, poor sales, problems with suppliers, problems with other staff members, impossible deadlines
- Elicit how the issues might arise and ask students how they can be dealt with: arranging meetings, conference call discussions, adding or changing staff, extending deadlines, etc.
- Have your students discuss the questions in pairs. Ask them to interview each other and make some notes.
- Feedback: call on a few students to say what they found out. There is no need to ask all students.
- Explain that in this lesson they will practice how to describe issues, discuss options for solving issues, and say what action to take.

#### Practice: Describing issues, discussing options, and taking action (15–20 min)

Work in pairs. Use the background information and the speech bubbles below to make a conversation. The CEO of a company that produces electronics keyboards has called a meeting with his production manager. He wants to talk about one of their suppliers, a company called AudioTec.

1	2	3	4
... AudioTec. What are your thoughts?	Well, I'm sorry to say ...	... So what are our options?	One thing we could do is ...
5	6		
... perhaps we could ...	... I think we should ...		
7	8		
Okay, well I'll call ...	And I'll email ...		
9	10		
Right, and if ... we'll ...	... there are ...		
11			
Okay, well let's ...			



## Background information

### The CEO

- regularly hears complaints about AudioTec products.
- suggests arranging a visit to the AudioTec factory.
- will contact someone to arrange a meeting.
- wants to find a new supplier if quality doesn't improve.
- wants to meet the same time next week to discuss progress.

### The production manager

- knows of some serious AudioTec quality issues.
- suggests giving AudioTec a list of production standards.
- thinks that sitting down with AudioTec engineers is a good idea.
- will send AudioTec expected quality standards.
- knows of other quality manufacturers they could use.

- Establish who the people in the picture are: a CEO is talking with a production manager.
- Encourage students to make sentences from the prompts in the speech bubbles. For example, Bubble 2 might be: *Well I'm sorry to say we are having some issues with them. Or Well, the problem is that quality control has become a real issue.*
- Direct them to the **Background information**. Ask a few questions to encourage them to scan the text rather than read the whole thing in one go (e.g., *What's the issue with AudioTec? What are some options for solving the issue? What will they do if they can't solve the AudioTec problem?*)
- Have students form pairs to create a conversation between the CEO and production manager. Make it clear there is not just one correct version.
- Focus on the target phrases used in the three steps: describing an issue, discussing options, and deciding what to do. Clarify meaning and establish when they are used as necessary. See the suggested model dialogue below.
- Have pairs practice their dialogues. Monitor and help with problems regarding key language or pronunciation.
- Feedback. Ask one or two pairs to read out their dialogues. Compare their versions with others. Correct as necessary.

## Model dialogue

CEO	I'm hearing a lot of complaints about <b>AudioTec</b> . <b>What are your thoughts?</b>
Prod. manager	<b>Well, I'm sorry to say</b> there are some serious quality issues.
CEO	Yes, I believe so. <b>So what are our options?</b>
Prod. manager	<b>One thing we could do is</b> give them a list of production standards.
CEO	I agree. And <b>perhaps we could</b> arrange to visit their factory.
Prod. manager	Yes, <b>I think we should</b> sit down with their engineers.
CEO	<b>Okay, well I'll call</b> their CEO and try to organize that.
Prod. manager	<b>And I'll email</b> our production standards to their supervisor.
CEO	<b>Right, and if</b> the quality still doesn't improve, <b>we'll</b> look for a new supplier.
Prod. manager	Yes, <b>there are</b> lots of quality manufacturers we could use.
CEO	<b>Okay, well let's</b> meet the same time next week to discuss progress.

**Back to you (15-20 min)**

You are going to have a conversation with a partner. One of you is a regional supervisor and the other is a shipping manager responsible for a small fleet of delivery trucks.

Look at the notes for your role below and plan your conversation. You can use information here or your own ideas. You may also be able to use ideas from your own experience. Look at the language study section below to get some ideas if you need to.

**Student A      Regional supervisor**

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**Student B      Shipping manager**

You are responsible for a small fleet of trucks that deliver goods to convenience stores and supermarkets. Your drivers are complaining that multiple construction projects around the city are causing diversions that result in delays in delivery. You are meeting your boss, the regional supervisor, to discuss the issue and decide necessary action. Be prepared to explain the problem and provide ideas that could help solve the problem. For example: checking traffic updates, using a real-time navigation system, opening another depot, adding staff.

- Introduce the topic of the role play – solving a truck delivery problem. Elicit the sorts of problems that might cause problems for truck drivers and how these might be resolved.
- Explain that in this role play, one student will play the regional supervisor, who is concerned about customer complaints, and the other is a shipping manager who is responsible for the delivery trucks.
- If possible, allow some time for students to prepare (preferably As together and Bs together). If you feel any student is not very confident, direct them to the language study at the end and elicit or adapt a few sentences that they could use themselves.
- When they are ready, set the scene. Think about where they are (e.g., *in the supervisor's office, in a meeting room at the depot, in the shipping manager's office*), and how to start the conversation (e.g., *Have a seat, X. I'd like to talk about our delivery problems. As you know we've been getting some complaints about later deliveries.*)
- As with all role plays, avoid interrupting or correcting at this point. Make some notes, including some things your students do well, as well as some mistakes to look at during the feedback.

**Feedback**

- After the role play is finished, use your notes to provide feedback to class and individuals.
- Mention things that students did well and then focus on errors (particularly ones relevant to the topic). See if anyone can correct the errors themselves.
- If your students used very simple language or did not make significant errors, elicit or suggest other ways of saying the same things.

**Extra time**

If there is still time, you could swap roles and do the role play again. Alternatively, ask about their week coming up. Remember – the aim of the lesson is to encourage them to speak.

## Language reference

### Describing the issue

***What happened was** they missed the production deadline.*

***The problem is** the sales forecasts aren't accurate.*

***I'm sorry to say that** she doesn't communicate very well.*

### Taking action

***Let's** keep a record of all customer issues.*

***I'll** update the database and email it to you.*

#### Form:

**Let's / I'll** + infinitive without to

### Discussing options

*We need to reduce shipping costs. **What are our options?***

***One thing we could do is** economize on packaging.*

***Perhaps we could** offer a bulk-order discount.*

***What do you think, Sam?***

***I think we should** register our trademark before production starts.*

***If you don't have a receipt, the store won't** replace the product.*

#### Form:

**Perhaps we could / I think we should** + infinitive without to

**If** + subject + present simple, + subject + **will / won't** + infinitive without to