

Dialogues and exercises

1 Read the dialogue aloud with your teacher:

Managing Director: **The issue here is** whether our employees are willing to work shifts. Demand is currently so high that we have many orders to meet. The solution is a 24-hour response service.

HR Manager: Seven days a week?

Managing Director: Exactly. **What's your view on this?**

HR Manager: Well, Jim, **my impression is** this working practice will be unpopular. Many of the employees have children and need to be at home in the evenings.

Managing Director: But we have to do something. Sales were poor last year and now we need to take advantage of the surge in demand. **Let's look at the figures:** last year our turnover was £14 million, the previous year £19 million.

HR Manager: **I take your point.** I appreciate the business needs flexibility. But **we have to be realistic.** It will not be easy to get our employees to work evenings, nights and weekends. **The point is** they have other commitments.

Choose expressions below to replace the expressions in red in the text:

I get the feeling
I understand what you're saying
the fact is
the question is
to give you an example
we have to face facts
where do you stand on this?

Now replace the same expressions in red with these below:

any thoughts?
let me put you in the picture
my hunch is
the thing is
there are practical issues here
what I want to know is
yes I take that on board

2 Do the same with these two dialogues:

Publisher: Yes, I do like this book, I really do, and I'm most grateful to you for sending it to me to look at. I think **it has a lot going** for it. I really do. **No question of that**, let me assure you. **The trouble is**, I don't see this being compatible with our list. As a publishing house we concentrate on magazines now, not books. So I'm not sure we can **develop this** here at Brownings.

Author: Russia is constantly in the news, and surely spying stories are very much back in fashion?

Publisher: Hmm, yes, but **the situation has changed** at Brownings since our new MD arrived. **We focus on** fashion these days, yes, but in female clothing, not novels and spy thrillers.

Colleague: If I can come in there, Alan, I'd like to put in a word for the old-fashioned novel. I think we need **to revisit this** once the MD is settled in the role. We need to **stand back and look at** the potential of authors like Derek here, even if they are not quite meeting our short-term needs.

**I'm quite confident about that
our core business is in
take a broad overview of
take this further
the only thing is
there is a lot to be said
things are different
to look at this again**

3

Manager: So **how's it shaping up?**

Researcher: **We're getting there**, Peter. **The way I see it is this**: we do away with traditional chicken products and replace them with this non-feathery specimen we have developed – which is all breast of course.

Manager: **I'm not sure I follow you**, Arthur. **Are you suggesting** we create an animal to eat?

Researcher: Animal, vegetable, call it what you like. It will break traditional barriers.

**bear in mind
concentrate solely
how's it going?
I don't like the sound of this
is your recommendation
it's going okay
let me get this straight
this is what I had in mind**

Manager: Oh **I don't like this idea at all**. Sorry, no, I'm totally against developing an animal food product in a laboratory.

Researcher: Why? We develop medicines in laboratories to keep us healthy. Why not foods?

Manager: We need to **take into account** wider ethical questions, not **focus purely** on company profits.

4 Read these dialogues aloud, and replace the expressions as before.

Manager: So where is the business coming from ?

Geoff: Most of our sales are generated from the website. **Roughly speaking** 80% of our business is off the internet. A further 5% is sourced elsewhere but the initial contact came via the website. For instance, we sold a shower unit last week from the saleroom, but the customer had found us on the internet. So my feeling is that we should increase our budget for internet advertising.

Manager **You may have a point here**, Geoff. However, I think there is **a case to be made for** increasing spending on the saleroom, especially if sales are so much lower there?

Geoff: In my view you'll be **throwing good money after bad**.

Manager: Denis, what's your view on this?

Denis: I take Geoff's point. The internet is **all the rage** these days. I have to say **I'm in two minds** about this. **I'm inclined to think** that we need to update the saleroom and keep investing in that too, unless we are happy for it to become a warehouse with the website as the only shop window.

Manager: Okay, **I appreciate your contributions**. Leave it with me and I'll have a think about it.

I understand what you're saying
thanks for your input
I'm not at all sure
approximately
wasting resources
my feeling is
an argument in favour of
very much in fashion

5

Clare: **To put it in a nutshell**, Jerry, we're going to have **to let you go**.

Jerry: **Let me get this straight**, Clare. Are you asking me to leave the company?

Clare: No, I'm not personally. As HR manager I have to pass on a decision taken by the board.

Jerry: Was it the incident at Thompsons?

Clare: Yes, I believe that **had a lot to do with it**.

Jerry: But I genuinely thought the visitor had a gun. I know it turned out to be a mobile phone, but he aimed it at someone.

Clare: **I appreciate that**. But you didn't have to knock him out. He was our biggest customer.

Jerry: Big? He was enormous, and very frightening too. **Put yourself in my shoes**, Clare. What would you have done?

I understand what you're saying
run that past me again
imagine you were me
terminate your contract
was a significant factor
to get straight to the point

6 Read these dialogues aloud. Then think of other words for those in red without changing the meaning. You can change other words too.

How do you **feel** about working on Saturdays?
Any thoughts on this?

As far as I'm concerned it's fine. But I get the **feeling** that some of the workers may not like it. We need to **think through** the implications.

My **impression** is that some of the employees like watching football on Saturdays. A lot of these games have been moved to Sunday.

That is true, but they also like shopping and other activities with their families.

Roughly speaking, how many employees will work on Saturdays ?

About half, **there or thereabouts**.

Doesn't **sound too bad**.

To be **blunt**, they will want extra pay to work at weekends.

Precisely how much more?

Double time, at least – and finish by midday.

Let me get this **straight**: they want to work half the hours and be paid double the salary?

7

Holiday clothes have done very well this year.
Broad-brush figures show turnover is up by 50%.

Excellent.
So what do **you think** of the idea for all staff to wear tee-shirts and shorts?

The idea looks good **on paper** but I'm not at all sure about it. We have to be **realistic** – it's very cold at this time of year.

I **see** what you're **saying**. Scotland can be a bit chilly in winter. I suppose in an **ideal** world our shop would be in the south of France.