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Language Center

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English Revisited:

Tips, Tidbits & Tutorials

IN THIS ISSUE

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EDITORIAL

Picking up on an article from last year on agile meetings, we have included in this issue a piece on useful vocabulary and phrases for meetings. Quite often in business English, be it on the telephone, in e-mails or during meetings, there are set phrases that are used and should be learned as such. Another area for learners of English to focus on and learn in context is prepositions, the bugbear of most foreign languages. We have highlighted in our grammar article the most common areas where German speakers tend to make mistakes when speaking English. Our third article in this issue of our newsletter explores the origins of the wonderful and iconic Tate Modern museum, which has marked its 25th anniversary this year.

John Nixon

GLOSSARY

be it:
for example
(*sei es* in German)

bugbear:
a cause of annoyance
or anxiety

marked:
celebrated

Style Guidelines for Writing Official University Texts in English

Guidelines

If you are interested in any of the following, please click on the links or **contact us**.

- Regular English Courses
- Workshops for PhD Candidates
- *Schreibwerkstatt / Writing Center*
- *Englischkurse für Uni-Beschäftigte*
- English as a Medium of Instruction (Learn how to teach in English!)
- Science Communication

@ Comments

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Problems with Prepositions

GLOSSARY

to fall into place (v): to happen without problems

a myriad of: countless, a great number

Good Friday: the Friday before Easter (*Karfreitag*)

Prepositions can prove problematic even for highly advanced learners of English. In many cases prepositions are the very last area of language learning to fall into place since they are neither intuitive nor logical. However, mastery of prepositions is worthwhile since it is a strong indication of overall English proficiency. The incorrect usage can on the other hand also change the sentence meaning. As there are a myriad of prepositions which are worthy of discussion, I have restricted this article to those errors frequently causing confusion in English language classes.

Prepositions of Time at/on/in[1]

We use **at** for the time of day:

at 9:30, at half past 2, at lunchtime, at midnight, at sundown, at dawn

However, we use **on** for days and dates:

on Monday/Mondays, on 19 August, on my birthday, on a weekday, on Good Friday

In is reserved for longer periods:

in November, in the summer holidays

The preposition **at** is reserved, meanwhile, for certain set expressions.

I don't see too well at night.
Are we going out at the weekend?

Note that in American English, on the weekend is more common.

By vs Until[2]

These two prepositions are often confused due to their similarity in meaning.

We use **until** when we say that something will continue up to a particular time.

We have to be at the office until 5 p.m. (We can't leave before that time)

She learned French until the age of 16. (At 16 she stopped learning French.)

We use **by** to say that something will happen before a certain time or at that time at the latest. **By** is the preposition of choice for deadlines.

We have to be at the office by 2 p.m (because at 2 p.m. the meeting starts)

Since vs for

In essence we use **for** for a period of time but **since** for a point in time.

I have been living here since 1988 (point in time).
I have been living here for 37 years (time period).

In vs Into

The confusion between **in** and **into** is another common challenge. In German, for instance, **in** can imply both static and dynamic movement depending on the case (dative or accusative), but in English, **in** denotes location while **into** denotes movement. Thus, German speakers may incorrectly say, "He goes in the room," when the accurate English sentence is "He goes into the room." This error stems from German's flexible case system, where *Er geht in das Zimmer* uses the accusative case to imply motion but still uses the preposition *in*.

To

Similarly, during presentations native German students often make the following mistake.

I will present you my arguments. (incorrect)
I will present my arguments **to you**. (correct)

Whilst changing the subject to talk about a summary, German speakers often say "to the summary" instead of "regarding the summary" or "in terms of the summary".

Verbs Plus Prepositions

Errors also occur with expressions like "interested in", where German uses *interessiert an*. A common error is "I'm interested on science" instead of the correct "I'm interested in science." Although the prepositions ***an*** and **in** are sometimes the direct translations of each other, their specific uses diverge significantly, especially in idiomatic expressions.

Another common mistake is the omission of the preposition **for** when using the verb "to compensate" with an object.

We must compensate the lack of efficiency. (incorrect)
We must compensate **for** the lack of efficiency. (correct)

How can prepositions best be learned?
In summary, as with most language acquisition, prepositions should not be learned in isolation but in context and preferably with set examples.

Cheryl Stenzel

References

[1] Adapted from Murphy, Raymond.2003. English Grammar In Use.

[2] Adapted from Hewings, Martin.2003. Advanced Grammar in Use: A Self-Study Reference and Practice Book for Advanced Learners of English

Tate Modern Turned Twenty-Five

GLOSSARY

hard-up:
poor, impoverished

wharves (pl):
docks

dilapidated:
run-down, in bad condition

defunct:
no longer operating

mayor:
the head official in a city government

beacon:
bright light that serves as a warning or celebration; (here) an inspiring example

to lure (v):
to attract, tempt

hulk:
main part, hull

100 m:
There is a space between the figure and "m" to distinguish it from "million, for example 100m = 100 million

to slump:
to fall, decline dramatically or over a longer period of time

If you had taken a walk along the Thames in the 1980s, Bankside Power Station and the surrounding area of Southwark would not have invited you to stay. This was a bleak part of London, which evoked the times of Dickens and his hard-up characters. Bankside used to be a major industrial district full of extensive riverside warehouses and wharves linked to the Port of London further down the river. Alas, gone were the days when it was the busiest harbour in the world.

The year 2000 was to turn this dilapidated neighbourhood and the defunct power station into one of the most important cultural hubs of the UK. Though not short of world-class museums, London could not show off any outstanding modern art gallery at the turn of the century, as Paris could with the Centre Pompidou. Mayor Ken Livingstone was determined to change that and he had big plans for South London and the Millennium celebrations: Bankside Power Station was to become Tate Modern[1]; the Millennium Bridge was to connect the new museum with St. Paul's Cathedral and the City; the Millennium Dome[2] would be another beacon for the redevelopment of industrial London; and the London Eye was to lure even more visitors to the southern shores of the Thames.

In 1995 the prestigious architectural firm Herzog & Meuron won the international competition for the conversion of Bankside Power Station. The giant brick hulk of the plant, the impressive Turbine Hall, became the heart of the museum and the building's highest element, the central chimney of almost 100 m, its iconic landmark. A perfect synthesis of industrial heritage and modern museum architecture was achieved. On 11 May 2000 the Queen alongside a myriad of notables such as Tracey Emin and Alexander McQueen opened Tate Modern's doors to the public, and the new contemporary art museum took off with a landmark installation: Louise Bourgeois's giant bronze spider, *Maman*, welcomed the over 5m visitors who flooded to the museum in its inaugural year. It also set the tone for many more outstanding Turbine Hall installations and performances like Olafur Eliasson's setting sun of *The Weather Project* in 2003; Anish Kapoor's *Marsyas* of the same year, an enormous red trumpet, created with a single PVC membrane, making full use of the hall's complete length; or Kraftwerk's eight live gigs in 2013. Ai Weiwei's one hundred million porcelain *Sunflower Seeds*, hand-made by uncountable skilled artisans in China, were also displayed here in 2010—an unmistakably political statement by the artist.

In 2014 *The Cut-Outs* exhibition of Henri Matisse's late works broke Tate records with well over 500,000 exhibition visitors. It is still the most popular exhibition to date. Four years later Tate Modern gave insight into Picasso's "year of wonders", 1932, in the spectacular *The EY Exhibition*, which explored the artist's "love, fame and tragedy"[3].

After twenty-five years Tate Modern still stands out because of its unique blend of a fine contemporary art collection and gigantic multimedia installations in the Turbine Hall, where artists have the space to think big. Sadly, Covid and Brexit made the museum's visitor numbers slump by over a quarter and they never climbed back to the 5.8m annual record of 2016. In particular young Europeans seem to be staying away as Britain's exit from the EU has dramatically lessoned their job chances and academic opportunities in the country.

This autumn, however, should definitely make us travel to London and boost the museum's figures as in September Tate Modern opened another outstanding Picasso exhibition, *Theatre Picasso*, where contemporary artists have transformed the museum space into a theatre for 45 of the master's works. If you enjoy river cruises, catch a Thames Clippers boat at Millbank Pier from Tate Britain[4] first. There is no better way to explore maritime London. Then take a ride to Tate Modern, the museum which the New York Times has called the "museum of the century"[5].

Footnotes:

[1]There is no definite article with the museum's name, something the Queen didn't know when she referred to *the* Tate Modern in her opening speech. (Retrieved 26 August 2025 from https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/mar/23/tate-modern-at-25-it-utterly-changed-the-face-of-london)

[2]This is now The O2 arena.

[3] Retrieved 26 August 2025 from https://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/history-tate/history-of-tate-modern

[4]Tate Britain was the new name for The Tate Gallery when its collection of modern art was moved to the new Tate Modern.

[5]Retrieved 26 August 2025 from https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/08/arts/design/tate-modern-25-anniversary.html

Sylvia Grade

Running Effective Meetings: Useful Vocabulary and Phrases

GLOSSARY

agile methods:
management approach that breaks processes down and promotes collaboration

aligned (here):
everyone understands the same thing

rapport:
close or good relationship with people

reiterated:
mentioned again

docket:
a list of trials at a court, but can be used to refer to a list of items

the floor (here):
the right to speak

to adjourn a meeting:
to end a meeting, which will resume at a different date/time

Further Reading
https://www.fluentu.com/blog/english/english-for-business-meetings/
https://preply.com/en/blog/impressive-words-for-meetings/
https://www.usingenglish.com/articles/100-most-useful-phrases-for-business-meetings.html

In our newsletter issue from a year ago (No. 2/2024), we explored the global aspect of meetings and discussed how agile methods can help create an environment where meetings run smoothly and efficiently. In this article, we revisit the topic by introducing specific vocabulary and phrases that can be used when running meetings.

Setting the Agenda

The first step in running a successful meeting is to set the agenda and ensure that all participants are aligned on the topics to be discussed. Once attendees have gathered and settled in, a short introductory round may take place—as discussed in our previous article—to help establish rapport among participants.

When it is time to officially open the meeting, the moderator might say:

> I'd like to call this meeting to order. (formal)
>
> Thank you for joining us today. (somewhat formal)
>
> Shall we get started? (less formal)
>
> I'm delighted to welcome everyone. (neutral)

Once the meeting is open, the agenda can be established or reiterated with phrases such as:

> We will begin by reviewing the agenda for today's meeting. (formal)
>
> The (primary/main) topic/subject/aim/objective of this meeting is…. (neutral to formal)
>
> Key items on our docket include…. (buzzword-heavy)

Clear framing at the start not only sets the tone but also ensures efficiency and focus throughout the discussion.

Offering Opinions

The moderator may share updates and suggestions while leaving space for alternative perspectives. Useful phrases include:

> From my experience, … has proven effective in similar situations. (formal)
>
> I'd like to weigh in on this matter. (informal)

Inviting Others to Contribute

> I would like to hear the different perspectives here. (formal)
>
> The floor is open for your thoughts. (neutral)
>
> Feel free to share your insights. (informal)

Agreeing and Disagreeing

In many meetings, consensus is not immediate, making it important to agree or disagree respectfully.

Agreeing

> I concur with … on this issue. (formal)
>
> That's a valid point, and I agree. (neutral)

Disagreeing

> I have some reservations about that suggestion. (formal)
>
> I hold a different opinion on this issue. (formal)
>
> I respectfully disagree with that idea. (neutral)
>
> Perhaps we should reevaluate this. (neutral)

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of keeping a meeting on track is managing ideas and discussions which are not relevant to the topic. The moderator's main role is to steer the conversation to the issues at hand.

> I suggest we refocus on the main issue. (formal)
>
> To return to our main/ primary topic. (neutral)
>
> Let's take that topic offline. (informal)
>
> Let's put that in the parking lot for now. (informal)

Managing a meeting effectively requires balance: setting a clear agenda, encouraging participation, handling disagreement professionally, and maintaining focus. The phrases above can help moderators and participants alike navigate these challenges.

For further terminology and expressions, please see the references on the side. We have only scratched the surface—but for now, this meeting must adjourn.

A heartfelt thank-you to Megan Cardenas, whose invaluable experience and insights from countless meetings have helped shape this article. Your wisdom and generosity are truly appreciated!

Gretchen Chojnacki-Herbers