

## ***LEARNING BUSINESS ENGLISH ON THE NET***

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Site: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/business/>

Author: The BBC producers and experts

Language: English

Email: at the *FAQ* section of the site

### **Overview**

The BBC World Service Learning English Site comprises a range of possibilities for teachers, students or even businessmen in search of practical development within their areas of expertise. Users can listen to BBC World Service, find information on working abroad, or on how to improve work skills, and can even keep up to date with everyday English, thanks to the Quizzes and Lingo sections.

### **Contents**

Within the site, individual sections provide all types of different information relating to many aspects of Business English. This information is beneficial not only for teachers but also the students of BE. Because each sub section covers a sufficient amount of material, and because the site is edited daily by professionals working at the BBC, it is recommended for anyone wishing to broaden their horizons for both business and everyday English.

The educational value of the site is obvious. Being an English teacher myself, I would feel confident in referring to any section of the site. For myself, just listening to the BBC World Service on topics such as world news, international business, or even movie reviews can be very interesting. But also, I would consider using this site in a classroom with Internet access. The

students can take the quizzes, learn some "lingo", or just ask the experts any question related to their learning.

In the "*Working Abroad*" section, users are introduced to eight individuals who present details of their lives and experiences with moving from their home lands to work in other countries. Whether it is from Buenos Aires to Germany, from Germany to France, or from Poland to England, each person's experience is recorded in six different units, dealing with issues such as cultural differences, language difficulties and relationship development.

This section is organized by a simple step-by-step procedure. Users may either listen to or read the interviews of each of the eight individuals presented. It is even possible to read the text while listening to the interview. The topics include verbal communication, time, status, and body language. In addition to these units/lessons, there are additional vocabulary pages, exercises and quizzes helping develop and test the user's ability in English.

Another section offered on the BBC Business English site is "*Quizzes*". Here, a user can further polish English skills when taking communication, grammar and vocabulary exercises. The activities are subcategorized into a set of topics. In each subcategory there is a list of informal phrases and their standard English definitions, as well as a list of abbreviations commonly used in advertisements.

The section "*Teachers*" is made for teachers and by teachers. Articles are posted with useful tips on teaching techniques and practical activities for the classroom. Thanks to this page, teachers have the opportunity to contact and consult others to alleviate any doubts concerning their teaching styles. Teaching-related questions will definitely find appropriate answers. Information on this site includes a new radio series for teachers teaching English and highlights how they can use the internet for themselves and in their classrooms. Further teaching suggestions are also supplied at [www.teachingenglish.org.uk](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk).

Another section of the BBC Business English Site is *FAQ*, or frequently asked questions. The questions answered are the most common ones asked by students. Teachers may find some of the answers provided very handy. Perhaps the most frequently ask question by students appears to be: '*Can you help me learn English?*'. Rather than answering with a simple yes or no, the reply given is of a different kind. The answer hints that the user's ability to learn English relies on his/her own willingness to work through the courses and exams on the site. It is also indicated in the *FAQ* section that all the quizzes, articles and features remain permanently on the site. As the site is updated, older courses are still available in the archive area. *FAQ* also informs us about the possibility of ordering Learning English Email Newsletter.

When a user clicks on the "*Contact us*" section, he/she can ask questions or make general comments concerning the material on the site, as well as point out technical difficulties or broken links.

On the right hand side of the home page for Business English on the BBC site, there are links provided under the heading "*More Learning English*". These links take the user to other areas of the BBC site which also provide opportunities for learning English. These links include: "*Virtual masterclass*", "*Example Lessons*", "*Business Words in the News*" and "*Lingo*". The "*Masterclass*" develops further into the categories:

- "*Learning Tips*" - equipped with information on how to learn provided by ELT trainer Gareth Rees,
- "*Business Hints*" - how to communicate successfully at work - the advisor being David Evans,
- "*Education in UK*" - a British Council expert on education - Nick Butler - suggests how to apply, choose subjects, find accommodation, etc.,
- "*Grammar Surgery*" - Martin Parrott is willing to answer some of the most common queries,
- "*English in the News*" - a BBC correspondent recommends the most typical language of the news or helps us choose from the selection of the topics for a bulletin.

Other links include: "*Welcome to London*" (multimedia lessons on life in London, with the current lesson on the topic of shopping); "*Business Words in the News*" (archives of business words used in the news stories) and "*Lingo*", which deals with the colloquial language and provides lists of business words in their less formal version together with standard English explanations.

## **Technical Issues**

The vast majority of the audio streamed from this site is in Real Player format. Radio programmes, however, offer streaming via Real Player or an MP3 player. Links are provided to sites where free versions of these programmes can be downloaded, enabling the user to listen to the audio streams in a very, uncomplicated manner.

## **Interactivity**

On the BBC Business English site, users are provided with many different ways to interact. They can take the quizzes, ask questions concerning learning or teaching, do the listening exercises or give their opinions about the site itself. The visitors to this site can enhance their knowledge about Business English, if they are willing to go through the various sections and learn from the professional advice of experts available.

## **Overall Issues**

The site is copyrighted and fully paid for by the BBC alone, freeing it from distracting sponsors' windows or advertising banners. Information is updated frequently, so that repeat users can often come across new materials. The overall design seems to be given as much consideration as the content on this site, making it very user-friendly. There are no unnecessarily aggressive colours to catch the user's eye to take concentration away from the courses provided. All Business English visitors will appreciate the variety and the potential this site gives, while the teachers will clearly appreciate true pedagogical value of this site.