

Objectives

- Talk about breakdowns and faults
- Use relative pronouns
- Check someone understands
- Discuss and solve problems



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1. Match the companies with the situations.

1. This company entered the Australian market, hoping to replicate its success. However, its products were considered too expensive compared to local alternatives, and the company's rapid expansion strategy was not sustainable. Facing financial losses, the company significantly reduced its presence in Australia.

2. In an effort to tap into the Chinese market, this company launched a large-scale store focusing on its iconic product. However, the product did not resonate with the local culture that stresses skill building and education. Within two years the store was closed.

3. This company attempted to expand its business in Germany, but faced cultural challenges. German customers found American-style customer service, like greeters and bagging groceries, intrusive. Ultimately, these issues led to the company withdrawing from the German market.





Audio
13.1

2. Listen to the audio and complete the table.

	Problem	Action
1. Andrew, a product manager at a tech company		
2. Maria, the CEO of a toy company		
3. Jose, the owner of a small restaurant		

3. Choose a noun from the list below that can go with all three verbs in each group (1-4).

complaint

failure

injury

mistake

1. admit / end in / avoid
2. realize / make / acknowledge
3. deal with / investigate / file
4. suffer / treat / recover from

4. Use some of the phrases from exercise 3 to describe the problem Walmart faced in Germany.



Walmart attempted to expand its business in Germany, but faced cultural challenges. German customers found American-style customer service, like greeters and bagging groceries, intrusive. Ultimately, these issues led to the company withdrawing from the German market.

E.g. Walmart made a mistake by imposing American-style customer service on German customers.

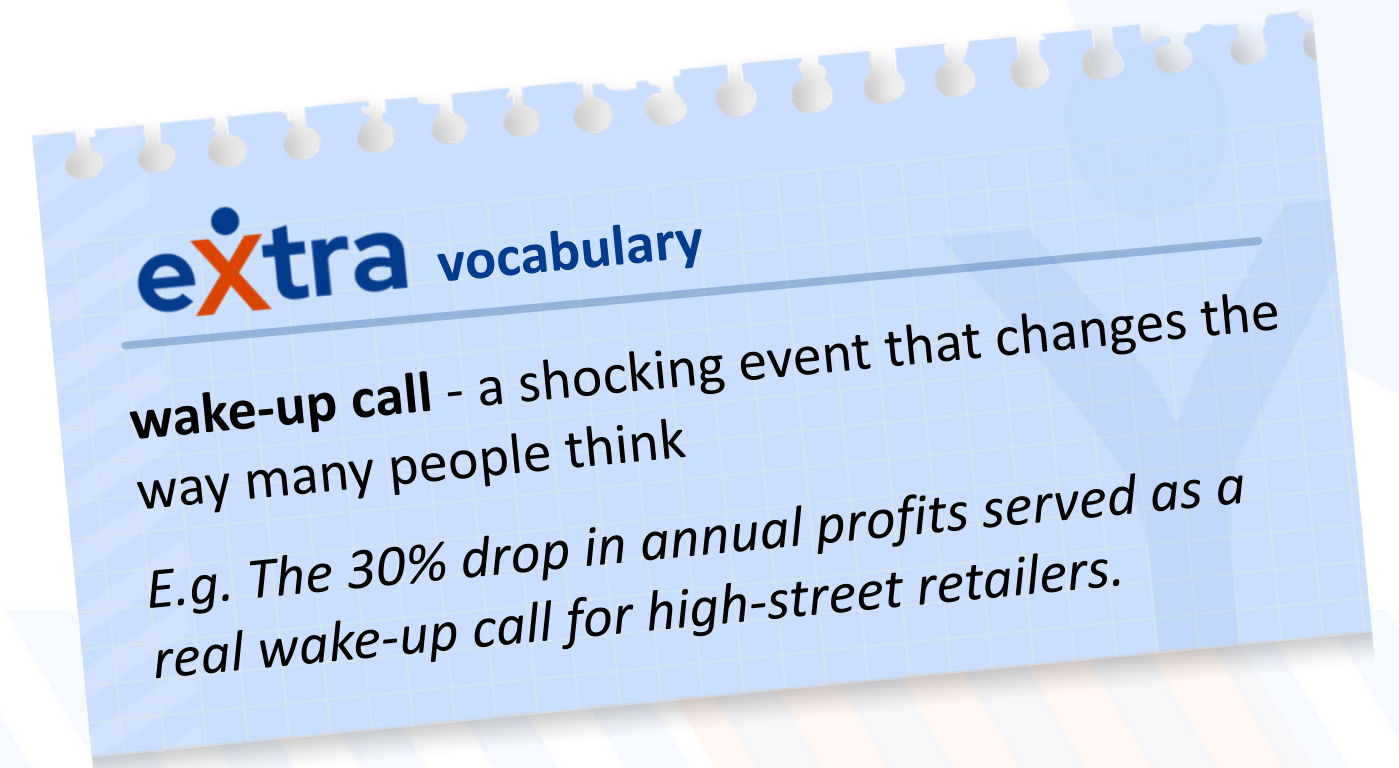
5. Match the words (1-8) with the sentences that best illustrate their meaning (a-h).

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. fault | a. The website became inaccessible for several hours last night. |
| 2. defect | b. The car had a problem with its brakes, making it unsafe to drive. |
| 3. go down | c. The company asked customers to return the toy due to safety concerns. |
| 4. refund | d. They returned my money because the clothes I bought were too small. |
| 5. recall | e. The storm caused harm to many houses in the area. |
| 6. misunderstanding | f. It was his responsibility that the project did not succeed. |
| 7. resolve | g. There was a confusion about the meeting time, so we arrived an hour late. |
| 8. damage | h. They found a solution to the disagreement and shook hands. |

6. Complete the questions with the words (1-8) from exercise 5.

- Have you ever accidentally _____ something valuable or expensive?
- How do you _____ conflicts?
- Have you ever had a _____ that was difficult to resolve?
- What do you usually do when the internet _____?
- Is it easy for you to admit your _____?
- Have you ever bought something that had a _____?
- Have you ever asked for a _____?

7. Answer the questions in exercise 6.



1. Look at the map of the English language. Which accents do you understand easily? Which accents are difficult to understand?



2. Read the text and answer the questions.

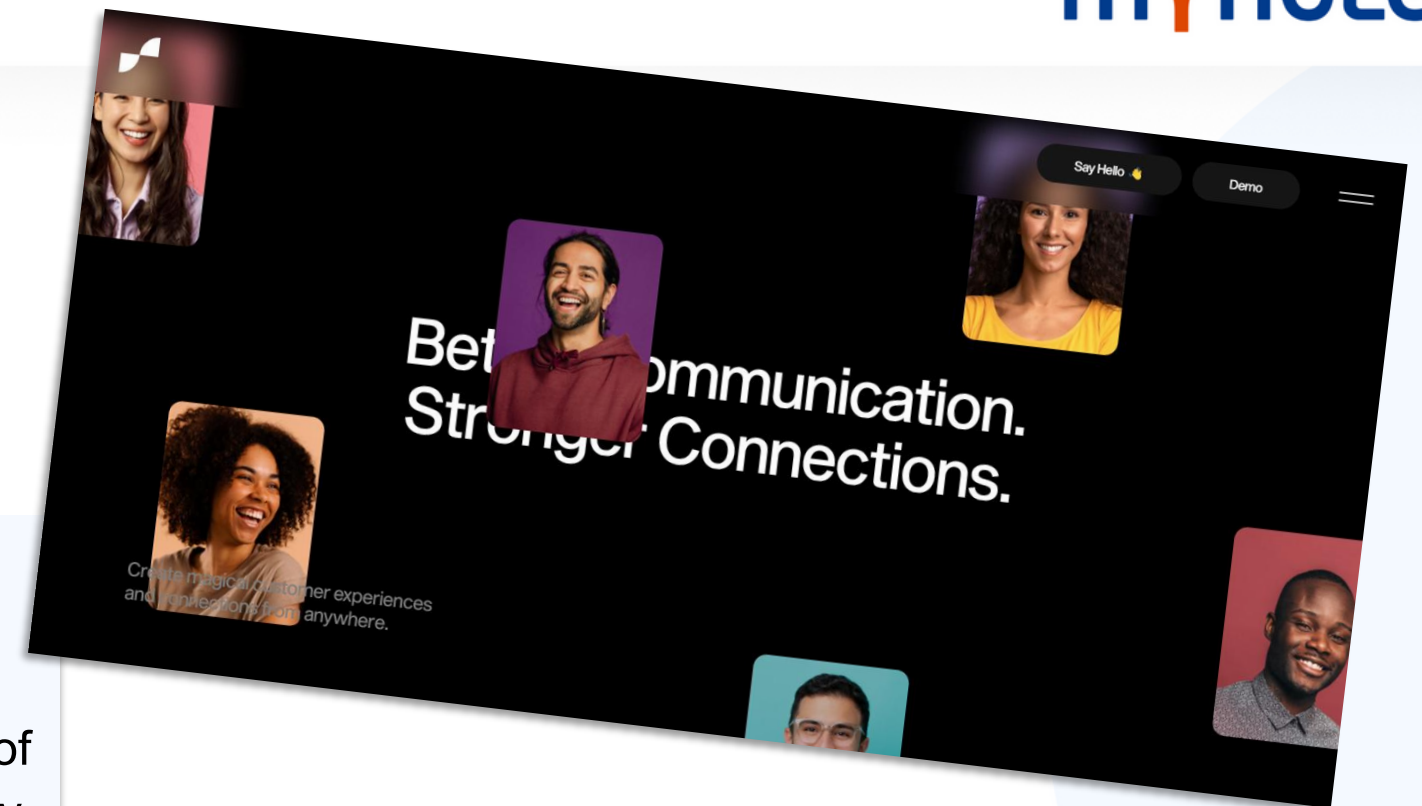
1. What is the purpose of the accent translation technology?
2. How do call center workers benefit from using it?
3. What concerns have been raised about this technology?

In Western countries, large companies often outsource customer service to Asia. This can lead to conflicts, like rude behavior from customers towards call center workers with different accents. One example is Sharath Keshava Narayana who **faced up to** discrimination while working at a call center in 2003. He was fired because of his accent. This experience partly motivated the creation of Sanas, a technology designed to modify non-American accents to sound more American. Currently, about 1,000 people, mostly in Indian and Philippine call centers, use this technology daily and they say they can't **do without it**.

*'Imagine the agents in India and the Philippines that speak English but they speak with an accent. We translate their accents in real time to the northern American customer. So, what that solves for is a number of things. There's a lot of agents that don't get hired in today's call center world not because they don't understand English or comprehend English but they have too thick of an accent that they would like to **get rid of**. Additionally, a lot of the U.S customers struggle with is understanding. So sometimes they might hang up the phone hoping that they call back and talk to somebody else', says Marty Sarum, the president of Sanas.*

Sanas is currently trying to **get around** serious claims of racism and discrimination. Critics **call for** a focus on cultural diversity and see this as "digital whitening," which might reinforce racial biases rather than try to help people learn that it does not matter if somebody has an accent. Responding to these claims, Narayana stated they would **see about** expanding the technology to include more accents.

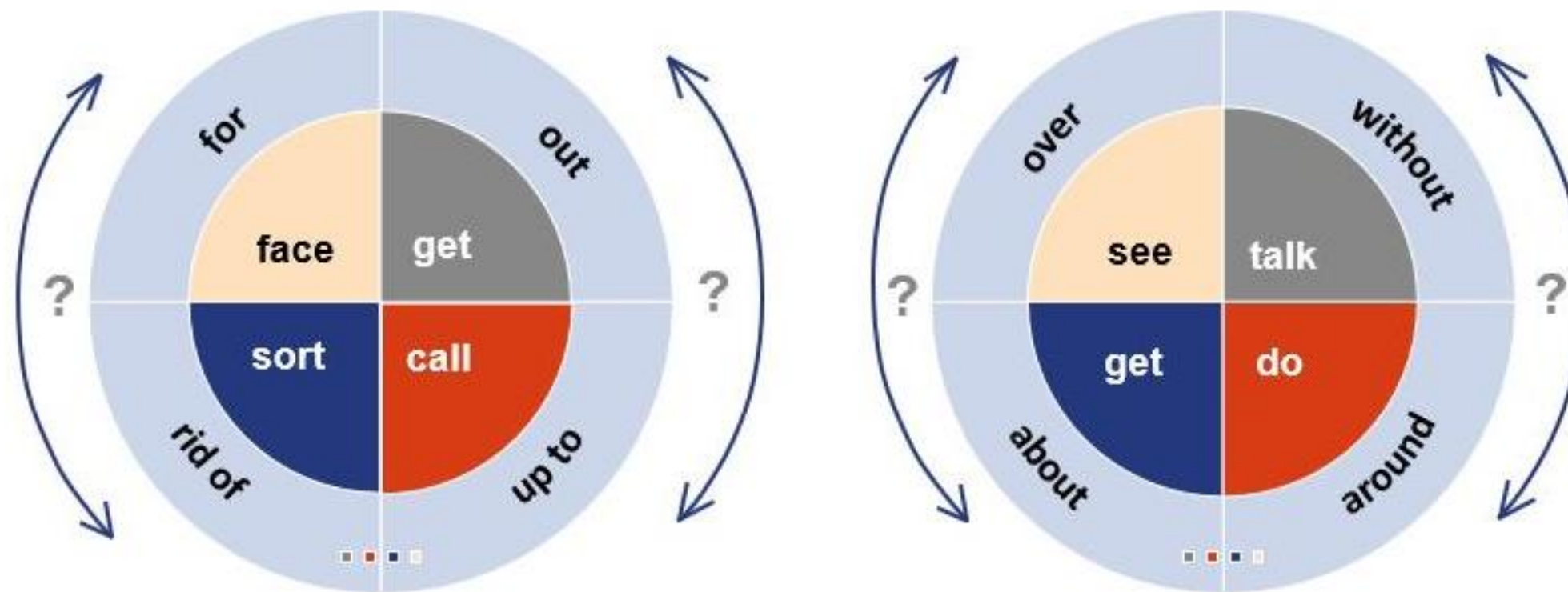
Despite these concerns, Sanas' founders **talked over** the issues, focusing on their commitment to improving global communication. They aim to **sort out** misunderstandings and emphasize that their goal is to facilitate communication, not erase cultural identities.



3. Find the phrasal verbs in the text that mean the same as:

1. to accept and deal with something difficult
2. to consider or arrange for something to be done
3. to ask for something
4. to avoid a problem
5. to discuss something thoroughly
6. to resolve issues
7. to remove something
8. to manage without having something

4. How do you need to move each dial to make phrasal verbs using all the words?



5. Complete the sentences with the phrasal verbs from exercise 4. The words in brackets will help you understand the meaning.

1. We have to _____ the fact that the company may not meet its annual targets this year. **(accept)**
2. We need to _____ scheduling a meeting with the investors. **(arrange)**
3. The situation _____ immediate action to improve sales. **(require)**
4. The CEO is looking for ways to _____ the funding problem. **(avoid)**
5. We should _____ the contract details before signing. **(discuss)**
6. The HR department will _____ the issue with the payroll errors. **(solve)**
7. The company decided to _____ the outdated equipment to make room for new technology. **(remove)**
8. During the budget cuts, we may have to _____ some of our usual perks. **(manage without)**

6. Read the problems below and suggest solutions.

In what ways, big or small, could your company save money?

The owner of a small bookstore in Seattle wishes to increase her store's visibility but lacks the budget for a marketing campaign.

A fitness instructor has space to offer more classes but can't find any qualified trainers to hire.

A freelance graphic designer receives many requests for his work but finds it difficult to manage his time effectively between projects.

extra vocabulary

stumbling block - something that prevents action or agreement.

E.g. Lack of funds is a major stumbling block to the project.

1. Match the expressions (1-6) with their definitions (a-f).

1. A weak link

3. A crisis

5. Can of worms

2. A troubleshooter

4. A whistleblower

6. Achilles' heel

a) _____ is a time **when** a very serious problem needs to be dealt with right away.

b) _____ is the part **where** something is most likely to break or fail, causing trouble for everything else.

c) _____ is someone **whose** job is to find and fix problems that others can't solve.

d) _____ is a weakness **that** can cause someone or something strong to fail.

e) _____ is a situation **which** creates more problems **when** you try to solve it.

f) _____ is a person who tells people about bad or illegal things happening at work.

2. Complete the *Language point* explanations with the relative pronouns and examples from exercise 1.

LANGUAGE POINT

We introduce a relative clause with a relative pronoun and use:

1. _____ or _____ for things E.g. _____
2. _____ or _____ for people E.g. _____
3. _____ for possessions (people, countries, towns and companies). E.g. _____
4. _____ for time. E.g. _____
5. _____ for place. E.g. _____

3. Combine the sentences using relative clauses.

1. The manager is on vacation. He is the person who can fix this issue.
E.g. The manager, who can fix this issue, is on vacation.
2. There's an error in the financial report. It must be corrected immediately.
3. This is the meeting room. Our server broke down here.
4. She has a plan to improve efficiency. It can save us a lot of money.
5. He owns the software company. Its products are used worldwide.
6. We need to see about the broken printer. It is causing delays in document processing.
7. I will sort out the issues with the supplier. They are responsible for the late shipment.
8. Over there is a site. They are going to build a new factory.

extra grammar

In formal English it's possible to use *whom* instead of *who* where *who* is the object of the sentence:

E.g. The candidate **who / whom** we chose for the job has an MBA.

4. Complete the sentences with suitable relative pronouns (which, when, that, whose, where, who).

There may be more than one possible answer.

1. The IT department identified the software bug _____ caused the system to crash.
2. There's a defect in the gadget _____ we just bought from the new tech store.
3. The customer _____ asked for a refund seemed really upset.
4. She's the one _____ can resolve any IT issue, no matter how big or small.
5. The team meeting _____ we discussed the damage to the project's timeline was pretty intense.
6. That's the coffee machine _____ always acts up when we're in a rush.
7. She is a manager _____ many people admire.
8. The day _____ our system crashed was chaotic.
9. The manual _____ they sent explains everything.
10. They promoted the manager _____ sales team was most successful.

5. If the sentence is correct, put a tick (✓) at the end. If the sentence has a word which should not be there or a mistake, correct it.

1. The flight which I'm taking leaves from Terminal 2.

✓
2. The firm whose their stand was at the back had very few visitors.

their
3. The manager who wants to avoid confrontation will speak to both parties separately.
4. The CEO who is facing a dilemma he has asked for more time to think.
5. The candidate which we take into consideration has a lot of experience.
6. We opted for the solution that it seemed the most cost-effective.
7. The products who sell best are those with nice packaging.

6. Complete the questions with suitable relative pronouns (which, when, that, whose, where, who). There may be more than one possible answer.

1. Do you remember the day _____ you first started at the company?
2. Who is the person _____ has had the most influence on you?
3. Is there a particular achievement _____ you are most proud of?
4. Can you tell me about a time _____ you had to overcome a significant challenge at work?
5. When was the moment _____ you realized you wanted a career in this field?
6. What are the skills _____ you need for your work?
7. Who is the colleague _____ you like to work with?
8. What is the main goal _____ you aim to achieve in your current role?

extra grammar

We can leave out *who, which, that* (but not *whose*) in a relative clause if they are followed immediately by a noun or pronoun:

E.g. The salad (**which / that**) I had for lunch was superb.

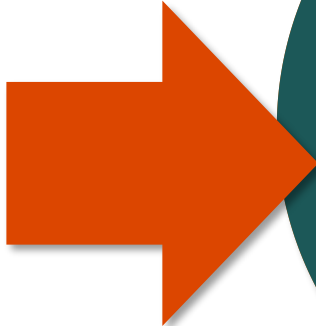
7. Answer the questions in exercise 6.

8. Describe the words in the first dark orange row without using the words below. Use relative pronouns (which, when, that, whose, where, who) (optional).

DOG
best
friend
animal
4 legs
tail

- This is the word you need to describe.

You cannot use these words to describe a “dog.”



This is the creature **that** barks. It’s the pet **who** is often called 'man's best companion'. It’s somebody **who** doesn’t like cats but loves going for walks.

misunderstanding
communication
mistake
wrong
confusion

defect
faulty
product
quality
return

refund
money
back
return
purchase

complaint
unhappy
customer
service
product

injury
accident
hurt
pain
compensation

client
customer
business
service
buy

salary
pay
money
job
earn

negotiation
bargain
discuss
agreement
deal

deadline
time
limit
date
complete

meeting
discuss
agenda
colleagues
speak

1. Work with your partner / teacher. Do the quiz and discuss your answers.

1. How can you check if someone understands you?
 - a) Just go on and think they will understand later.
 - b) Summarize what you said and ask what they think.
 - c) Watch their body language to see if they get it.
2. What do you do if you don't understand what someone said?
 - a) Wait and hope it makes sense later.
 - b) Stop them immediately and ask what they mean.
 - c) Remember to ask more about it after talking.
3. What do you do if you have trouble understanding someone in English?
 - a) Use a translation app or ask for help.
 - b) Focus on simple words and gestures they use.
 - c) Ask them to write it down or use pictures.
4. How should you explain complex ideas to someone?
 - a) Use examples they can relate to.
 - b) Just give the facts and don't make it too simple.
 - c) Focus on what you know; they should keep up.





Audio
13.2

2. Listen to two conversations and answer the questions.

Conversation 1

1. What's special about the new virtual reality system?
2. How does it make you control your avatar?
3. How does Sam feel about the new technology?

Conversation 2

1. How will they decide which products to discontinue?
2. What are they going to do with the inventory they already have?



Audio
13.2

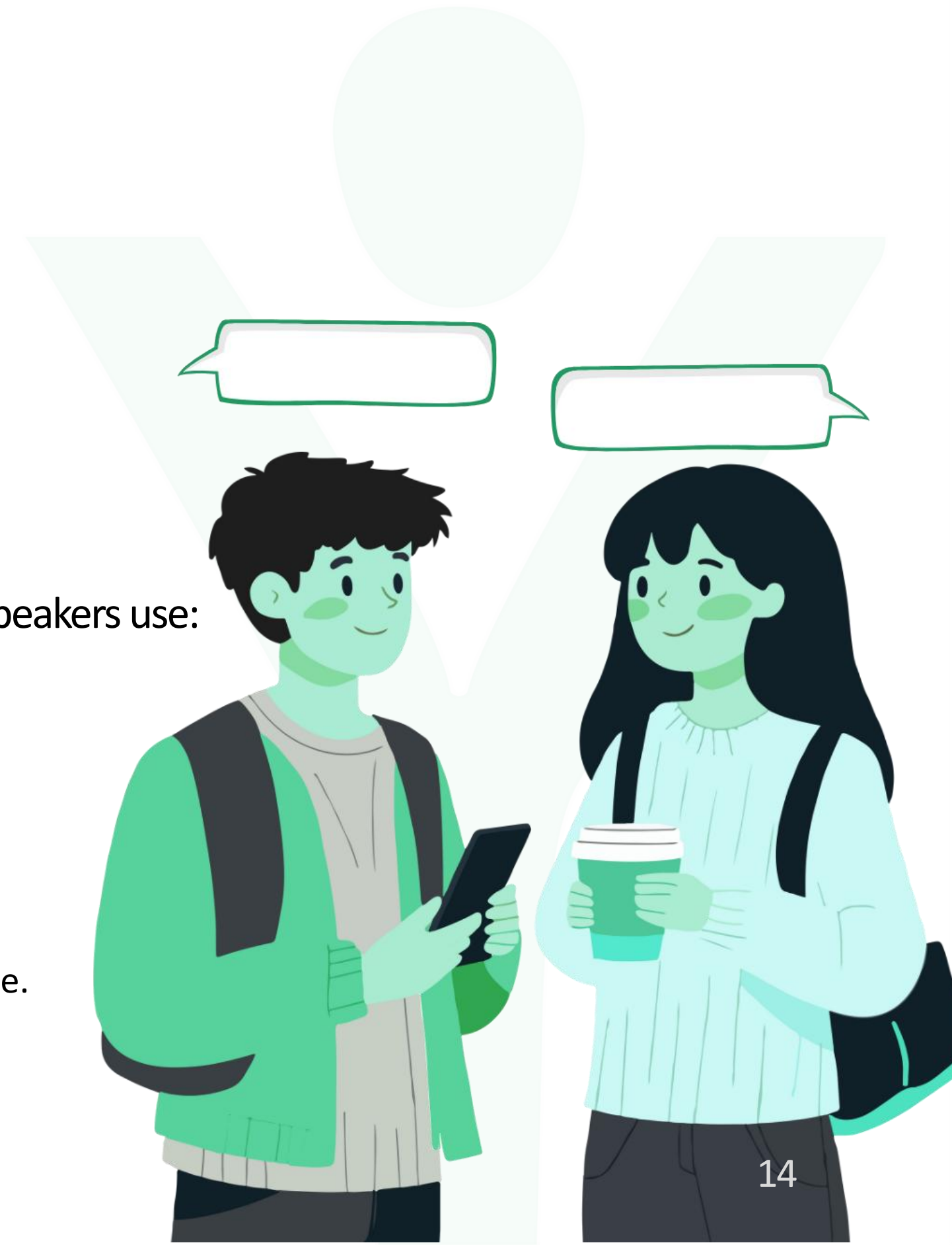
3. Optional: Listen again to Conversation 2 and note down the phrases the speakers use:

1. to check understanding
2. to show if they understand

4. Complete the sentences with the words below:

- a. kind
- b. clear
- c. get
- d. sense
- e. see

1. I don't _____ how it's much different from the VR we already have.
2. Does that make _____?
3. I _____ what you mean, but it still sounds like science fiction
4. _____ of, but... what about the inventory we already have?
5. Is that _____?



How to check someone understands

5. Work with your partner / teacher. Take turns to explain the situations (1-7) to each other. Use the phrases below to check understanding and express understanding / lack of understanding.

1. The importance of meeting deadlines.
2. Explain how effective communication can contribute to team success.
3. Teamwork and why it's important in a workplace.
4. Describe what you would do if you were assigned a task you've never done before.
5. The role of customer feedback in improving a product or service.
6. Describe how you would handle a disagreement with a colleague.
7. The importance of time management in completing work tasks efficiently.

Checking understanding

- Do you know what I mean?
- Does that make sense?
- Is that clear?
- Do you see?
- Do you follow?
- Are you with me?
- Is that okay so far?
- Are we on the same page?
- Did I explain well?

Expressing understanding

- I understand.
- I see what you mean.
- I get it now.
- That makes sense.
- I'm with you.
- I see.
- It's clear.

Expressing lack of understanding

- Kind of, but... I don't get ...
- I'm not sure I follow.
- I'm a bit lost.
- I don't get it.
- Can you clarify?
- I'm confused.
- Can you explain further?
- I'm not sure I understand.
- I'm finding it hard to follow.

1. Read the information and discuss it with your teacher / partner. What can you add?

Common problems faced by employees at work

Managing workload

Technical issues

Answering all the emails

Overworking

Missing deadlines

Poor communication



Audio 13.3

2. Listen to three conversations and complete the table.

Problem	Solution
1	
2	
3	



Audio 13.3

3. Listen again to Conversation 1 and 2 and complete the sentences.

Conversation 1

- 1. Hey Maria, _____? You look concerned.
- 2. What _____ playing hardball?
- 3. But _____ the right approach.
- 4. Perhaps _____ a unique marketing approach could help us stand out.
- 5. The _____ to create a distinctive brand identity.

Conversation 2

- 1. _____ freezing and crashing
- 2. Whenever I try to save, _____ complete the action.
- 3. It _____ there's a compatibility issue.
- 4. _____ reinstall and see if that resolves the issue.
- 5. Yes, _____. Let me know how it goes.



4. Read the expressions. Ask your teacher to clarify the meaning of any you do not understand.

Asking what the problem is

- *What's the matter?*
- *How can I help?*
- *So what appears to be the trouble?*

Explaining the problem

- *It keeps on (+ verb + -ing)*
- *It's always (+ verb + -ing)*
- *It won't (+ verb)*
- *It means that ...*

Asking for details

- *What's wrong with it exactly?*
- *What do you mean by ... ?*
- *What sort of noise/smell is it?*
- *When you say ... , do you mean ... ?*

Diagnosing the problem

- *It looks/sounds like ...*
- *It looks/sounds as though ...*
- *It could be ...*
- *It might be ...*

Advising

- *The best thing would be to ...*
- *I'd advise you to ...*
- *I think you should/could*
- *If I were you, I'd ...*
- *Have you tried (+ noun / + verb + -ing)?*

Confirming a solution

- *There we are - that should fix it.*
- *That should sort it out.*
- *That should solve the problem.*

5. Work with a partner. Use the key expressions to roleplay the following situations.

Situation 1

Student A

One of your biggest clients is thinking about switching to one of your competitors.

Student B

Diagnose the problem and make suggestions.

Situation 2

Student A

You face challenges in communicating effectively with remote team members, causing misunderstandings and making teamwork difficult.

Student B

Diagnose the problem and make suggestions.

Asking what the problem is

- *What's the matter?*
- *How can I help?*
- *So what appears to be the trouble?*

Explaining the problem

- *It keeps on (+ verb + -ing)*
- *It's always (+ verb + -ing)*
- *It won't (+ verb)*
- *It means that ...*

Asking for details

- *What's wrong with it exactly?*
- *What do you mean by ... ?*
- *What sort of noise/smell is it?*
- *When you say ... , do you mean ... ?*

Diagnosing the problem

- *It looks/sounds like ...*
- *It looks/sounds as though ...*
- *It could be ...*
- *It might be ...*

Advising

- *The best thing would be to ...*
- *I'd advise you to ...*
- *I think you should/could*
- *If I were you, I'd ...*
- *Have you tried (+ noun / + verb + -ing)?*

Confirming a solution

- *There we are - that should fix it.*
- *That should sort it out.*
- *That should solve the problem.*

6. Read the situation below and roleplay it with your teacher / partner.

Student A

You are upset because your boss takes credit for your ideas without giving you any recognition.

Student B

Diagnose the problem and make suggestions.

extra writing

Answer the question (50-80 words):

What is the biggest problem you've had at work so far?

extra vocabulary

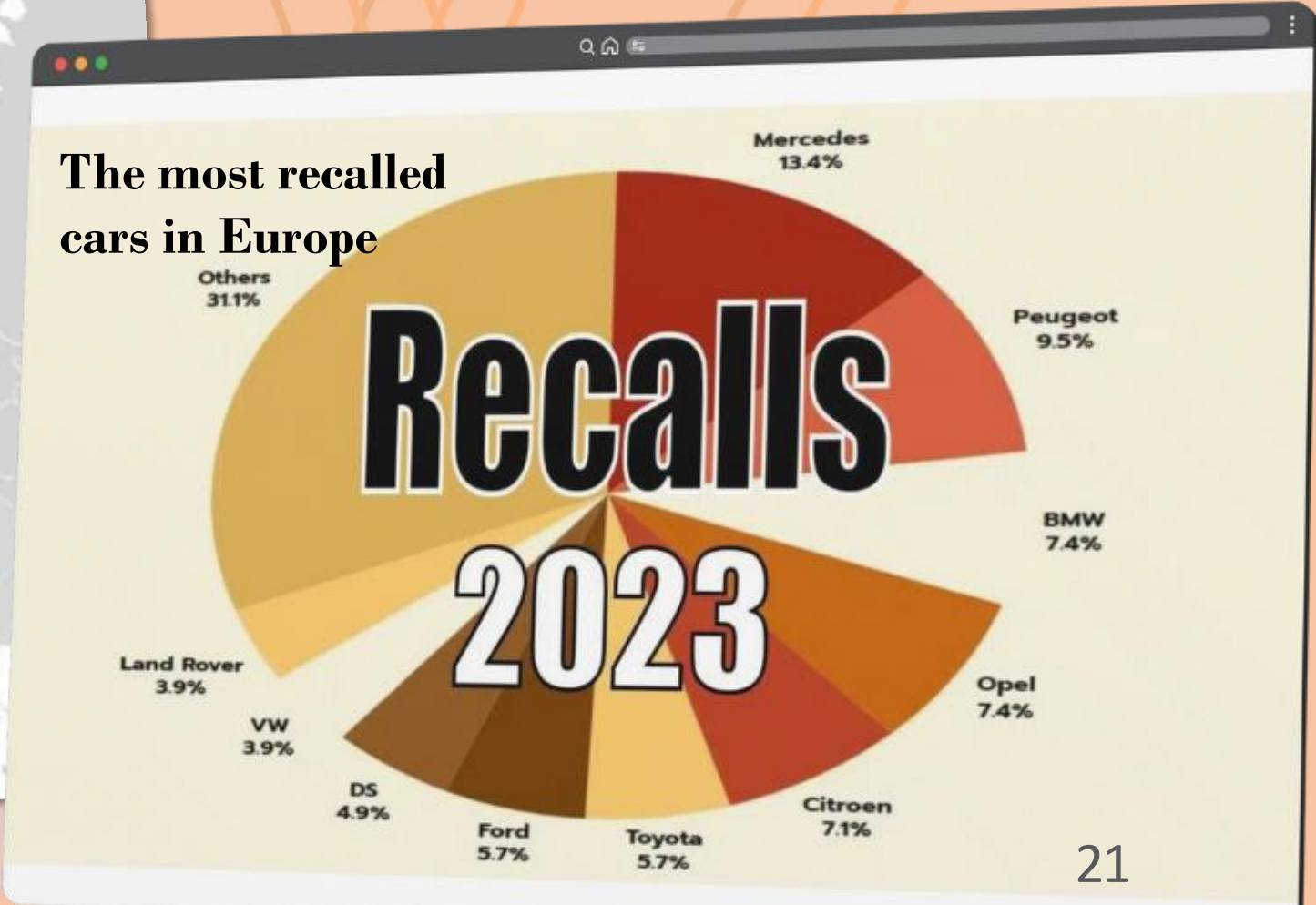
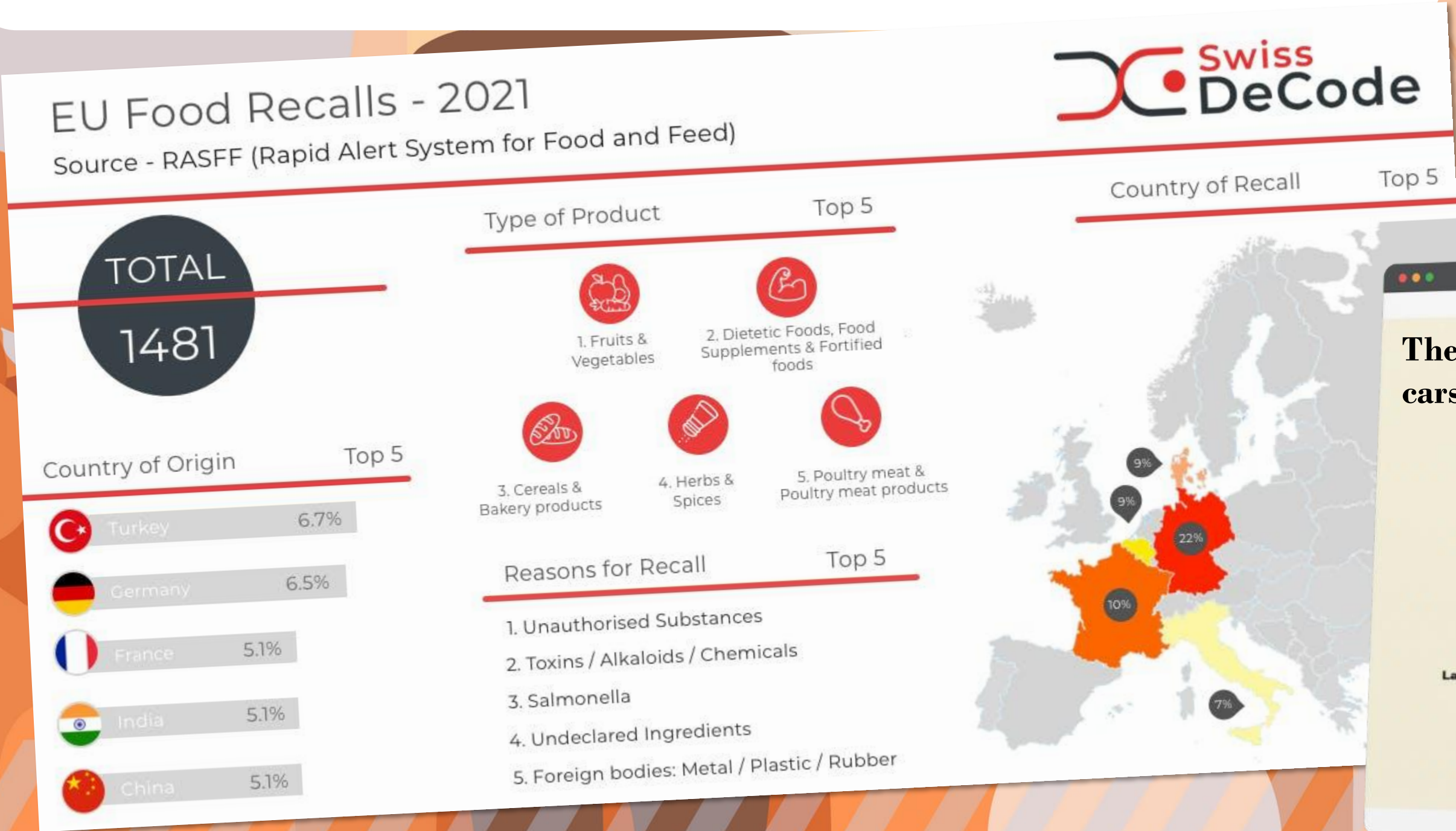
Snag - a problem, difficulty, or disadvantage.

E.g. We don't anticipate any snags in/with the negotiations.

1. Answer the questions.

- 1. What car model do you have? Have you ever had any problems with your car?
- 2. Have you ever been dissatisfied with any food brands?

2. Read the infographics below and discuss the information with your teacher / partner.



3. You are going to watch a video about Tesla cars. Before you watch, match phrases (1-10) from the video to definitions (a-j).

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. autopilot issues | a. to closely resemble or reflect something else. |
| 2. gravity | b. problems with the self-driving system of a vehicle. |
| 3. contextualize | c. to make someone or something do something, often against their will. |
| 4. in name only | d. importance of a situation. |
| 5. over-the-air software update | e. to place something in context, or to provide background information for better understanding. |
| 6. to force | f. happening quickly, in a very short time. |
| 7. impacted | g. a method of delivering new software or updates to devices wirelessly. |
| 8. to mirror | h. only in title, not in reality. |
| 9. at the press of a button | i. affected or influenced by something. |
| 10. overnight | j. very easily, typically by simply pushing a button. |



4. Watch the video and say if the sentences are True or False.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MadqNBkxowY&ab_channel=BloombergTelevision

1. Tesla is recalling over 1.5 million cars in China due to autopilot issues.
2. The recall requires returning the cars to Tesla for repairs.
3. The recall in China affects certain Model 3, Y, S, and X vehicles.
4. Tesla's stock is rising because of the recall.

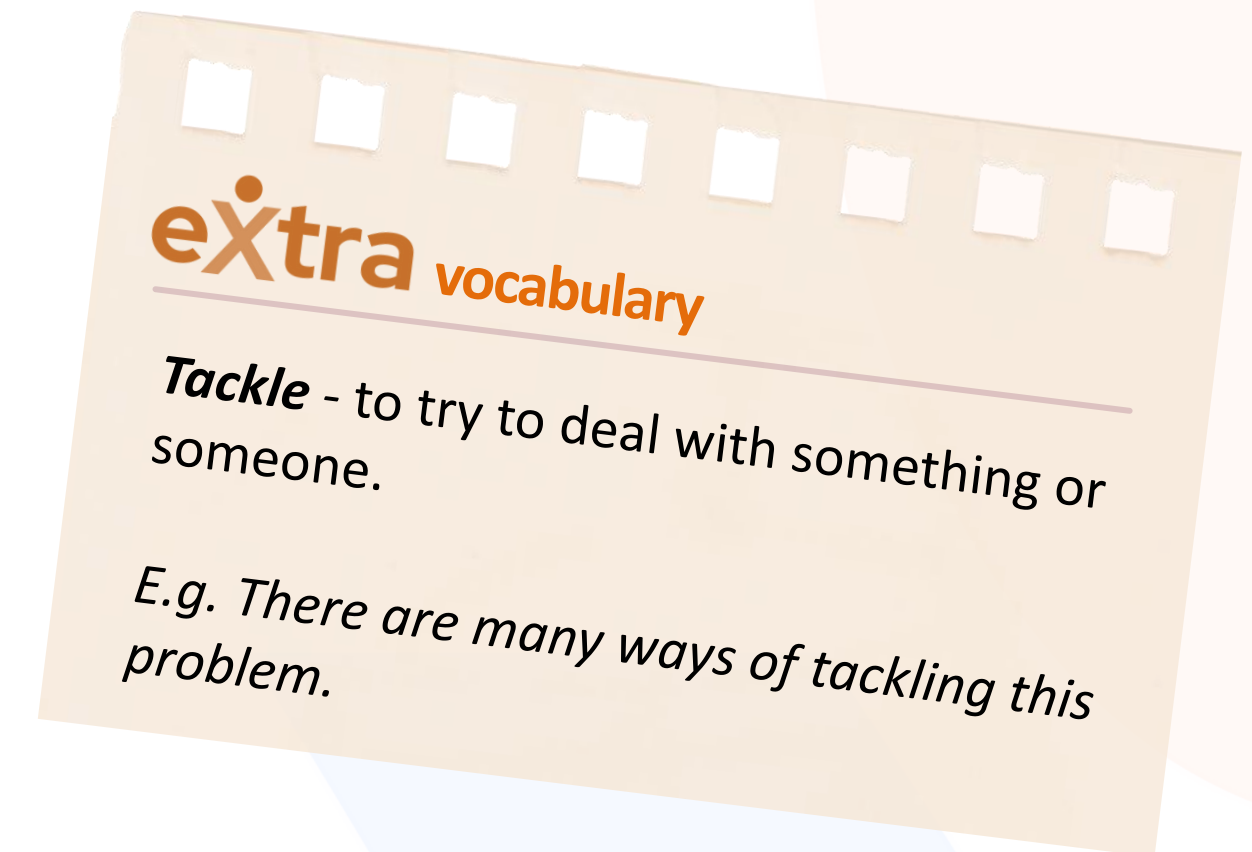
*NHTSA - The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is an agency of the U.S. federal government, part of the Department of Transportation, focused on transportation safety in the United States.

5. Answer the questions.

1. How does this recall affect Tesla's image?
2. What are the possible long-term impacts on Tesla's reputation and customer trust?
3. How do you think Tesla handled the problems that they faced?
4. Do you think Tesla could have improved the situation?
5. What should Tesla do to avoid recalls?

6. Imagine that your company had to recall its most popular product. Develop a recall plan. Consider the following:

1. How quickly will you acknowledge the defect and issue a public statement?
2. What channels will you use to communicate the recall to customers?
3. What methods will you use to keep customers regularly informed?
4. What compensation will you offer to affected customers?
5. How will you conduct the investigation to identify the cause of the defect?
6. How will you regain customer trust after resolving the issue?
7. How will you monitor product performance after the recall?



1. Match (1-8) with (a-d). There may be more than one possible answer.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. avoid | |
| 2. investigate | |
| 3. admit | a. failure |
| 4. make | b. mistake |
| 5. file | c. complaint |
| 6. recover from | d. injury |
| 7. end in | |
| 8. deal with | |

2. Complete the sentences with some of the phrases from exercise 1.

1. If you _____, it's important to own up to it and find a solution promptly.
2. The athlete managed to _____ just in time for the championship game.
3. Our customer service team is trained to _____ effectively and with empathy.
4. Even with the best planning, sometimes a project may _____.



3. Match the words in A and B below to make phrasal verbs. Then match each phrasal verb to the following definitions (1-8).

A

- face
- see
- call
- get
- talk
- sort
- get rid
- do

B

- out
- over
- around
- for
- of
- up to
- without
- about

1. demand
2. arrange
3. to avoid a problem
4. organize
5. eliminate
6. discuss
7. confront
8. to manage without having something

4. Replace the underlined words in the sentences below with the phrasal verbs from exercise 3.

1. Sometimes, you have to manage without additional resources to stay on budget.
2. We need to discuss any concerns about the new software update.
3. Let's organize the team's workload by the end of the day.
4. It's essential to eliminate any outdated practices to improve efficiency.
5. We'll overcome the issue of limited space by reorganizing the office.
6. The policy change demands a review of our current procedures.
7. You must confront the challenges in your project directly.
8. I'll arrange a visit to the new client's office tomorrow.

5. Complete the sentences with your ideas. Use relative pronouns (which, when, that, whose, where, who).

E.g. A leader is someone who inspires others and sets a positive example.

1. A leader is someone ...
2. A good company is a place ...
3. A great job is ...
4. A successful team is ...
5. An effective manager is someone ...
6. A fulfilling career is ...
7. A supportive colleague is someone ...

6. Complete the second sentence so it means the same as first.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. We often hold meetings in that conference room.
E.g. That's the conference room where we often hold meetings. | 5. The manager approved the budget for the marketing campaign.
That's the budget _____. |
| 2. You mentioned that new client last week.
He's the new client _____. | 6. The employees attended a workshop on customer service.
That's the workshop on customer service _____. |
| 3. The company is launching a new product soon.
That's the product _____. | 7. The sales department achieved their quarterly targets.
Those are the targets _____. |
| 4. Our team completed the project before the deadline.
That's the project _____. | |

7. Read the situations and complete the exchanges.

1. **A:** Every time I'm in the middle of working on a report, my screen goes blank unexpectedly.
B: Ask for details _____
2. **A: Ask what the problem is** _____
B: I keep missing deadlines due to back-to-back meetings.
3. **A:** Our computers are so outdated that it takes forever to finish a task.
B: Diagnose the problem _____
4. **A:** There's a lack of communication between my team and the sales department.
B: Advise _____
5. **A:** I feel burned out because my workload has doubled in the past month.
B: Advise _____
6. **A: Ask what the problem is** _____
B: Explain the problem _____ (you haven't had any recent training sessions)

6. Complete the conversation with a-f.

- a. That makes sense.
- b. Can you clarify
- c. Did I explain well?
- d. Do you follow?
- e. I'm a bit lost.
- f. I see what you mean

A: So, in our next team meeting, we'll review the quarterly sales report and discuss strategies for improving our performance.

_____ ¹
B: _____ ² What specific strategies are we going to discuss?

A: We'll focus on customer engagement and product promotion techniques. _____ ³

B: _____ ⁴ how we'll measure the success of these strategies?

A: Sure. We'll track increases in sales and customer feedback. This way, we can see if our efforts are effective. _____ ⁵
about needing clear measurements.

B: _____ ⁶ Thanks for explaining.