

BUSINESS ENGLISH . INTERMEDIATE (B1 B1+)

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO



1. **Watch this short video.** In pairs, talk about what happened. Use the questions below to help you.

- a) What was the girl's problem?
- b) What was the actress Kate Winslet's attitude towards the girl's problem?

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/VX_0-wXApvs

2. **Answer these questions in pairs.** Give as many details as possible.

- a) When was the last time you didn't know how to do something that you had to do?
- b) What did you do? Did you talk to someone about it? If so, what was the person's attitude?

3. **Read the article below.** Match these sub-headings with the strategies explained in the article below. There is one sub-heading you won't use. Compare your answers in pairs.

**A) Wait B) Ask your board advisors C) Admit it D) Read
E) Show confidence F) Step away G) Call a friend**

What To Do When You Don't Know What To Do

As a business leader, you are always supposed to know what to do. But what do you do when it's just not clear what to do? BY ERICK HOLTZCLAW, COMPANY STRATEGIST @EHOLTZCLAW

It's five o'clock on Friday afternoon and I have **decided to fire** my lead developer on a mission critical project. I **plan to replace** him with a contractor that has been working on the same project for several months. As I complete the developer's exit interview, I find out the contractor committed a fireable offense that same afternoon and I **let him go** too.

This is just one of the many times in my career that I felt like I didn't know what to do. When you find yourself in a similar situation, here are some ways to recover.

1. _____

As a leader, you feel like you should always have the answer.

There is great power in admitting to your team that you just aren't sure what to do next. This transparency builds your relationship and gives others permission to admit when they are stuck without fear of repercussion.

2. _____

Go for a walk, get a quick workout in, or go for a swim. Regardless of the activity you choose, stepping away from the task may be the best thing to do.

Physical activity gets the blood flowing, **makes you breathe** deeper and clears your head. Thinking about your surroundings, how the sun feels on your skin, or the number of miles you've completed provides a sense of accomplishment and puts your issue in perspective. The oxygen, endorphin and short breaks help you think about a problem differently and come up with new ideas.

3. _____

Read a book, a blog, or an article. Just read. Reading stimulates the brain and clears your mind. Reading about someone else's experience, opinion and outlook offers a different way to look at things and solve a problem. I read several books while away on vacation and they always impact my approach to my business. I come up with new creative ideas to problems I was wrestling with before I left. If reading isn't your cup of tea, listening to a podcast can offer just as much insight.

4. _____

In our fast-paced world it's easy to feel like everything needs to be done NOW. The decision to wait may be the best. Most of the time, problems have a way of working themselves out and waiting may bring additional information **allowing you to make** a better decision. I have found this is especially true for calendar conflicts and project deadlines.

5. _____

Some of the best advice I've received throughout my career has come from my friends. Friends are great sounding boards and **help you clear** your head, remind you of how you handled a previous similar situation, or offer a whole new perspective to the situation. Friends offer words of encouragement, and you know they will be there long after the current situation has passed.

6. _____

Founder of Plywood People, Jeff Shinabarger writes and speaks on this topic often. One technique he suggests when trying to determine what to do next is to find an empty room and imagine 4 chairs around a table, each filled with a different personal advisor.

Who would your advisors be? What would they say or **recommend you do?** Would your advisors be in support of your decision, or would they try to talk you out of what you are about to do? Thinking about

how a trusted advisor would **advise you to handle** the situation can move you forward when you are stuck.

Acknowledge that not knowing what to do is normal. With the right approach, these times of uncertainty can lead to great strides.

<https://www.inc.com/eric-holtzclaw/what-to-do-when-you-don-t-know-what-to-do.html>

4. Read the article again and answer the following questions.

a) What is the dilemma presented on the first paragraph?

b) What are the advantages of admitting your failures, according to the article?

c) What are the effects of physical exercise and being in touch with nature on clarifying someone's thoughts?

d) What kind of reading does the author suggest you do?

e) Why isn't it a good idea to rush to find a quick solution to a problem?

f) What examples does the author give about the importance of friends when we need to solve a problem?

g) What is the approach suggested in the last piece of advice?

5. In pairs, talk about these questions.

a) Which of the strategies did the girl from the video follow?

b) Which of the strategies are the best in your opinion?

c) Do you use any of them at your workplace or at home?

6. Grammar. Look at phrases **in red** from the article.

Now, look at the grammar box. Which patterns do the phrases follow?

<u>Pattern 1</u> verb + Infinitive with to	<u>Pattern 2</u> Verb + Object + Infinitive with to	<u>Pattern 3</u> Verb + Object + Infinitive without to

LANGUAGE PRESENTATION

In English, we have different patterns of verbs that follow other verbs. Look at other examples for each pattern below.

Verb + Infinitive with to:

We **wanted to meet** at the club, but I left the office late.

Celine **hopes to spend** more time with her family this year.

Other verbs that follow this pattern: agree, arrange, choose, expect, intend, learn, manage, need, prepare, promise.

Verb + Object + Infinitive with to

My colleagues **invited me to spend** the weekend on a fishing trip.

His parents have **encouraged him to be** a pilot.

Other verbs that follow this pattern: ask, force, need, remind, tell, would like, expect, help, persuade, teach, want

Verbs + Object + Infinitive without to

The teacher **saw Anna bump** and fall down the stairs.

I could **watch them dance** all night long.

Other verbs that follow this pattern: hear, make, let, help

There are also verbs that are followed by a gerund (-ing) form. Look at the examples:

I'd rather **avoid eating** dairy. I think I'm lactose intolerant.

I'm seriously **considering moving** to a different country.

Other verbs that are followed by a gerund (-ing) form: enjoy, finish, imagine, keep, mind, practise, regret, risk, suggest.

7. PRACTICE. Complete the sentences below with the verbs in brackets in the correct form. Use infinitive + to, infinitive without to, or gerund (-ing). Sometimes, more than one answer is possible.

1. I want _____ how to play the piano. (learn)
2. She made me _____ watching stupid reality shows. (stop)
3. My partner enjoys _____ in the morning, but I do it every evening. (swim)
4. Sam decided _____ to college in another city. (go)
5. My classmates helped me _____ for the chemistry exam. (study)
6. The cardiologist suggested _____ in the park every morning to keep me healthy. (run)
7. I practise _____ by watching movies without subtitles. (listen)
8. Sam will regret _____ college. I'm sure about that! (quit)

8. Speaking. In pairs, share your ideas about the questions below. Refer to the Language Presentation and focus on the use of the correct patterns for the verbs.

- a) Have you or anyone you know ever risked changing careers? Why did you or the person decide to do it?
- b) When you're feeling overwhelmed, do you consider stepping away from the situation or do you prefer to face it straight away? Why?
- c) In meetings at your workplace, what techniques or incentives are used to encourage people to come up with ideas or solutions?
- d) How do you avoid getting into disagreements or conflicts with people either at work or in your family?

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TEACHERS' NOTES

The topic of this lesson is to discuss alternatives about what we can do when we are not really sure about what the best thing to do is. In this worksheet, students will watch a very short video and then follow up with an article. Both video and article have their links provided. Then, students will study the use of verb patterns with infinitive, infinitive without to and gerund.

1. **Watch this short video.** Explain that the video is about a girl who's going to interview Kate Winslet, a very famous British actress, star of a lot of films, including *Titanic*.

Ask students if they have ever talked to a famous person. If so, ask them to describe how they felt and what the occasion was. Then, ask students to imagine how they would feel if they had the opportunity to interview a very famous person.

After playing the video, with large classes put students in pairs so they can answer the questions together. Then, ask individual students to share their answers. In one-to-one classes, talk about the questions together with your student.

Students at a B1/B1+ level probably won't have any problems understanding the video, but the video script can be shown on a screen, or you can make copies for the students in case you think they need it.

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/VX_0-wXApvs

VIDEO SCRIPT

GIRL: Um, it's my first time.

KATE: This is your first time doing it?

GIRL: Yeah.

KATE: Ok, well, guess what? When we do this interview...

GIRL: Yeah?

KATE: It's going to be the most amazing interview. Ever.

GIRL: Ok.

KATE: And do you know why?

GIRL: Why?

KATE: Because we've decided that it is going to be. So, we've decided right now, me and you.

GIRL: Yeah.

KATE: This is going to be a really fantastic interview.

GIRL: Ok.

KATE: And you can ask me anything that you want. And you don't have to be scared. Everything's going to be amazing.

GIRL: Ok.

KATE: Ok. You got this!
GIRL: Yeah.
KATE: Ok. Let's do it!

2. With larger classes, put students into pairs to discuss the questions. If you work one- to-one, share ideas with your student. Encourage students to give details about their answers. Notice that the context here doesn't have to be work related.

3. Read the article below. Tell students that they are going to read an article about what to do when you don't know what to do. Speculate about what kind of things could generate such doubts about what the right thing to do is either at work or at home.

Tell students that the subheadings have been removed from the original text. Refer to the numbered gaps in the article and explain that they should read each part and choose the most appropriate subheading from the list. Read the list with the students, clarifying meaning if necessary. Emphasise that there is one subheading in the list that will not be used. With larger classes, tell students to compare answers in pairs before you check with the whole class. Ask different pairs to share their answers.

4. Read the article again and answer the following questions.

Tell students they will answer the questions individually, referring to the article. Encourage them to use their own words instead of just copying from the article. Check answers with the class, asking individual students to share their ideas. You can also check understanding of vocabulary from the article students may have trouble with.

a) The author of the text was planning to fire one of his employees and replace him with another one. However, the employee considered for the position also had to be let go, and now he has no one to replace either position.

b) The honesty behind the fact that you admit your failures brings about a more transparent work environment, with more trust among employers and employees.

c) The effects physical exercise has on blood flow and breathing together with the closeness to nature help to keep your head clear and open to solutions.

d) The author suggests you do any kind of reading, from books to articles.

e) When you rush to find a solution to a problem, you don't give yourself time to consider different alternatives. Also, when you delay the decision-making process, new ideas can come up.

f) Friends can help you keep your head together, they help you remember past situations when you succeeded, and they can also provide you with new points of view about how to solve a problem.

g) The approach suggested is a kind of mental roleplay, when you imagine what other people who work with you would probably tell you to do.

<https://www.inc.com/eric-holtzclaw/what-to-do-when-you-don-t-know-what-to-do.html>

5. Allow some minutes for students to discuss the questions in pairs. Monitor and offer any help with language if necessary. Ask some students to share their ideas with the class. You can have a class vote on what suggestion from the article is the most useful.

- 1. The girl from the video follows the first strategy: she admits that she doesn't know what to do because it's the first time she interviews someone.**
- 2. Students' own ideas.**
- 3. Students' own ideas.**

6. LANGUAGE PRESENTATION. Tell students to look at the phrases in red from the article. You could write them on the board, showing students that there are two verbs in each phrase. Read the patterns presented in the grammar box. Do the first one as an example and then give students some minutes to complete the exercise. In a large class, ask students to compare answers in pairs before you check them.

<u>Pattern 1</u> verb + Infinitive with to	<u>Pattern 2</u> Verb + Object + Infinitive with to	<u>Pattern 3</u> Verb + Object + Infinitive without to
decided to fire plan to replace	allowing you to make advise you to handle	let him go makes you breathe help you clear recommend you do

Read the explanation with the students, showing the different verbs that follow each pattern. Be prepared to give examples of sentences with the other verbs of each pattern's list. Point out that some verbs may follow more than one pattern, e.g., help, would like, and want.

7. PRACTICE. Tell students that they should refer to the lists of verbs for each pattern in part 4. Point out that more than one answer may be possible. With a larger class, ask students to check the answers in pairs before you check with the whole group.

- 1. to learn**
- 2. stop**
- 3. swimming**
- 4. to go**
- 5. study / to study**

6. **running**
7. **listening**
8. **quitting**

8. Speaking Go through the questions with the students, explaining any words that could be trickier. Also, check students' understanding about the questions.

In a larger class, put students in pairs and allow them some minutes to discuss the questions. Encourage students to give reasons for their answers. Monitor and provide students with help in case they have trouble answering any questions. You could also ask the class if anyone would like to share any thoughts from their conversations. Always encourage the use of the verb pattern structures learned in the language presentation.

If you work one-to-one, allow some minutes for your student to think about their answers before sharing ideas. Encourage your student to give reasons for their answers and to use the verb pattern structures learned in the language presentation.

Ask students if their partners have shared any interesting stories. Encourage students to tell them to the class if appropriate.