

## Improve your English for BBE/BaWiSo

If you found this activity difficult and would like to improve your English, here are some resources that you might find useful.

### General reading & listening

One of the best ways to improve your language skills is simply to practise, practise, practise. Watching films & videos are fun and great for improving your social English, but as preparation for studying in English, it's also important to be able to manage more advanced or formal vocabulary.

As well as just reading an article, watching a video or listening to a podcast passively, try to activate your thinking brain! While you're reading/watching/listening, try to pick out the three or four most important points and write them down:

- Why is this news? What is different or innovative?
- What has happened/how does it work/why does it work/why is it important (depending on the topic!)?
- What do people say about it? What does the writer think about it?

Think about whether you agree with them or not, and why. This will help make sure you have understood the text, is good practice for attending lectures, and makes it easier to remember.

DON'T look up every single word you don't know! Focus on identifying and thinking about the overall message. If a word comes up several times, or it seems to be an important piece of vocabulary for talking about this topic, make a note of it.

Some good places to find interesting, business-relevant topics (like the ones we use in the entrance exam) are:

- <https://www.ted.com/>
- <https://www.bbc.com/> and especially <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/>
- <https://edition.cnn.com/> and especially <https://edition.cnn.com/business>
- [https://www.businessinsider.com/?IR=C&\\_ga=2.74573911.458575909.1554317343-948642600.1552332953](https://www.businessinsider.com/?IR=C&_ga=2.74573911.458575909.1554317343-948642600.1552332953) (or go to [www.businessinsider.com](http://www.businessinsider.com) and select US edition)
- <https://www.bloomberg.com/businessweek> (this also has a podcast!)
- Most reputable English-language newspapers have a paywall, but *The New York Times* and *The Economist* have limited free access (and more if you register for free with an email address). The "Business This Week" section of *The Economist* is great for an overview of the business news in very short, manageable chunks (usually just a couple of sentences), although the language is often quite advanced. *The Guardian* has unlimited access for everybody!

## Grammar & vocabulary

When you look up vocabulary, try to use the “legacy” dictionaries, which have more precise definitions, sample sentences and even some additional information about how to use the word (e.g. collocations and set phrases). As well as writing down the meaning, use it in a sentence to try and learn it in context, which makes it easier to remember.

It’s worth keeping a notebook for vocabulary so it’s all in one place and you can find it again. There are also numerous apps that let you create flashcards like <https://quizlet.com> or <https://www.goconqr.com/> which make it easy to practise specific vocabulary whenever you have a few minutes to kill.

- <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/>
- <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/>
- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>
- <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/> (you can also select the “business dictionary” tab which gives more technical definitions)
- <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/> (this is particularly good for collocations)
- [www.visuwords.com](http://www.visuwords.com) (a “graphic” dictionary for visual learners where definitions are presented in the form of a mind map!)

There are millions of websites (and YouTube videos) for learning English! Mostly it’s just a matter of finding one you like. Some of the ones we can recommend, which also have a special section explaining aspects of grammar, are:

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/> (this also has a specific business section)
- <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/>
- <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/>
- <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/grammar/>
- <https://www.grammar-monster.com/>