

Business Advanced

Unit 6: Progress



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Unit 6: Grammar reference and Homework



Working with Words

1. Complete this text with the verbs from the list.

get (x2) - try - hit - think - look - fall - figure - bounce - run

Six tips for creative thinking

1. Creativity often needs peace, so _____ out ways of getting some quiet time for yourself. Or have an 'away day' with colleagues to _____ around ideas together.
2. To come up with new and unusual ideas, you need to _____ outside the box. Be open to new perspectives. _____ beyond your beliefs and usual ways of doing things.
3. Writing down your ideas and thoughts will help the creative process. The more ideas you have, the greater _____ the chance you might _____ on a few good ones.
4. Take risks! Expect that some ideas will fail or _____ by the wayside. See them as experiments rather than mistakes, then _____ back on track and come up with new solutions.
5. Be curious. Ask a lot of questions. Challenge existing methods and _____ out different things.
6. The end result of a creative idea needs a lot of hard work. So don't give up when you _____ into problems or when projects fail to _____ off the ground.

2. Match (1-8) to (a-h).

1. ... otherwise they can significantly cut into ____
 2. Companies often have to undergo radical ____
 3. From this point of view, employees are the most important part of a business, an idea which is causing quite ____
 4. Good managers know how far to tolerate ____
 5. In fact, staff retention is now seen as the key driver to boosting ____
 6. In the end, both innovation and control are needed to successfully outperform ____
 7. Nevertheless, strict measures are needed to control ____
 8. To serve customers better, the company is shifting ____
- a. costs and prevent overheads from spiralling out of control ...
 - b. the production emphasis from quantity to quality.
 - c. the competition and maintain a competitive edge.
 - d. mistakes and see them as part of the innovation process - they also budget for learning costs.
 - e. a stir among traditional, number-crunching managers.
 - f. the bottom line and reduce profits.
 - g. earnings in service-orientated companies where employees need the freedom to choose how they serve.
 - h. change in order to meet the challenges of the digital age.

Answer key

1.

1. get /bounce - 2. think / look - 3. figure / hit - 4. fall / get - 5. try - 6. run / take

2.

1.f - 2.h - 3.c - 4.e - 5.g - 6.b - 7.a - 8.d

1. Put these words in the correct order to make brainstorming expressions.

1. work / would / not / how / I'm / sure / how / but / practice / this / in / about ... ?
_____?
2. I / have / be / possible / would / it / thought / would / to...
_____.
3. you / work / think / what / that / makes / would?
_____?
4. could / about / we / it / thinking / even ...
_____.
5. you / would / like / on / expand / to / that?
_____?
6. that / just / in / that / I / I / well / thought / way ...
_____.
7. certainly / thinking / it's / about / worth
_____.
8. we / shouldn't / be / more / thinking / about ... ?
_____?
9. the / lines / thinking / I / was / along / of ...
_____.

2. Complete this problem-solving brainstorm with appropriate expressions using the words in brackets.

- A. So we've got to make significant changes or face receivership.
- B. 1. _____ (consider) poaching market share?
- C. I don't see how that helps. Increasing market share doesn't necessarily help the bottom line.
- B. So, where does that leave us?
- C. 2. _____ (supposing) ignore market share and our competition...
- B. 3. _____ (sorry / saying) that we don't bother selling anything?
- C. Not exactly. I mean, let's look at ourselves rather than outside.
- A. Oh, I see, 4. _____ (thinking) that we should be trying to reduce our costs rather than increase our revenues. Am I right?
- C. Well, for example, we could look at which of our customers actually make us money.
- B. Erm... all of them?
- A. Well, that's probably not quite true. But 5. _____ (bad idea). We could even drop those clients who don't make us enough of a margin!
- B. 6. _____ (concerned) how that would look.
- C. I think it would be fine. By focusing on those clients who generate the most profits and selling to similar clients, we can increase revenues and profits without expanding the infrastructure or fixed costs. 7. _____ (consider)...

Answer Key

1.

1. I'm not sure how this would work in practice, but...

2. I thought it would be possible to...

3. What would you think makes that work?

4. Could we even think about it?

5. Would you like to expand on that?

6. I just thought that way in that I... well...

7. It's certainly worth thinking about.

8. Shouldn't we be thinking more about...?

9. I was thinking along the lines of...
2.

1. consider - 2. supposing - 3. saying - 4. thinking - 5. not a - 6. concerned - 8. consider

Adverbs

Adverbs of degree

1. Adverbs of degree can add emphasis to most adjectives and adverbs. These include: *very, really, extremely, so, just so, very ... indeed.*

- *It was **just so** unreasonable of them to overlook our new proposal.*

2. Some adjectives and adverbs are **ungradable**: they express extreme qualities such as perfection. With these words, we use adverbs such as *completely, absolutely, utterly* (not *very*).

- *It's **absolutely** essential that you double-check the report.*
(~~Not: It's very essential that you double-check the report.~~)

3. Many adverbs of degree are used to qualify the **gradable** adjective or adverb they precede (e.g., *quite, rather, pretty, fairly, a bit, a little*, and, in American English, *somewhat*).

- *The results were **quite** satisfactory.*
- *He reacted **rather** harshly, suggesting a lack of preparation.*

4. We can use most of these words with **adjective + noun** combinations. Note the word order with *quite*.

- *It was **a rather complex** issue.*
- *It was **quite a successful** event.* (~~Not: It was a quite successful event.~~)

5. We can also use an **adverb of degree with not** (e.g., *not very, not really, not absolutely*).

We can also say *not at all*.

- *I'm **not very optimistic** about the project's timeline.*
*She's **not at all** worried about the meeting tomorrow.*

6. *Not really* can mean both *not very* and *not, in fact*.

- *I'm **not really** upset about missing the presentation, just a little disappointed.*
(*Not upset, in fact*)
- *He **wasn't really** annoyed, but he sounded slightly impatient.*
(*A bit annoyed*)

7. When the adverb comes before *not*, the meaning is different.

- *I'm **not absolutely** convinced.* (*less than 100% convinced*)
- *I'm **absolutely** not convinced.* (*0% convinced*)

It isn't possible to put *very* before *not*.

- *I'm not **very** pleased with the outcome.*

(~~Not: I'm very not pleased with the outcome.~~)

Focus adverbs

1. The *adverbs even, just, and only* focus our attention on one part of a sentence. They usually come before a main verb, but after an auxiliary or *be*.

- *The report **only** highlighted the main points.* (not the minor details)
- *I **just** don't understand why they delayed the delivery.* (I really don't understand.)
- *He couldn't **even** recall the meeting time.* (a criticism of him)

2. If these adverbs refer to a noun phrase, they come before it, and the meaning is changed.

- ***Only** Maria submitted her work on time.* (no one else did)
- *I don't understand why they didn't complete **just** the initial phase.* (they managed to complete all the other phases)
- *I don't understand why **just** the marketing team didn't attend.* (all the other teams attended)
- ***Even** Alex forgot to lock the office.* (Alex is expected to be responsible, so forgetting is surprising.)

Functional adverbials

Adverbials are often used to refine the message conveyed by the sentence, without altering the meaning of any individual words. For example, they can be used:

1. To soften negative reactions

- ***Unfortunately**, we won't be able to approve your request.*
(*Also: regrettably, sadly*)

2. To provide a link to what someone else has said

- ***Of course**, you make a valid point, but I'd still like to explore other options.*
(*Also: no doubt, obviously, evidently, certainly*)

3. To move the subject of conversation/writing onto a different area

- 1. ***Frankly**, I think we should focus on more pressing matters.*
(*Also: to be honest, honestly, actually*)

Language at Work

1. Complete this email with words from the list. Sometimes more than one answer is possible.

quite - rather - little - all - absolutely - just - actually - even - only

Trebuchet MS

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To:

Subject:

From:

Hi Lenny,

I'm writing from Tokyo, where I'm at **1.** _____ a good conference on technologies in business. It's all been **2.** _____ interesting so far, although I'm getting a **3.** _____ tired - I've **4.** _____ been having about four hours' sleep a night, because I keep bumping into old colleagues and going for meals and drinks with them. Talking of meals, the food here is **5.** _____ wonderful. **6.** _____ the most basic things are **7.** _____ spectacular. And the wine's not **8.** _____ that bad either. I've **9.** _____ got back from lunch, **10.** _____. Anyway, I needed to ask you...

2. Complete this conversation with a suitable adverb/ adverbial phrase.

- A. That was **1.** _____ a useful meeting, wasn't it?

B. Yes, although I'm not **2.** _____ convinced about the brainstorming.
- A. To be **3.** _____, I'm not either. I found that part of the day **4.** _____ tiresome, **5.** _____

B. Yes. Nick couldn't **6.** _____ keep his eyes open!
- C. Well yes, his attention did seem to wander, but **7.** _____ towards the end - for most of the meeting he was concentrating.

D. Of **8.** _____, and even if we didn't get a clear outcome, it was useful **9.** _____ to be thinking about all those issues together.
- A. Yes, I don't **10.** _____ think it would have been possible to reach any firm decisions today, do you?

B. No, I suppose not. And I have to say, it was **11.** _____ the most productive meeting of that kind we've had on this project so far.

Answer Key

1. Suggested answers:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. at quite | 6. even |
| 2. actually | 7. absolutely |
| 3. rather | 8. actually |
| 4. just | 9. just |
| 5. absolutely | 10. only |

2. Suggested answers:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. quite | 7. absolutely |
| 2. actually | 8. quite |
| 3. rather | 9. actually |
| 4. just | 10. quite |
| 5. absolutely | 11. absolutely |
| 6. even | |

Key Expressions

Putting forward an idea

- *Couldn't we consider ... ?*
- *I would have thought it would be possible to ...*
- *I'm not sure how this would work in practice, but how about ... ?*
- *Supposing we were to ...*

Asking for clarification

- *It's not clear to me what you mean by ...*
- *Oh I see, so you're thinking ...*
- *Am I right?*
- *What did you have in mind?*

Clarifying the idea

- *Well, for example, ...*
- *I was thinking along the lines of ...*

Building on the idea

- *Thinking about it, we could even ...*
- *And there's nothing stopping us from ... is there?*

Evaluating the idea

- *I'm concerned about how ...*
- *I can't help wondering ...*
- *I would certainly need to know...*
- *Before ...*
- *It's certainly worth thinking about.*
- *We should at least consider it.*
- *In terms of ... I think it has potential.*
- *That's not such a bad idea.*