

Hide a phrase in a conversation

B1-B2 | Adults and teens | About 20-25 minutes | Work in threes

1. Read the examples

See eye to eye = agree. We see eye to eye about the budget.

Once in a blue moon = very rarely. I go bowling once in a blue moon.

A piece of cake = very easy. Booking online was a piece of cake.

On the ball = alert and quick to notice or act. Lee was on the ball: he spotted the wrong date on our tickets.

A: Cooking for ten will be a piece of cake.

B: Really? What will you make?

2. Choose a plan

A and B: plan a Saturday outing. Spend **no more than £8 each**. Choose somewhere **indoors**. Compare two choices and agree one reason for your decision. The prices below are invented for this activity.

City museum: free; indoors; 10-minute walk.

Board-game cafe: £6 each; indoors; 20-minute walk.

Park picnic: £4 each; outdoors; 10-minute walk.

Secretly choose one phrase from section 1. Plan for one minute.

Talk for two minutes. Use your phrase if it fits. You may invent your preferences. Do not stop the conversation to name the phrases.

3. Listen and check

C: listen to the plan. Note a phrase and what it meant.

Choice and reason: _____

Phrase heard: _____

It meant: _____

Tell A and B their plan in your own words. Ask: **Have I got that right?** Then check whether the phrase fitted the meaning.

4. Change roles and try again

Improve one unclear sentence together. Your teacher will give you a new choice. Change roles each time so everyone speaks and listens.

If you are unsure: What does ... mean here?

Check: Do you mean ...?

Keep going: I mean ... / Let me say that another way.

Find the smaller word

B1-B2 | About 15 minutes | A spelling and meaning puzzle

Find a smaller word inside each longer word. Keep the letters in order. You can skip letters. You cannot move them around.

Example: destruction → ruin

Both words can describe serious damage. The smaller word uses letters 5, 6, 9 and 11. Words may fit different sentences.

1. Circle the letters. Write the word.

a. Clue: strongly advise someone to do something.

e n c o u r a g e Smaller word: _____

b. Clue: very bad or morally wrong.

d e v i l i s h Smaller word: _____

c. Clue: someone with a higher position than you at work.

s u p e r v i s o r Smaller word: _____

d. Clue: someone who says something untrue.

p l a g i a r i s t Smaller word: _____

2. Check the meaning

A plagiarist presents someone else's words or ideas as their own.

A liar says something untrue. Can someone be a liar without copying anyone's work? Give an example. You may invent one.

3. Try two sentences

Choose a pair. Write one sentence with each word.

Ask your partner: **Can I swap the words here? Why, or why not?**

1. _____

2. _____

Help: The letters are in order. / The meaning is more specific.

The grammar changes. / Both work here, but ...

The puzzle does not explain word history. Your teacher has one more to try.

Which word do you need?

B1-B2 | About 15-20 minutes | Explain the meaning, then choose

Foundations: the structure supporting a building from below.

Basement: a floor partly or wholly below ground level.

Cellar: an underground room, often for storage.

Base: a bottom or supporting part, such as a pizza base.

Basis: the reason, evidence or principle behind a decision.

A foundation in a subject: basic knowledge to build on.

1. Choose the usual word

- a. We keep the wine in a wine _____.
- b. The builder checked the house's _____.
- c. I prefer a thin pizza _____.
- d. On what _____ did you choose the new supplier?
- e. The training gives you a _____ in accounting.
- f. The office is on the _____ level, below ground.

2. Compare and explain

Compare answers. Explain two choices.

Help: I mean a room / a building support / food / evidence / knowledge.

Basement and cellar can overlap. A room does not become a basement or a cellar just because it looks cheerful or gloomy.

3. Make a message clearer

A house advert: The house has a large foundation where we keep bicycles.

What the writer means: an underground room used for storage.

Ask a question to check the meaning. Then improve the advert.

Start: Do you mean ...? / So the house has ...

Practise saying your clearer message. Your teacher will give you a different message to explain after feedback.

Explain a surprising fact

B1-B2 | About 15-20 minutes | Read, explain and check

You are choosing a fact for a school science display. Read about Venus. Which fact would make a visitor stop and ask a question?

Venus is the second planet from the Sun. It is the hottest planet in our solar system. Its thick atmosphere traps heat. It has no moon.

Venus takes about **243 Earth days** to turn once on its axis and about **225 Earth days** to travel once around the Sun.

1. Compare the two movements

Rotation: turning on an axis. **Orbit:** travelling around another body.

One turn (rotation)

 243 days

One trip around the Sun (orbit)

 225 days

Which takes longer? By about how many Earth days?

2. Choose a clear message

- a. A day on Venus is longer than its year.
- b. One full turn of Venus takes longer than one trip around the Sun.

Which message explains the two movements more clearly? Why?

Here, **243 days means one full turn**. It is not the time from one sunrise to the next. The word **day** can be confusing.

3. Explain and ask

A: choose one fact. Explain it without reading a whole sentence.

B: say what you understood. Ask one question. Swap roles.

Help: It takes ... to ... / It takes longer to ... than to ...

Do you mean ...? / The information says ... / We still need to check ...

Tell another pair your chosen fact and why it interests you. If a question is not answered here, keep it as a question. Do not invent a fact.

Source: NASA, Venus Facts, checked 18 October 2026. Facts paraphrased for this original activity. Your teacher has a new planet comparison to try.

Choose one small practice task

About 10 minutes with your teacher | Review it next lesson

1. Start with something you want to do

A topic I enjoy: _____

Something I want to do in English: _____

2. Choose a short item

Choose a short text, recording or exercise with your teacher.

Try a little now. Is it easy enough to use? What help do you need?

Title or link: _____

Help I need: _____

No item ready? Try this message:

Our walking group meets on Sunday at 9:30 outside the community centre. The easy route takes one hour and costs nothing. Wear comfortable shoes. If it rains, we will meet in the centre cafe instead.

Try: Tell someone when and where to meet. Ask one question.

3. Make a small plan

Example: I will read a short message, note two useful phrases and explain the plan next lesson. I will spend no more than ten minutes.

I will: _____

When: _____ Time limit: _____

I will bring or show: _____

4. Come back to it

Next lesson: show what you did. Try one useful phrase or ask a question.

What worked? _____

What got in the way? _____

5. Agree what to do next

Keep it / shorten it / add help / choose something else.

Our next step: _____

Choose one manageable task. You can change the plan together.

Choose one activity

Supported B1-B2 activities; choose one, not the complete pack

Share only the page you choose. Student pages are 1-5; keep 6-8 for you. No recording required. Timings are adjustable, not classroom validated.

- 1 • Idioms • 20-25 min:** agree a plan; listen and check appropriate use.
- 2 • Word puzzle • 15 min:** find letter paths; compare meanings.
- 3 • Word choices • 15-20 min:** choose a meaning and repair a message.
- 4 • Science • 15-20 min:** explain information and check a listener.
- 5 • Practice plan • 10 min:** agree a small task and review its result.

Page 1: hear the message as well as the phrase

4 min: check the four meanings. Read the short examples; elicit a plain-English version. These expressions are informal. See eye to eye often appears as do not see eye to eye about/on something.

2: check £8 each and indoors. The museum and cafe meet both rules; the picnic does not. There is no single best choice between the first two.

3: allow one minute to prepare, then two minutes to speak. C notes the plan, reason and phrase in context.

2: C checks the summary and meaning. Discuss one unclear use, with a model if needed.

6: rotate roles twice using the new choices below. Everyone listens once and speaks twice. Each may keep or change their phrase.

3-5: hear a final improved sentence and discuss a useful clarification question. No points or phrase quota needed.

New choices: reveal one per round

Round 2: choose a regular 30-minute English meeting. Monday lunchtime is free for everyone. Wednesday evening is also possible but costs £3 each for the room. Choose a day and one activity.

Round 3: the group has only 15 minutes and no budget. Meet on Monday in the free room or online on Wednesday. Choose a day, place and one activity that fits.

Observe each learner: message clear; phrase fits; listener checks meaning; support needed. A natural conversation without an idiom is better than a forced example. After feedback, invite a new accurate example; do not treat one successful use as mastery.

When a phrase is unclear

Clarify now if it blocks the task. Otherwise note the exact phrase and situation, then return to it afterwards. Ask for a paraphrase and a new example. The page 1 questions provide the routine.

Check letters and meanings

Notes, keys and new examples for student pages 2-3

Page 2: optional spelling and meaning puzzle

Check the longer words first; explain unfamiliar meanings. Model destruction → ruin. Allow 4 minutes each for letter paths, meanings and two sentences, then try the new puzzle below. A dictionary is optional.

Answers (positions count from 1):

encourage → urge: 5, 6, 8, 9

devilish → evil: 2, 3, 4, 5

supervisor → superior: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10

plagiarist → liar: 2, 5, 6, 7

Check meaning separately. Urge is stronger than encourage here. Devilish can also be playful or mischievous. A superior is higher in rank, not necessarily a direct supervisor. A liar need not plagiarise: this pair is especially loose. These are related-word puzzles, not strict synonym or word-history claims.

Sentence examples: I encourage her to apply / I urge her to apply (both work, different strength). A devilish grin / an evil grin (different tone). Ask your supervisor / superior (different scope). Accept other accurate sentences.

Fresh puzzle after feedback: write OBSERVE; clue: notice with your eyes. Intended word SEE uses 3, 4, 7. Learners mark the letters, then explain why observe can mean watch carefully, more than simply see. Offer a first letter if needed and record the help.

Page 3: choose by meaning, then repair

Allow 4 minutes for meanings, 4 for choices, 5 for explanation/repair and 3-5 for a new message. Begin with room versus structure if support is needed.

Key: a cellar; b foundations; c base; d basis; e foundation; f basement.

Advert model: Do you mean a room below ground? The house has a large cellar/basement where we keep bicycles. Both room words may fit this open description.

Basement/cellar is not a cheerful-versus-gloomy distinction. In f, basement level is the intended combination; open descriptions allow overlap. The nouns have other senses.

New message after feedback: We chose the supplier on the basis of price. Clarify room versus reason, then repair: on the basis of price. Each learner gives a new decision and reason. Accept alternatives such as because of the price.

Online/one-to-one: mark letters on screen or read positions; take turns giving sentences. Note explanations as independent, cued or modelled.

Explain, check and follow up

Notes for pages 4-5 | Sources and qualifications

Page 4: explanation, not a general-knowledge test

3 min: read the facts and establish turn/rotation versus trip/orbit. Mime the movements or use two objects if useful.

4: compare the bars: 243 is 18 more than 225. The bars use the same scale. Message b names both movements and avoids an ambiguous day.

5: partners explain and check a listener. Ask a question answered in the facts and one that still needs checking.

3-5: give feedback and the new comparison below. Each learner explains again, with less support if ready.

Accuracy: 243 Earth days is approximately the sidereal rotation period, not sunrise-to-sunrise. A Venus solar day is about 117 Earth days. Venus is second from the Sun; a strong greenhouse effect, not being the closest planet, explains its extreme heat. It has no natural moon. No need to teach the technical labels to complete the task.

New comparison, from NASA Mercury Facts:

Mercury takes about 59 Earth days to turn once and 88 to travel around the Sun. Which movement takes longer? Explain to a partner.

Key: the orbit is about 29 Earth days longer than the rotation. A Mercury solar day is different again; do not equate it with the 59-day turn.

Assess the explanation and listener check separately from reading the numbers. Let learners read facts; ask them to rephrase the relationship. Do not treat recalling astronomy as the language outcome.

Page 5: make enthusiasm manageable

Ask about an interest and a real English goal. Sample a short item together before agreeing the task, support, time and next-lesson follow-up. The supplied fallback meets Sunday 9:30 outside the community centre; the walk lasts one hour and is free. Rain changes the meeting to the centre cafe. Dogs are not mentioned: keep this as a question.

Next lesson, check what the learner tried. Hear one phrase or explanation, give feedback and try again. Agree whether to keep, shorten, support or replace the task. A plan alone is not evidence of learning.

Support and sources

Online, share only the chosen student page. In pairs or one-to-one, alternate speaking and retelling your partner's message; the teacher can listen. For lower B1, reduce the idiom set or use just two noun contrasts; do not require the complete pack.

Sources: Cambridge Dictionary (named entries); NASA Venus Facts, NASA Mercury Facts and NASA Space Place, checked 18 October 2026. Original tasks by Gav & Em. Classroom effectiveness untested.