

Weekly English Recap: 16 Shadowing Pairs

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

16 learning entries

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

1

get straight to the point

DEF

To say the important thing immediately, without a long introduction.

It values clarity and efficiency. It is direct, but tone and context determine whether it sounds helpful or rude; learn the fixed form with "the point".

Let's get straight to the point: we cannot finish the project today.

She got straight to the point and asked whether I wanted the job.

2

beat around the bush

DEF

To avoid saying the main thing directly, especially when the subject is uncomfortable.

It is often critical and suggests that someone is wasting time or avoiding honesty. The continuous form "beating around the bush" is especially common.

Stop beating around the bush and tell me what happened.

He beat around the bush before admitting that he had lost the keys.

3

read between the lines

DEF

To understand a meaning that is suggested but not stated directly.

It relies on clues in wording, omissions or tone; it does not mean inventing a message without evidence.

If you read between the lines, her polite reply is actually a refusal.

Reading between the lines of the report, the team expects another delay.

4

keep someone posted

DEF

To continue giving someone the latest information as a situation develops.

The natural pattern is "keep someone posted about/on something". "Keep me posted" is a common standalone request for future updates.

I'll keep you posted about the interview.

Please keep us posted on any changes to the schedule.



5

minor

DEF

Small in scale or effect, with limited consequences.

Minor does not mean that something should be ignored; it means its effect is limited. Common combinations include “minor problem”, “minor mistake”, “minor delay”, “minor injury” and “minor damage”.

A spelling mistake in the draft handout is a minor error.

There was a minor delay because the room was still being cleaned.

6

serious

DEF

Important or severe, with significant possible consequences.

Serious describes severity, not necessarily time pressure. A serious problem can deserve careful attention without requiring action in the next few seconds; common partners include “illness”, “accident”, “risk” and “damage”.

The funding gap is a serious problem because the free classes could disappear.

The roof damage is serious, but it is not urgent while the weather is dry.

7

urgent

DEF

Requiring immediate attention or action.

Urgent mainly describes time pressure, not severity. Something may be urgent without having major long-term consequences, or it may be both urgent and serious.

Water near the electrical socket makes this an urgent repair.

Finding the passenger's passport is urgent because the bus leaves in five minutes.

8

Could you give me a hand?

DEF

A friendly request asking someone to help with a practical task.

Give someone a hand is an idiom: no literal hand is involved. It is natural with friends and colleagues and often takes with plus a noun or an ing-form.

Could you give me a hand with these boxes?

Could you give me a hand moving this table?

9

Would you mind...?

DEF

A polite way to ask whether someone is willing to do something.

Use would you mind plus an ing-form, not an infinitive. In reply, Not at all means the person is happy to help because the action is not a problem.

Would you mind holding the door for me?

Would you mind checking these numbers?



10

I could use some help with...

DEF

An indirect way to say that help would be useful with a task or problem.

This gently signals a need rather than asking a direct yes-or-no question. It works best when the situation is clear and the listener can offer help.

I could use some help with this report.

I could use some help carrying these bags.

11

I'd appreciate it if you could...

DEF

A polite, slightly formal way to ask someone to do something.

It suits work, emails and requests involving extra effort. Use could followed by the base form: could send, could check, could help.

I'd appreciate it if you could send me the figures before lunch.

I'd appreciate it if you could check the booking one more time.

12

Could you help me out with...?

DEF

A friendly, informal request for help with a particular problem or task.

Help someone out often suggests solving a difficulty or providing practical support. It is warmer and more conversational than simply saying help me.

Could you help me out with this form?

Could you help me out by watching the shop for ten minutes?

13

Is there any chance you could...?

DEF

A gentle request that asks whether doing something might be possible.

Is there any chance makes the request tentative and gives the listener an easy way to say no. It is useful when asking for a favour or when availability is uncertain.

Is there any chance you could pick me up after work?

Is there any chance you could look over this email today?

14

Would you be able to...?

DEF

A polite request that checks whether someone has the time or ability to do something.

This wording acknowledges possible practical limits, so it is useful at work and when a task may take time. It is more tentative than Can you...?

Would you be able to join the call at three?

Would you be able to help me carry the equipment downstairs?



15

Could I ask you a favour?

DEF

A polite way to signal that you are about to request someone's help.

This sentence introduces the request but does not contain it, so follow with a clear explanation. It is natural with friends and colleagues; a large favour may need more context.

Could I ask you a favour? I need someone to check this application.

Could I ask you a favour and borrow your charger for an hour?

16

I was wondering if you could...

DEF

A very gentle and indirect way to introduce a request.

The past continuous was wondering softens the request; it does not mean the speaker has stopped wondering. It is common for favours and polite professional requests.

I was wondering if you could cover my shift on Friday.

I was wondering if you could explain the last step again.

