

# International commerce

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Anglès tècnic



# Índex

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Learning objectives</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1 Trade</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1 Import-export . . . . .	11
1.2 Markets . . . . .	14
1.3 E-commerce . . . . .	14
1.4 Language in use . . . . .	15
1.4.1 Oral language . . . . .	15
1.4.2 Informal conversations . . . . .	17
1.4.3 Formal conversations . . . . .	19
1.5 Further reading . . . . .	20
1.5.1 Communication: language styles . . . . .	22
1.5.2 Grammar reference: sentence structure (I) . . . . .	26
<b>2 Purchasing</b>	<b>33</b>
2.1 Products . . . . .	33
2.2 The purchasing process . . . . .	35
2.3 Language in use . . . . .	36
2.3.1 Communication: business correspondence . . . . .	40
2.3.2 Grammar reference: sentence structure (II) . . . . .	50
<b>3 Logistics</b>	<b>55</b>
3.1 The modes of transport in logistics . . . . .	55
3.2 Business agreements . . . . .	56
3.3 Packaging logistics . . . . .	61
3.4 Language in use . . . . .	63
3.4.1 Communication: talking about time and place . . . . .	66
3.4.2 Grammar reference: prepositions of time and place . . . . .	70



## Introduction

Each unit of this course has a central theme and it provides information and examples set in business contexts with the aim of giving the students the tools to develop the language skills in their workplace. Furthermore, you will also find exercises and activities online to practise the contents of the unit.

This unit, “International commerce”, is intended to describe the operations involved in trade, especially in international transactions, the workforce, activities, documentation and processes of international trade. We will meet different people whose work is related to this sector. All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. They are serving the purpose of showing plausible contexts and situations which students of international commerce might encounter, thus providing them with helpful vocabulary and resources to use in a real workplace situation.

The unit is composed of three separate sections, each of them divided into four different parts. The first one includes some reading texts about topics related to the unit. The second part, called “Language in use”, includes explanations about the oral and the written language with multiple examples, such as emails, letters or conversations. The third part is called “Communication” and it offers practical examples of the use of the English language in different situations and to serve different purposes. Finally, there is a grammar reference, with grammar contents to use as a reference and as a revision of different grammatical points. This structure will be present in every section of this book.

The section called “Trade” contains information about the process of importing and exporting goods. We will get acquainted with terms such as comparative advantage, specialization or protectionism, which are essential to understand the mechanisms of international trade. Additionally, we will learn some facts about markets and its protagonists, and we will see the description of the process of ordering items online.

In the “Language in use” section there are different conversations. The first one is an interview to Lily, an import-export clerk who works for Patterson Lines. She describes her job and tells us how she feels about it. Then, there are some other conversations set in various contexts, formal and informal.

The “Communication” section explains the difference between the language styles (formal and informal) and between the written and the oral languages. These differences are very clearly marked in English.

The grammar section deals with the structure of the English statements and questions. This refers to the correct use and position of the elements that compose a sentence, which is especially important in written English. On the other hand, this section also explains the correct answer to yes/no questions.

In the section “Purchasing”, there is a description of the purchasing process, which starts from the moment a need of a product is identified until it is delivered to the final customer. Furthermore, we will learn what a product is and see a classification of different types of products.

In the “Language in use” section there is an example of a purchase order and some emails with examples of different stages in the purchasing process.

The “Communication” section deals with two important examples of written English: business letters and emails, which are very important in a business environment. You will learn the structure of business letters and emails as well as the type of language which is necessary depending on the context. This part also includes a list of connectors and the basic rules of spelling and punctuation in English.

The grammar section continues the topic of the structure of English sentences. In this case, we are going to learn about the verbal complements of other verbs. Those verbal components can go in infinitive, in gerund or in both, but there are no clear rules to establish which form they take.

The section “Logistics” is about the fascinating world of logistics, how different pieces of the network interconnect to attain the final goal of transporting any goods from the point of origin in any country to their final destination. We will learn vocabulary related to transport and modes of transport, read about incoterms and packaging. Finally, we will meet Gary Clerk, from Los Angeles, who moved to England and works for an English logistics company.

In the “Language in use” section, Anna Garcia, who works in the purchasing department of KeepImmerFit, calls a Chinese company to order some goods and discusses the terms of the transaction with Ms Younghi’s secretary. After the discussion, Ms Garcia writes a mail confirming the order and the terms agreed on the phone.

The section called “Communication” is devoted to talk about time in English. You will learn about the correct way of expressing the dates (both in the written and oral language) and the clock times.

In the grammar section, we are going to learn about the use of the prepositions of time and place. In English, the use of the prepositions does not always conform to a logical use, so it is sometimes necessary to learn the prepositional phrase (for example, *at the weekend*) as a whole.

## Learning objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Understand oral messages in standard language through any means of communication, both in daily life situations and in the professional field of administration and finance, and understand the contents of the message accurately.

- Identify the main idea in a message.
- Identify the finality of oral messages in standard language as well as the tone and feelings of the speaker.
- Get information from recorded messages in standard language related to the professional field of administration and finance.
- Identify the points of view and attitude of the speaker.
- Identify the main ideas in a speech in standard language and at normal speed about specific and abstract issues related to the field of administration and finance.
- Understand the details of a message in standard language, even with background noises.
- Identify the main ideas in a speeches, reports and professional presentations related to the field of administration and finance.
- Be conscious of the importance of understanding a message as a whole, even if you don't understand all the words.

2. Understand complex written texts related to the field of administration and finance and analyze the contents comprehensively.

- Read a text with a high degree of autonomy, adapting the style and speed of the reading to different types of text and objectives.
- Read the details of long and relatively complex texts related to the field of administration and finance.
- Relate the text to its corresponding context.
- Quickly identify the contents and importance of pieces of news, articles and reports related to the field of administration and finance and decide whether a deeper analysis is necessary.
- Translate complex texts related to the field of administration and finance using reference materials, if necessary.

- Interpret technical messages in different means: post, fax and email, among others.
- Interpret long and complex instructions related to the professional field.
- Choose reference material and technical dictionaries and use automatic translators.

3. Produce clear, well-organized oral messages frequently used in jobs related to the field of administration and finance and analyze the context of the situation, adapting yourself to the other's linguistic register.

- Identify the registers used in oral messages.
- Express yourself fluently, accurately and efficiently in a great variety of professional and daily life situations, clearly establishing the relationship between the different ideas.
- Express yourself spontaneously with the appropriate degree of formality according to the situation.
- Use the appropriate protocol in formal and informal introductions.
- Make a correct use of the technical words related to the field of administration and finance as normally used in your profession.
- Express and defend your points of view clearly by using the appropriate explanations and reasoning.
- Describe the steps in a process related to your professional field.
- Explain the choice of a specific option in detail.
- Require the repetition of a speech or part of a speech when necessary.
- Apply the appropriate interaction formulas normally used in your professional field.

4. Write texts normally used at work and in the daily life and use the appropriate register for each situation.

- Write clear, detailed texts about a variety of issues related to the professional field, summarizing and considering the information from different sources.
- Organize the information correctly, accurately and coherently and ask for and/or give general and detailed information.
- Write reports related to the professional field pointing out the relevant aspects and giving details to support your points.
- Fill in documents related to the professional field.
- Apply the standard rules and the specific vocabulary used to fill in administrative, accounting, fiscal and financial documents.

- Summarize articles, pieces of news and other types of information related to the professional field using a great variety of words to avoid frequent repetitions.
- Understand the most important points in manuals, regulations, legislations and other written texts as normally used in the field of administration and finance.
- Use the appropriate protocol rules that apply to a specific document.

5. Show the appropriate attitude and behaviour in communicative situations as established by international conventions.

- Define the most distinctive aspects of the customs of your professional field in the use of a foreign language.
- Describe the social conventions of the English-speaking countries.
- Identify the values and beliefs which are characteristic of English-speaking countries.
- Apply the social conventions in English-speaking communities.
- Identify the language traits of different regions.



## 1. Trade

Trade refers to the act or process of buying, selling, or exchanging commodities from one person or entity to another, and the network that allows trade is a market.

Trade can be either wholesale or retail, within a country or between countries. Retail trade consists of the sale of goods to the people who will use them, the end users, as opposed to wholesale which is selling to someone who sells to consumers. Retailing takes place at department stores, malls and markets, online or by mail, while wholesaling occurs in large warehouses, where wholesalers store and repack the goods they buy from the producer to redistribute them in smaller lots. Markets are available locally as well as internationally. Local trade is carried out within countries, cities, towns or villages and it takes place in markets and stores where items of local needs are traded. On the other hand, international trade is the exchange of commodities between two or more countries.

### 1.1 Import-export

International commerce can be defined as trade between states or nations. In the trade process, products or services are exchanged. Exports are goods and services sold to one country from another. Imports are goods or services bought by one country from another country. South Africa, for example, exports products such as fruit, vegetables and wine, while it imports products such as crude oil, aircrafts or vehicles, and services, such as engineers, banking expertise or medical specialists.

Almost no human being lives with things manufactured in their home country, and there is no single country in the world which is self-reliant. Consequently, countries trade with each other to exchange the goods or services that they cannot produce or which may not be viable for production.

#### Specialization and comparative advantage

With international exchanges of goods and services, countries get to enjoy a wider variety of goods that may have a better quality. Besides that, the key reason for trade is that by trading goods, countries can afford to *specialize* in producing only some items that they are relatively better at producing. It means that not every country needs to produce everything, just focus on what it produces more efficiently or what it has the *comparative advantage* in, and exchange this for what it is not so great at producing. On a global scale, this means that the world becomes a global production hub where each country specializes in producing what they are best at. Therefore, international trade is a step forward for the world in increasing efficiency.

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**Comparative advantage** is a theory based on relativity. If a country or company is relatively better at making a product, it should make that product and not something else.

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## International transactions: the import-export process

International trade may seem a recent phenomenon. However, commerce has been taking place since ancient times and has allowed for the exchange of needed or desired goods and services. It has undergone changes throughout the years and nowadays it is regulated by international laws.

WTO is an intergovernmental organization which regulates international trade. It deals with regulation of trade between participating countries by providing a framework for negotiating trade agreements and a dispute resolution process.

In 1947 the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was created to reduce tariffs between 23 nations, and it was replaced by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995. In 1957 the European Economic Community was formed, and in the 1980s and early 90s European leaders signed agreements that would create a unified European economy in 1993. In 1992 leaders from the United States, Canada, and Mexico signed a treaty to form a North American free trade zone (NAFTA).

The import-export process involves a lot of documentation, which plays an extensive role in international transactions.

The process starts at the origin. Once the products are ready, the manufacturer will issue a certificate of manufacture certifying that the goods have been made to the buyer’s specifications. Before shipping, the goods will be inspected and they will be given a certificate of inspection, which certifies that the merchandise meets the required standards.

FIGURA 1.1

**09 February 2017**

### CERTIFICATE OF MANUFACTURE

**Company:** Unicorn Ltd.  
20 Mahler Building  
Gustav Mahlerlaan 105  
1082 MK Amsterdam  
The Netherlands

We hereby certify that the products listed below are manufactured by Unicorn Ltd., of 20 Mahler Building, Gustav Mahlerlaan 1025, 1082 MK Amsterdam, The Netherlands. All products listed below are manufactured in The Netherlands.

**Product:**

Product	Description	Unit Quantity
Floor underlayment	Asphaltic laminated paper: 36" wide roll lengths 300'	25 rolls
Concrete underlayment	PE coated membrane for use under concrete slabs for moisture protection: 96" wide, roll length 250'	10 rolls

International Department  
Kamer van Koophandel

This certificate is based on the information supplied to the Chamber of Commerce by the Exporter/Consignor and is not to be taken as amounting to a warranty or representation of fact by the Chamber or its servants

Once the merchandise is given the certificate of manufacture, the seller will issue a proforma invoice and the buyer may obtain a letter of credit to finance the payment. Next, the seller will draw up a bill of lading and arrange shipment under internationally agreed terms, known as incoterms.

When a shipment reaches its destination, merchandise is often stored in a bonded warehouse until the import tax or duty is paid. The importer or the designated licensed customs broker files the entry documents for the goods port of entry. Imported goods are not legally entered only after the shipment has arrived within the port of entry, delivery of the merchandise has been authorized by the customs, and estimated duties have been paid. Finally, the importer has to arrange for examination and release of the goods.

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A **customs broker** is a person or firm licensed to represent an importer or exporter in front of customs authorities. The broker files the appropriate paperwork and helps ensure that the goods being imported comply with all applicable regulations.

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## Protectionism

Different countries have different laws for protecting their economy and the local producers. Protectionism is the policy of restraining and discouraging trade between states and contrasts with the policy of free trade. This policy often takes the form of tariffs and restrictive quotas.

A tariff is a tax on imports or exports, which is popularly referred to as a customs duty. An import quota is a type of protectionist trade restriction that sets a physical limit on the quantity of a good that can be imported into a country in a given period of time.

Quotas, like other trade restrictions, are typically used to benefit the producers of a product at the expense of consumers in that economy. Quotas are considered to be less economically efficient than tariffs, which in turn are less economically efficient than free trade.

TAULA 1.1. Vocabulary

<b>Bill of lading, B/L (n):</b> document de coneixement d'embarcament	<b>Manufacturer (n):</b> fabricant
<b>Bonded warehouse (n):</b> dipòsit de la duana	<b>Merchandise (n):</b> mercaderia
<b>Certificate of manufacture (n):</b> certificat de fabricació	<b>Port of entry (n):</b> port d'entrada
<b>Comparative advantage (n):</b> avantatge comparatiu	<b>Production hub (n):</b> centre de producció
<b>Customs broker (n):</b> agent de duanes	<b>Proforma invoice (n):</b> factura proforma
<b>Customs duty (n):</b> aranzel, impost d'importació	<b>Proteccionisme (n):</b> proteccionisme
<b>Export (n):</b> exportació	<b>Quota (n):</b> quota
<b>Free trade (n):</b> lliure comerç	<b>Self-reliant (adj):</b> auto-suficient
<b>Import (n):</b> importació	<b>Tariff (n):</b> aranzel, impost
<b>Letter of credit (n):</b> carta de crèdit, crèdit documentari	<b>Trade (n):</b> comerç
<b>Manufacture (v):</b> fabricar, manufacturar	

## 1.2 Markets

This role is played by the middlemen, who act as intermediaries, ensuring that the distribution channel between the producer and the end user is complete. Examples of middlemen include wholesalers, retailers, agents and brokers.

Wholesalers and agents are closer to the producers. They buy the goods in bulk and sell them to the retailers in large quantities. Retailers and brokers acquire the goods from the wholesalers and sell them in small quantities to the consumers. Consumers may also choose to bypass the intermediaries and buy directly from the producers. Internet is gradually becoming the communication channel between the two parties, and it is enabling to accelerate the sales process.

Market forces influence the price of goods and services, called market price. This price depends on the supply (quantity available), and the demand (how many buyers want them). If the demand is constant, and there is a decline of supply it results in a rise of its market price and vice versa. This often happens with seasonal products, such as fruit and vegetables. If the demand is greater than the supply, prices will go up and producers will increase production.

TAULA 1.2. Vocabulary

<b>Agent (n):</b> agent	<b>Market price (n):</b> preu de mercat
<b>Broker (n):</b> corredor de borsa, <i>broker</i>	<b>Middleman (n):</b> intermediari
<b>Buy in bulk (v):</b> comprar a l'engròs	<b>Producer (n):</b> productor
<b>Consumer (n):</b> consumidor	<b>Production (n):</b> producció
<b>Demand (n):</b> demanda	<b>Retailer (n):</b> minorista
<b>Distribution channel (n):</b> canal de distribució	<b>Sales process (n):</b> procés de venda
<b>End user (n):</b> consumidor final	<b>Supply (n):</b> oferta
<b>Increase (n):</b> augmentar, apujar	<b>Wholesaler (n):</b> majorista

## 1.3 E-commerce

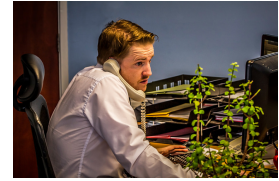
Failing to digitalise fast enough will lead to sweeping penalties including reduced market responsiveness, higher relative costs impacting pricing and revenues, not to mention problems with customer retention and loyalty.

Rigby, Chloe (2016). *Too much, too fast? Retailers under pressure for digital transformation* [article en línia](#). Internet Retailing Expo.

Virtual commerce is currently taking over the traditional commerce, specially in the case of flight tickets, hotel bookings, or tour holidays, although more and more products are gradually being sold online. A product or a service is offered in an online shop, the seller's website. If you are looking for a product, you can use a

search engine to see the offer. Once you have found it, you add the items to the shopping basket or shopping cart, and click on the checkout button in order to proceed to the payment.

You may have to sign up and provide your personal data, address, contact email, etc. if it is the first time that you access the website. You will be given an account and you will be asked to enter your payment details. If you pay with a credit card, you might have to provide some information, such as the card number, the cardholder's name, the expiring date, and the secret code on the back of your card. If you have your account from a previous purchase, you will have to log in by using your username and password. When you finish the transaction, you have to log out



Although sometimes e-commerce websites enable a customer service telephone line, most often this attention is provided via e-mail or messaging. Source: CWCS Managed Hosting ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com))

There are some drawbacks to e-commerce. The main one is the customer service, since it lacks the personal touch of a traditional shop. In addition, you make the purchase and you do not get the product till it is delivered to you, whereas in a traditional store you get the product and carry it back home. There is also the risk of credit card fraud. Therefore, it is important to work on prevention in order to avoid it.

TAULA 1.3. Vocabulary

<b>Account (n):</b> compte	<b>Online shop (n):</b> botiga online
<b>Cardholder (n):</b> titular de la targeta	<b>Password (n):</b> contrasenya
<b>Checkout button (n):</b> botó de confirmació	<b>Search engine (n):</b> buscador
<b>Deliver (v):</b> lliurar, trametre, entregar	<b>Shopping basket (n):</b> cistell de la compra
<b>Drawback (n):</b> inconvenient	<b>Shopping cart (n):</b> carro de la compra
<b>Expiring date (n):</b> data de caducitat	<b>Sign up (v):</b> registrar-se
<b>Hotel booking (n):</b> reserva en un hotel	<b>Username (n):</b> nom d'usuari
<b>Log in (v):</b> iniciar sessió	<b>Website (n):</b> lloc web
<b>Log out (v):</b> tancar sessió	

## 1.4 Language in use

In this section we are going to see some examples of oral texts occurring in different situations. For each of them there will be a short explanation to highlight some of the characteristics of the language used. Notice the difference between formal and informal style.

### 1.4.1 Oral language

Read the following interview and pay attention to the structure of the questions as well as to the vocabulary and expressions that Lily uses to describe her job. See

the language notes after the interview.

### **Interview**

**Reporter:** This is Business Channel, we are here in Patterson Lines to learn about this company operations. Lily Herald is with us today. Hello, Ms Herald. How are you?

**Lily:** Hello. Fine, thanks.

**Reporter:** Ms Herald, do you like your job? (1)

**Lily:** Yes, I do. I just love it!

**Reporter:** Tell us about it. What does the job entail? (1) (2)

**Lily:** I'm an import-export clerk at Patterson Lines. I have a wide range of duties, I deal with each step of the shipping process, such as tracking shipments, giving the clients updates about the package's status, coordinating with customs agents for package clearance on overseas deliveries. Besides, I deal with quotes from prospective shippers and handle claims with insurance companies if any shipments occur.

**Reporter:** And what are your everyday tasks? (3)

**Lily:** The main task is to provide efficient delivery logistics. I fill out import-export documentation, compile carrier and route assignments, compute international fees for each shipment, and keep track of shipment payments and quotas.

**Reporter:** How long have you been with this company? (4)

**Lily:** I've been with Patterson Lines for 10 years.

**Reporter:** Where did you work before? (5)

**Lily:** Before that, I had been working as a freelance customs agent.

**Reporter:** Why did you quit your last job? (6)

**Lily:** Well, it was interesting, but frankly, it was too stressful. Then I got the job offer from Patterson Lines and I took it.

**Reporter:** What is your advice for someone new in this business? (3)

**Lily:** My advice...concentrate and focus on a task until you finish it. Revise all the figures at least twice. Any error in currency exchange or insurance fee could be disastrous.

**Reporter:** Ok, we'll note it down. Any other important requirement? (7)

**Lily:** Yes, sure. There's no need to tell you how important it is to master as many languages as possible, specially English and French.

**Reporter:** Thank you, Ms Parker. Now, moving to a different issue... How is the company presence on the web?

**Lily:** Everything is done online. Online commerce represents a big percentage of the total sales.

**Reporter:** Thank you for all the information. It has been a pleasure talking to you.

### Language notes

(1) These are “yes/no” questions. See the structure: *do/does + subj. + Verb + Compl.*

(2) We use various expressions to describe a job:

- The job entails / involves...
- I am in charge of...
- I work for...(name of the company)
- I deal with...
- The tasks I perform are...

(3) In this question we have used an interrogative pronoun “what”. In order to make questions we need an auxiliary, but in this case we have used the verb “to be”, which does not use any auxiliary verb.

(4) In this question we have the interrogative words “how long”. The verb tense is the present perfect. In order to make the question we invert the order of the subject and the verb. The structure is: *int. word + have + subj. + Verb?*

(5) This is a “yes/no” question in the past. The structure is: *Did + subj. + Verb?*

(6) We have used the past tense, but unlike the previous question, it has an interrogative pronoun at the beginning: “why?”

(7) The sentence is not grammatically complete, but it can be used. It is as if we said “(Is there) any important requirement?”

TAULA 1.4. Vocabulary

<b>Assignment (n):</b> assignació	<b>Fee (n):</b> tarifa, preu
<b>Carrier (n):</b> empresa de transports, transportista	<b>Fill out (v):</b> emplenar (un document)
<b>Clear (v):</b> autoritzar, permetre	<b>Handle claims (v):</b> gestionar reclamacions
<b>Clerk (n):</b> empleat	<b>Insurance company (n):</b> companyia d'assegurances
<b>Compute (n):</b> calcular	<b>Overseas delivery (n):</b> tramesa a l'estranger
<b>Currency exchange (n):</b> canvi de divises	<b>Prospective shipper (n):</b> transportista potencial
<b>Customs (pl n):</b> duana	<b>Quote (n):</b> pressupost
<b>Customs agent (n):</b> agent de duanes	<b>Shipping process (n):</b> procés de la tramesa
<b>Customs clearance (n):</b> tràmits duaners	<b>Track shipment (v):</b> fer el seguiment de la tramesa
<b>Delivery logistics (pl n):</b> logística de la tramesa	

### 1.4.2 Informal conversations

The following are informal conversations. Read the situation and the dialogues.

**Situation 1**

*Lily and Claire are at the office, and they are talking about a dress which Claire purchased online.*

**Lily:** Hey, where did you buy this dress from?

**Claire:** I ordered it from dressfine.com.

**Lily:** Isn't it expensive there?

**Claire:** No, not at all. It has some great deals! I got crazy discounts!

**Lily:** How much did this cost you?

**Claire:** Well, I got a 35% discount on the retail price!

**Lily:** Wow, that's great. I will look at it today.

**Situation 2**

*The next day, Lily requests Claire's assistance to guide her to the process of booking a flight online.*

**Claire:** Hi Lily, how are you doing?

**Lily:** Hi Claire, yea... fine. Just a bit stressed, trying to book a flight.

**Claire:** Awesome! Where are you flying to?

**Lily:** Istanbul. But I don't know where to start.

**Claire:** Well, there are many websites where you can get a good offer. Why don't you try Rumbo or Kayak? These websites search for flights in different airline companies.

**Lily:** Ok. Can you help me?

**Claire:** Ok. Get to the website, click "return" for a return ticket or "one way" if you don't want to book the return. Select the city of origin, the destination airport, and the departure and the arrival date. Then type the number of passengers. Once you've done that, click "Search".

**Lily:** Wow! So many options!

**Claire:** Yes, you can see the list. Now just click one. But I advise you to look at it carefully, as sometimes you have to stop over.

**Lily:** Great! Look, this one is exactly what I need! This flight departing from London Heathrow at 9.30 am.

For more information about formal and informal styles, see section "Formal style vs informal style".

**Language notes**

One of the characteristics of oral language is the use of interjections (in the text: "hey", "wow", "yea") and expressions to describe emotions or opinions ("great deals", "crazy discounts", "that's great" "awesome").

**Fixed expressions and collocations** are as well frequent. These are groups of words that usually go together. For example: "great deals", "crazy discounts", "retail price", "stop over". There are no rules on how these collocations are formed, they simply 'sound right' to the native speaker.

TAULA 1.5. Vocabulary

**Airline company (n):** companyia aèrea

**Non-stop flight (n):** vol sense escales

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<b>Arrival date (n):</b> data d'arribada	<b>One-way ticket (n):</b> bitllet d'anada
<b>Book a flight (v):</b> reservar un vol	<b>Retail price (n):</b> preu de venda al públic
<b>Deal (n):</b> oferta	<b>Return ticket (n):</b> bitllet d'anada i tornada
<b>Departure date (n):</b> data de sortida	<b>Stop over (v):</b> fer escala (un vol)
<b>Discount (n):</b> descompte	<b>Stop-over (n):</b> escala (en un vol)

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### 1.4.3 Formal conversations

Now we will look at two formal conversations. In the first one, Mr Brooks introduces himself to Mr Ross, and they elicit information from each other while conversing politely. In the second one Mr Brooks introduces him to Ms Parker.

Both conversations could take place in any business or formal context. Observe the differences with the previous informal conversations. Here there are no interjections or personal comments. The tone is quite neutral, not emotional.

#### Situation 1

**Mr Brooks:** Hello, I don't think we've met (1)... Thomas Brooks.

**Mr Ross:** Ben Ross, pleased to meet you (2).

**Mr Brooks:** Pleased to meet you, too. And what company are you from?(3)

**Mr Ross:** Patterson lines, I'm the sales representative for this region.

**Mr Brooks:** Ah! yes, I know your company. Your business is expanding very rapidly at this moment.

**Mr Ross:** Yes, we're doing quite well. And yourself... Who do you work for?(3)

**Mr Brooks:** Actually, I work for myself. I'm the CEO of an small export and packaging company, we specialized in sea food.

**Mr Ross:** It's a growing market.

**Mr Brooks:** Yes, but a very competitive one.

#### Situation 2

**Mr Brooks:** Mr Ross, let me introduce you to someone. Claire, this is Ben Brooks. He is the regional rep for Patterson lines. This is Claire Parker(4), my sales manager.

**Ms Parker:** How are you doing, Mr Ross?

**Mr Ross:** I'm very well, thank you. Nice to meet you, Ms Parker.

**Ms Parker:** And you.

**Mr Ross:** Can I get you another drink?

**Ms Parker:** Thank you.

### Language notes

(1) This is a way to break the ice and introduce yourself to someone. It could be used in a conference or any business environment where people do not know each other.

(2) This is a fixed expression used when you meet someone.

(3) Two different expressions to ask for someone's career.

(4) The expression "This is..." is used to introduce a third party.

TAULA 1.6. Vocabulary

<b>Business (n):</b> negoci, empresa	<b>Packaging company (n):</b> empresa d'embalatges
<b>CEO (n)</b> (Chief Executive Officer): Director General	<b>Rep (n)</b> (=representative): representant, venedor
<b>Company (n):</b> empresa, companyia	<b>Sales manager (n):</b> director de vendes, cap de vendes
<b>Competitive (adj):</b> competitiu	<b>Sales representative (n):</b> representant, venedor
<b>Growing market (n):</b> mercat en expansió	

## 1.5 Further reading

European retailers are under pressure to move towards digital transformation, but most believe they are playing catch-up and that they don't have a proper strategy in place, a new study suggests.

The Fujitsu study, *Walking the Digital Tightrope*, questioned 600 IT decision makers in Europe about their digitalisation decisions – and found that retailers were the most likely group among those questioned to believe they lacked a clear strategy in reaching their goals. Four in five said they wanted to move faster towards digital investment, but 83% admitted they were gambling with their digitalisation investments, and almost three quarters said they were playing digital catch-up. One in three think they are overspending on digital projects, while one in four is 'extremely confident' about making the right choices.

"As online and physical worlds come even closer together, the development of 'the connected store' will become a key differentiator for retailers," said Richard Clarke, global retail director for strategy and business development at Fujitsu. "Retailers are under extreme and constant pressure to head down the 'digital express aisle'. Fujitsu research finds that four in five retailers want to move faster toward digital adoption. They agree that failing to digitalise fast enough will lead to sweeping penalties including reduced market responsiveness, higher relative costs impacting pricing and revenues, not to mention problems with customer retention and loyalty."

One chief executive told Fujitsu: "A simple homepage or online shop is no longer enough. The buzzword is omnichannel, as the customer decides when, where, how and which distribution channel is used."

Clarke adds: "Customers want the same personalised service in-store that they get online, whether that's through their smartphone or a store device. However, the lack of clear digital ownership across all channels and conflicting priorities are a barrier to success.

"Fujitsu's connected retail strategy focuses on supporting its retail customers on their journey to omnichannel digital transformation and in enabling them to achieve balance, both in order for them to thrive in a digital world as well as to transform their businesses without disruption."

Rigby, Chloe (2016). *Too much, too fast? Retailers under pressure for digital transformation*.

[Article en línia](#). Internet Retailing Expo.

The news that Debenhams is seeing a boom in sales through mobile comes as no surprise. As my esteemed colleague Chloe Rigby points out, department stores tend to see online sales grow more quickly than elsewhere.

But there is another factor at play: shoppers are just becoming more mobile centric in their approach to shopping. According to UK-wide research by ICM for Criteo, 2.5 million UK consumers shop on their mobile for something every single day. If that's not mainstream, I don't know what is.

Buried within the report – upliftingly titled A portrait of mobile performance: Measuring the pleasure in UK mobile shopping in 2016 – are some really interesting factoids that give a really telling indication about why people are turning to mobile and why perhaps IRUK Top 500 retailer Debenhams [IRDX RDEB] is seeing such a surge in mobile sales.

According to the ICM research clothing, perhaps surprisingly, has become the premier purchase on mobile devices. Almost a quarter of the UK population say they have bought clothes on mobile, way ahead of those staples of music and film (16%) and health and beauty (14%).

This is surprising as you'd think people like to try things on before buying, but it seems that social pressure – through social media – and impulse buying are the real drivers here. A third of consumers are doing their mobile buying in front of the TV in the evening and 27% – almost as many – are doing it in bed at night.

Social media seems to be the main driver for this – although you could also perhaps argue that TV is also playing a role here – with heavy social media users buying more and buying on mobile more frequently than 'normal' people.

This is perhaps due to copycat shopping, where they see things their friends and contacts have bought and want it too, or more likely they are being egged on online by their friends to buy whatever it happens to be.

Either way, social media and mobile – which are increasingly joined at the hip in terms of user usage – are pushing mobile retail to new heights.

And it seems that Debenhams is one of the leading UK retailers that is open about how much of an impact this move is having.

The interesting thing here is that this growth – both at Debenhams and across the gamut of retailers in the ICM research – is so far almost entirely user driven. It seems that the brands themselves are doing very little to encourage how shoppers use social: it is the shoppers who are using social then, with a flick of the thumb, buying stuff that are in the driving seat.

This is something of a poser for the retailers. Right now it seems ok to let it tick along as is, growing nicely with little input (or spending!). But this isn't going to last. Right here is the data you need to start really pulling together what your social media marketing strategy should be. Perhaps stores and paid for Tweets aren't the way ahead; maybe you need to look more at brand advocates and other ways to get in on the conversations people are having on social – without getting too creepy.

Interestingly, in the ICM research, the sentiment from the consumers polled was that they are up for an increasingly emotional tie and a relationship with brands they like. This is clearly the way in for retailers. The challenge, as ever, is how to find the right voice and pitch your interaction at the right level to get them to love you and not think you are stalking them.

Skeldon, Paul (2016). *Song of experience: how finding the right social voice is key to m-retailing*. [Article en línia](#). Internet Retailing Expo.

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Debenhams is a multinational retailer operating under a department store format in the United Kingdom and Ireland with franchise stores in other countries.

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### 1.5.1 Communication: language styles

There are different styles in a language. On one hand, we can distinguish between formal and informal language. On the other hand, we can distinguish between written and oral language. Each style has its own rules and its own vocabulary.

The English are very fond of language protocol, so it is very important to use each style in the appropriate situation. When we have a conversation with a colleague, for example, we must follow the rules of the the oral and informal language, but when we write a business letter, we must use the written, formal style.

#### Formal style vs informal style

In English, there is a great difference between the formal language and the informal language. Here are the main characteristics of each style:

##### Formal style:

- Does not use colloquial words/expressions (use: “post” instead of “job”, “I would appreciate it if...” instead of “I would like...”, etc.).
- Does not use contractions (write full words: I am, do not, cannot, will not, etc.).
- Writes in third person (except in business letters, where the first person may be used).
- Does not address readers using the second person pronouns (use: “the reader” instead of “you”, etc.).
- Does not use abbreviated words (use full versions, like “photograph”, and not “photo”; “television”, and not “TV”, etc.).
- Does not use the imperative voice (say: “could you send me...?” instead of “send me...”).
- Uses the passive voice (for example: “it is believed that...” instead of “we believe that...”).
- Uses longer and more complex sentences (short and simple sentences makes a writing poor).

##### Informal:

- Uses colloquial words and expressions (well, kids, guy, etc.).
- Uses contractions (I’m, don’t, can’t, won’t, etc.).
- You may use first, second, or third person.

- You may address readers using the second person pronouns (you, your, etc.).
- You may use abbreviated words (photo, TV, etc.).
- You may use the imperative voice (for example: Send me..., Please remember..., etc.).
- You may use the active voice (for example: we believe that..., etc.).
- You may use short and simple sentences.

Remember that both styles are correct. It is a matter of tone and setting. Formal English is generally used in academic writing and business communication whereas informal English is appropriate for communication with friends and relatives. When you choose the style of writing, you should think what you are writing and who you are writing to, but you must be consistent and not mix the two styles.

Here is an example of a **formal text** requesting some information:

“This is to inform you that I am interested in the post of administrative assistant advertised in ‘The Guardian’ of 3rd March. I would appreciate it if you could send me further details. Thank you in advance.”

Here is the same text, but using the **informal style**:

“Do you remember the advertisement for a job as an administrative assistant? It was in ‘The Guardian’ of the last 3rd March. Well, I inform you that I’m interested in the job. Can you tell me more about it? Thanks.”

### Written language vs oral language

The characteristics of the oral language and the written language depend on the way in which we transmit the message: the oral language uses words and it is immediate whereas the written language uses letters and the result remains on a screen or a piece of paper, so we can go back and make corrections, if necessary. In general, the oral language tends to be more informal than the written language.

The two types are also related to the four skills:

- Written language: reading and writing
- Oral language: listening and speaking

## The written language

Unlike the oral language, which makes use of non-verbal communication to transmit the message, a written text is just what we see. When we speak, we can leave sentences unfinished, and change the tone of our voice to express feelings and emotions, but we cannot do so in a written text.

The characteristics of the written language are the following:

- It uses long forms: *I am, he is, I have got*, etc.
- It has some grammatical constructions that are only used in writing: *We are looking forward to your reply*, etc.
- It is organized in paragraphs.
- It makes a great use of connectors.
- It includes punctuation.
- The sentences are longer than in speech and they include subordinate clauses.
- In general, it is more formal than the oral language.

See the annex called "English phonetic symbols" for a description of the English sounds.

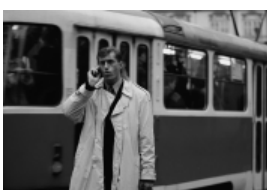
As with all the skills, writing a text correctly requires some practice. Here are some tips for producing a good written text:

1. Write short, simple sentences. The text might look poor at first, but as you advance in your knowledge of English, you can write longer sentences.
2. Organise your text into different paragraphs to separate the different blocks of information. Leave a blank space between the paragraphs.
3. Think about the right words to express your ideas. Use a dictionary in case of doubt, but pay attention to false friends and other confusing words.
4. Look for possible syntactical mistakes in the text. Think about the grammar rules that you have learned. If you have any doubts, look up the grammar explanations that you can find in your coursebook or elsewhere (websites, grammar references, etc.).
5. Check the spelling. Use a dictionary if you have any doubts.
6. Go over the punctuation rules and try to apply them to your writing, including the correct use of capital letters.

## The oral language

Listening and speaking are the two oral skills of a language. Listening means understanding an oral message. On the other hand, speaking means producing an oral message. For many people, the oral skills are very difficult because they require a lot of practice, but they are very important because in our interactions with other people we mostly use the oral language.

The following are some characteristics of the oral language:



- It uses more contractions to facilitate the pronunciation: *I'm, he's, I've got,* etc.
- It has colloquial words and expressions: *hi, bye, see you,* etc.
- It has frequent interjections and exclamations: *wow!, er, oops, no!, really?,* etc.
- The sentences are usually shorter than in the written language.
- The speech is full of hesitations, interruptions, self-corrections, etc.

There are two basic types of oral texts:

- A speech: one person speaks and one or more people listen.
- A conversation: a minimum of two people speak and respond to each other.

Both types share the characteristics of the oral language, but a speech is usually more formal than a conversation. In fact, a speech very often consists on reading a text aloud.

Here is a short list of contractions and expressions commonly used in speech, but rarely found in written texts:

- gonna (=going to)
- wanna (=want to)
- 'cause (=because)
- gotta (=I have got to)
- Great! (=excellent!)
- I'd rather (=I prefer)
- I'm dying to (=I would like very much to)
- Are you into...? (=Are you interested in...?)
- Dammit! (exclamation to express irritation)

Learning how to speak English fluently is not easy because it requires a lot of practice, especially when the learning takes place in a virtual classroom. Here are some ideas that can help you develop your speaking skills:

1. Do not pay much attention to the formal grammar that you have learned. This may sound strange, but think that many English native speakers only know about 20% of the grammar rules of their language. However, they can speak fluently. This is so because they have learned the language in a natural way. The idea is that you do not waste much time remembering grammar rules when speaking because they will be applied automatically as you gain more and more confidence.

2. When speaking, do not translate from your mother tongue. The syntactical structures of both languages are probably very different and this may lead to make lexical and grammatical mistakes. Instead, try to “think” in English and speak directly in that language.
3. Speaking requires a lot of practice. You can learn the grammar rules and lots of new words in one evening if you can memorise them, but you cannot certainly learn how to speak in one evening. This requires time and patience, so you need to find a way of practising your speaking skills, which leads to the fourth rule...
4. Surround yourself with an English-speaking context. This does not mean that you must go and live in England, Ireland, the USA or Australia (although this would be very good for your speaking skills). You can practise by getting together with people who speak English and decide to devote at least an hour to speak only in that language. You can talk to other learners like you who need to practise their speaking, but the best thing is to find a native English speaker (not necessarily a teacher) who can help you by talking and listening to you.
5. If you cannot find a person to talk to, study with appropriate material. The Internet offers thousands of websites where you can practise your oral skills.

### 1.5.2 Grammar reference: sentence structure (I)

The sentence structure refers to the order in which we write the elements that compose a sentence. This order is established by the grammatical rules of the language.

These are the most important elements of a sentence:

- **Subject.** It indicates the person or thing that does the action of the verb, or the person or thing that the sentence refers to. In the sentences: *John is running home* and *she is French*, the subjects are: *John* and *she*.
- **Verb.** It expresses the actions, the feelings or the state of the subject. In the sentences: *John is running home* and *she is French*, the verbs are: *is running* and *is*.
- **Complements:** They give information about who, what, where, when, etc. In the sentences *John is running home* and *she is French*, the complements are: *home* and *French*.

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Unlike Catalan or Spanish, in English we must always express the subject.

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There are different types of complements. The most important ones are:

- **Subject complement.** It describes or identifies the subject. In the sentence: *she is French*, the subject complement is: *French*.

- **Direct object.** It receives the action of the transitive verbs. In the sentence: *he is reading a book*, the direct object is: *a book*.
- **Indirect object.** It refers to the person or thing to which the direct object is directed. In the sentence: *I will send my friend a present*, the indirect object is: *my friend*, whereas *a present* is the direct object.
- **Adverbial of manner.** It tells how an action is made. In the sentence: *he spoke very slowly*, the adverbial of manner is *very slowly*.
- **Adverbial of place.** It tells where the action takes place. In the sentence *John is running home*, the place adverbial is: *home*.
- **Adverbial of time.** It tells when the action takes place. In the sentence *I met her last year*, the time adverbial is: *last year*.

In English, all the sentences must have at least a subject and a verb.

### The structure of English statements

A statement is a sentence in which the subject gives some information. A sentence can be affirmative or negative. Although sometimes there is flexibility in the position of the elements, these tend to go in a certain order.

#### Affirmative sentences

These are the basic structures of the affirmative sentences:

##### A) SUBJECT + VERB

- *She is sleeping* (Cat. Està dormint)
- *I will come* (Cat. Vindré)
- *We have finished* (Cat. Hem acabat)

##### B) SUBJECT + VERB + DIRECT OBJECT

- *We had a meeting* (Cat. Vam tenir una reunió)
- *I painted the room* (Cat. Vaig pintar l'habitació)
- *He bought a new car* (Cat. Va comprar un cotxe nou)

##### C) SUBJECT + VERB + INDIRECT OBJECT + DIRECT OBJECT

- *He gave his son all his money* (Cat. Va donar tots els seus diners al seu fill)
- *I wrote him a letter* (Cat. Li vaig escriure una carta)
- *We sent Mr Smith an email* (Cat. Vaig enviar un correu electrònic al Sr. Smith)

But it is possible to change the order if we express the indirect object with the preposition *to*:

- *He gave all his money to his son*
- *I wrote a letter to him*
- *We sent an email to Mr Smith*

#### D) SUBJECT + VERB + ADVERBIALS (MANNER + PLACE + TIME)

- *I travelled by plane to Paris last night* (Cat. Ahir a la nit vaig viatjar a París amb avió)
- *He waited patiently in the room for three hours* (Cat. Va esperar pacientment a dins de l'habitació durant tres hores)

#### Notes

1. Remember that an English sentence always has an explicit subject.
2. A sentence rarely includes all the complements.
3. A verb is not usually separated from its direct object. We must say: *I like the summer very much* (it is wrong to say: *I like very much the summer*).

#### Negative sentences

These are the structures of the negative sentences:

#### A) SUBJECT + DO/DOES/DID + NOT + VERB (in the base form)

- *You do not look well* (Cat. No tens bon aspecte)
- *She does not work in the evening* (Cat. No treballa per les tardes)
- *I did not see anything* (Cat. No vaig veure res)

#### B) SUBJECT + AUXILIARY/MODAL + NOT

- *I am not English* (Cat. No sóc anglès)
- *I was not listening* (Cat. No estava escoltant)
- *You should not come so late* (Cat. No hauries de venir tan tard)
- *We cannot speak French* (Cat. No parlem francès)

## Notes

1. The auxiliaries *do/does* are used in the present whereas *did* is used in the past.
2. In informal style, we commonly say and write the negative forms like this: *don't, doesn't, didn't, wasn't, weren't, can't, shouldn't, won't (=will not), wouldn't*, etc.
3. The form *can + not* is spelt as one word: *cannot*

## The complex sentences

Sometimes a sentence is composed of a main clause and a subordinate clause. A main clause is the part of the sentence that has a meaning of its own; the subordinate clause is the part of the sentence whose meaning depends on the existence of the main clause. For example:

*She is sleeping because she is very tired* (Cat. Està dormint perquè està molt cansada).

Main clause: *She is sleeping...*

Subordinate clause: *...because she is very tired*

The normal order of a complex sentence is:

### A) MAIN CLAUSE + SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

- *I was listening to music...when she arrived* (Cat. Estava escoltant música quan ella va arribar).
- *I will call you...if I know anything* (Cat. Et trucaré...si sé alguna cosa).
- *She is the person...who called yesterday* (Cat. És la persona...que va trucar ahir).

## Notes

1. For reasons of emphasis, there is a lot of flexibility in the order of the main clauses and the subordinate clauses, so we can also say: *When she arrived, I was listening to music* or *If I know anything, I will call you*. However, we cannot change the order of the relative clauses. It is wrong to say: *Who call you yesterday, she is the person*.
2. When we place the subordinate clause in the first place, we must write a comma (,) to separate it from the main clause.

## The structure of English questions

There are two types of questions:

- *wh-questions*: they ask for specific information (what, who, where, etc.).
- *yes/no questions*: they only require a yes or no answer.

Here are the different structures of the English questions:

### Wh-questions

A) INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN + DO/DOES/DID + SUBJECT + VERB (in infinitive) + COMPLEMENTS...?

Examples:

- *Why do you work on Sundays?* (Cat. Per què treballes els diumenges?)
- *Where does your brother work?* (Cat. On treballa el teu germà?)
- *What did you do yesterday?* (Cat. Què vas fer [tu] ahir?)

B) INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN + AUXILIARY/MODAL VERB + SUBJECT + COMPLEMENTS...?

Examples:

- *Where are you?* (Cat. On ets [tu]?)
- *What is he doing?* (Cat. Què està fent [ell]?)
- *What languages can you speak?* (Cat. Quins idiomes parles?)
- *What should I do?* (Cat. Què hauria de fer [jo]?)
- *Who have you met?* (Cat. A qui t'has trobat?)

C) WHO/WHAT + VERB (conjugated) + COMPLEMENTS...?

Examples:

- *Who saw you in the library?* (Cat. Qui et va veure a la biblioteca?)
- *Who came to yesterday's meeting?* (Cat. Qui va venir a la reunió d'ahir?)
- *What will happen?* (Cat. Què passarà?)
- *What has caused all these problems?* (Què ha provocat tots aquests problemes?)

### Use of auxiliary verbs in questions

Lexical verbs (that is, all except the auxiliary and modal verbs) form the questions with *do/does* in the present simple tense and *did* in the past simple tense (see structure A). However, sometimes there is no auxiliary verb (see structure C). This happens when the interrogative pronoun (*who* or *what*) is the subject of the question. Compare these two questions:

- *Who did you see last night?* (Cat. A qui vas veure (tu) ahir a la nit?)
- *Who saw you last night?* (Cat. Qui et va veure (a tu) ahir a la nit?)

### Yes/no questions

A) DO/DOES/DID + SUBJECT + VERB (in infinitive) + COMPLEMENTS...?

Examples:

- *Do you work on Sundays?* (Cat. Treballes els diumenges?)
- *Does your brother speak any languages?* (Cat. Parla el teu germà algun idioma?)
- *Did you go to the meeting?* (Cat. Vas anar a la reunió?)

B) AUXILIARY/MODAL + VERB + SUBJECT + COMPLEMENTS...?

Examples:

- *Are you in the office?* (Cat. Ets al despatx?)
- *Is Laura speaking on the phone?* (Cat. Està Laura parlant per telèfon?)
- *Have you ever been in Ireland?* (Cat. Has estat alguna vegada a Irlanda?)
- *Can you speak English?* (Cat. Parles anglès?)
- *Should I go?* (Cat. Me'n hauria d'anar?)

### Question mark

Do not forget to write a question mark (?) at the end of the sentence. In the oral language, we mark a question with the intonation:

- *wh- questions*: falling intonation. The voice falls on the final stressed syllable of the sentence.
- *yes/no questions*: rising intonation. The voice rises at the end of the sentence.

## Short answers

We often answer yes/no questions simply with 'yes' or 'no', without adding any other information. These are called *short answers*. However, in English answering a question with only 'yes' or 'no' may sound very rude. The language protocol requires that we add the corresponding subject pronoun and auxiliary (or modal) verb.

Here are some examples of short answers with auxiliary verbs:

- Are you in the office? - *Yes, I am / No, I am not.*
- Is Laura speaking on the phone? - *Yes, she is / No, she isn't.*
- Have you ever been in Ireland? - *Yes, I have / No, I haven't.*
- Do you work in the evening? - *Yes, I do / No, I don't.*
- Does Mike help you with your job? - *Yes, he does / No, he doesn't.*

When the question has a modal verb, we must answer with the modal verb. For example:

- Can you speak English? - *Yes, I can / No, I can't.*
- Should I go? - *Yes, you should / No, you shouldn't.*
- May I talk to you? - *Yes, you may / No, you may not.*
- Must we stop now? - *Yes, we must / No, we mustn't.*
- Will Mary come this evening? - *Yes, she will / No, she won't.*
- Would you like a coffee? - *Yes, I would / No, I wouldn't.*

However, if we add more information, it is not necessary to use a short answer:

- Are you in the office? - *Yes, but I'll go in a minute.*
- Is Laura speaking on the phone? - *No, I think she's in a meeting.*
- May I talk to you? - *Yes, of course.*
- Will Mary come this evening? - *No, she doesn't feel very well and prefers staying at home.*

## 2. Purchasing

Purchasing means to acquire goods or services and exchange them for money or its equivalent. As consumers, we may enter any store and buy anything we need or we like, or we may order it on any online store. We obtain the goods and pay cash, use credit card, or any other means of payment.

When a company buys a product or service, they must follow some steps, which form what is known as the *purchasing process*.

### **Purchase vs buy**

The verbs *to purchase* and *to buy* have the same meaning (Cat. comprar).

*Buy* is the everyday term used in informal conversations whereas *purchase* is more formal and it is mostly used in a business environment.

The noun that refers to the product that we have bought is *purchase* (Cat. una compra). The term *buy* is only used as a verb.

## 2.1 Products

A product is anything that can be offered to a market that might satisfy a want or need. It can be classified as tangible or intangible. A tangible product is a physical object, such as a building, vehicle, gadget, or clothing. An intangible product is a product that can only be perceived indirectly such as an insurance policy.

There are different kinds of goods. The consumer goods, such as food and clothing, are those which satisfy human wants or needs. The producer goods are those such as machinery, raw materials and tools which are used by the companies to produce consumer goods. Commodities are usually raw materials such as metals and agricultural products, but a commodity can also be anything widely available in the open market.

There are many products that can be ordered online in huge online stores. Their products are usually classified according to categories. The following are the categories offered by one of these big stores:

- Machinery, industrial parts and tools
- Health and Beauty
- Gifts, sports and toys
- Apparel, textiles and accessories

- Packaging, advertising and office
- Metallurgy, chemicals and plastics
- Electrical equipment, components and telecom
- Home, lights and construction
- Electronics
- Auto and transportation
- Agriculture and food
- Bags, shoes and accessories

**Fantastic Movies**

Fantastic Movies is an online company which distributes films. See their advert and the purchasing options they provide:

**FIGURA 2.1.** Advert



If you want to purchase an item, you have to click one of the categories, and then a new page will show all the available products within that category, with the name, details, pictures, specifications and price. Once you have made your choice, you have to click on *Add to my Cart*, proceed with the payment and the company will ship it so that it reaches your home within a usually short time frame. If you want to get further information of the product of your interest, the website normally provides a space to send a message to the supplier.

**TAULA 2.1.** Vocabulary

<b>Buy (v):</b> comprar	<b>Purchase (v):</b> comprar
<b>Buyer (n):</b> comprador	<b>Purchase (n):</b> compra
<b>Commodity (n):</b> mercaderia, producte	<b>Purchasing option (n):</b> opció de compra
<b>Consumer goods (n pl):</b> béns de consum	<b>Ship (v):</b> enviar, lliurar, trametre
<b>Intangible product (n):</b> bé intangible	<b>Shipment (n):</b> enviament, lliurament, tramesa

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<b>Item (n):</b> article, producte	<b>Store (n):</b> botiga
<b>Online store (n):</b> botiga online	<b>Supplier (n):</b> proveïdor, venedor
<b>Producer goods (n pl):</b> béns de producció	<b>Supply (v):</b> proveir, vendre
<b>Product (n):</b> producte	<b>Tangible product (n):</b> bé tangible

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## 2.2 The purchasing process

In a business environment, the purchasing process is made up of 3 main steps. It starts identifying the need, finding the supplier and sending the order to the supplier.

The process starts with the requirement, which identifies the business need to procure an item. It may be because the stocks are low or there is a requirement for a new part.

Before the company proceeds to procure the item, an approval may be required. This authorization process enables the company to ensure that its money is spent effectively, that it does not go out in procuring materials that are not required.

When the need to buy has been identified and approved, the company will find the supplier where the materials can be procured from. They might select a supplier from an approved supplier list or one from the marketplace. In the latter case, they will ideally choose the supplier that offers the appropriate price and the appropriate delivery time.

Once the supplier has been identified, the buying organization will typically raise a purchase order. As soon as the order has been received and accepted by the supplier, the supplier will either manufacture the materials, issue the materials from stock or buy the materials in before shipping to the buying organization. The time taken between receiving the order and dispatching the goods is called lead time.

When the goods are received, the materials are checked to ensure that they match what was ordered and that they are of the correct quality. Once they have passed the inspection, then the goods will be put into stock or issued to the requisition.

The final part of the process comes when the supplier issues an invoice for the cost of the goods. The invoice is normally received by the organization and processed by the finance department prior to the supply being paid. In international transactions, the commercial invoice is the document required by customs to assess the value of the imported goods, the tariff classification and the admissibility of the shipment. A commercial invoice must indicate the seller's and buyer's contact information, the invoice date, a unique invoice number, the sale and payment terms, the currency of sale, a description of the shipment (quantity, weight and volume), an insurance and a certification that the invoice is correct.

The VAT (Value Added Tax) is an indirect tax that applies to most business transactions that involve the transfer of goods or services. The companies pay

an input tax on the products that they consume or use in their operations and they charge an output tax on the selling price of all the taxable products or services.

TAULA 2.2. Vocabulary

<b>Admissibility (n):</b> admissibilitat	<b>Order (n):</b> comanda
<b>Assess (v):</b> avaluar	<b>Output tax (n):</b> IVA suportat
<b>Commercial invoice (n):</b> factura comercial	<b>Price (n):</b> preu
<b>Currency (n):</b> moneda, divisa	<b>Purchase order (n):</b> comanda
<b>Customs (pl n):</b> duana	<b>Purchasing process (n):</b> procés de compra
<b>Delivery time (n):</b> termini d'entrega	<b>Requirement (n):</b> necessitat
<b>Finance department (n):</b> departament de comptabilitat	<b>Send an order (v):</b> fer una comanda
<b>Goods (pl n):</b> bens, productes, articles de consum	<b>Ship (v):</b> enviar, lliurar, trametre
<b>Input tax (n):</b> IVA repercutit	<b>Shipment (n):</b> enviament, lliurament, tramesa
<b>Insurance (n):</b> assegurança	<b>Stock (n):</b> existències, <i>stock</i>
<b>Invoice (n):</b> factura	<b>Supplier (n):</b> proveïdor, venedor
<b>Item (n):</b> article, producte	<b>Tariff (n):</b> aranzel, impost
<b>Lead time (n):</b> temps d'elaboració	<b>Tax (n):</b> tasa, impost
<b>Manufacture (v):</b> fabricar, manufacturar	<b>Value (v):</b> valorar, posar preu
<b>Order (v):</b> fer una comanda	<b>VAT (n):</b> IVA

## 2.3 Language in use

The first step for the acquisition of a product is to get to know its features and its price. When a customer wants to make a purchase, they will probably inquire about it, that is, they might request for information, and they might require a quotation. A quotation is a letter in which a supplier or seller states that he is willing to supply goods at a given price and on the terms stated. When the company receives the request, they will reply and send the information required, often with catalogues or price lists attached. It is very important to reply to requests as soon as possible, since customer's satisfaction should be one of the main goals of every company.

When the customer wants to buy goods or services, they issue a commercial document called "purchase order", which should be accompanied by a cover letter to confirm the order to the seller; or they simply send an email with the order. This is received by the sales department in the company. Then, they have to check the inventory and see if the product is in stock. If it is available, an internal document, a sales order, will be recorded with the contents of the customer's purchase. The customer and the seller have to agree on the terms and means of payment, and the delivery time.

The figure shows an example of purchase order:

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A **purchase order** is an official document that a buyer issues to a seller, indicating relevant information about what they want to buy, the quantity, and the price agreed for that particular product or service. Terms and conditions may also be included in such a letter.

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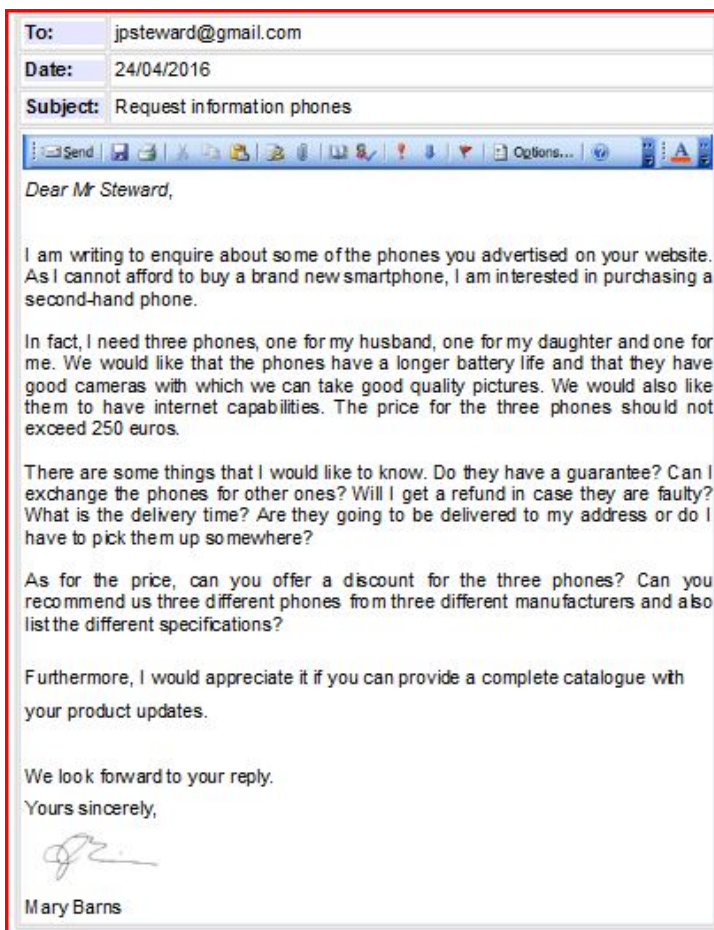
**FIGURA 2.2.** Example of purchase order

Order form		Electro Bits Electronic supplies	
Customer account number: 15468			
Product name	Product code	Quantity	Price
Processor Intel Core i7-4790K 4.0GHz	P8540A	2	275€
Fan Cooler Master	P6587A	3	37€
Plastic holder Ever cool	P2258L	15	4€

See the unit called "International commerce", section "Purchasing> Emails", for learning the correct language and layout of emails.

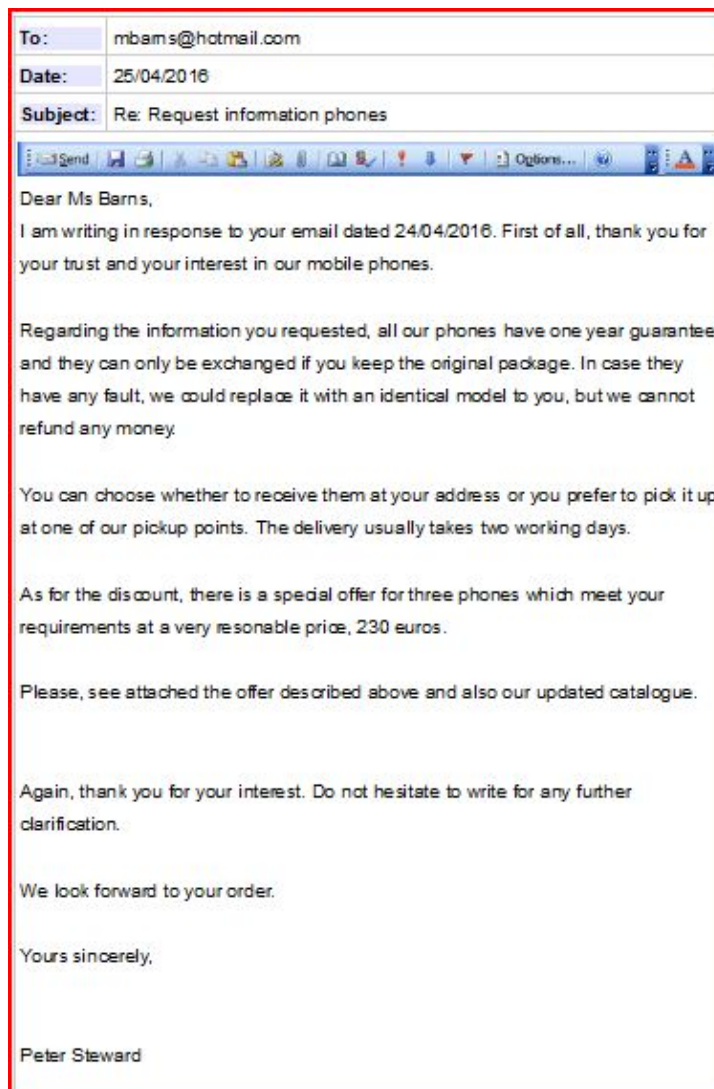
In the following email, Mary Barns (see the signature) enquires about some mobile phones advertised on a website.

**FIGURA 2.3.** Email requesting for information



This is Mr Steward’s reply to Mary Barns:

FIGURA 2.4. Reply to email requesting for information



In the following email, Mr Gray sends an email to a computer company, ordering some items and requesting some information, such as the delivery time, the payment terms, etc.:

**FIGURA 2.5.** Order

<b>To:</b>	marisehudson@gnda.com		
<b>Date:</b>	05/12/2014		
<b>Subject:</b>	Order num. 15445 BY		

Dear Ms Hudson,

With reference to our telephone conversation of yesterday, 4th December, I am writing to confirm our order Ref.No. 15445 BY for the following items:

Units	Ref. Num.	Product	Price
2	P8540A	Processor Intel Core i7-4790K 4.0GHz	275 euros
3	P6587A	Fan Cooler Master	37 euros
15	P2258L	Plastic holder Ever cool	4 euros

Would you please send a quotation for these items? Could you also provide details of your delivery times, and the payment conditions?

We would appreciate it if you could confirm that you have these items in your stock and send them as soon as possible.

Furthermore, I would appreciate it if you can provide a complete catalogue with your product updates.

We look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Cindy Vives  
Purchasing department

### 2.3.1 Communication: business correspondence

The email is nowadays the most widely used form of communication in the business world because it is much cheaper and faster than the postal mail. However, business letters are still used in some situations, so it is necessary to learn the language rules that are applied in these documents. We must also be very careful with syntax, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation.

#### Business letters

The figure below shows an example of a business letter. The objective is to ask for information.

FIGURA 2.6. A business letter



#### The layout of a business letter

The layout refers to the position of the different elements that compose the letter. It is very important to write each element in the correct place. The most common layout is the following:

1. **The writer's address:** on the top right corner of the page. Do not include your name in the address.
2. **Date:** below your address (but the date may also go below the receiver's address). Be aware of the correct date format.
3. **The receiver's name and address:** a line below the writer's address, on the left-hand side of the paper.
4. **Opening:** two lines below the date. Begin with *Dear* + the receiver's title and surname" (for example, *Dear Mr Jones*). If you don't know the

receiver's name, write: *Dear Sir or Madam*. Write a comma after the opening.

5. **Body of the letter:** two lines below the opening. Separate the text clearly into paragraphs and use the appropriate language. Pay attention to the punctuation.
6. **Ending formula:** we could use the standard phrase *I look forward to hearing from you*.
7. **Closing phrase:** two lines below the body of the letter, always on the left-hand side. The standard closing expression is: *Yours faithfully* (if we do not know the receiver's name) or *Yours sincerely* (if you know the receiver's name). Write a comma at the end.
8. **Signature:** sign your letter after the closing phrase and type your name and surname below.
9. **Enclosure:** if you enclose a document with the letter, write it down after your signature (for example, *Enc: Curriculum vitae*).

### The language of business letters

We can use different degrees of formality in a business letter, depending on our relationship with the receiver. The style can be:

1. very formal: when you do not know the person you are writing to.
2. formal: when you know the name, but do not know the person.
3. semi-formal: when you know the person.

The difference in formality is especially evident in the conventional opening and closing phrases:

#### Opening phrases:

- Very formal: *Dear Sir or Madam, Dear Sirs*
- Formal: *Dear Mr/Mrs Jones*
- Semi-formal: *Dear Michael Jones*

#### Closing phrases:

- Very formal: *Yours faithfully* (BrE), *Yours truly* (AmE)
- Formal: *Yours sincerely* (BrE), *Sincerely* (AmE)
- Semi-formal: *Best regards, Best wishes*

---

The abbreviations refer to the variety of English: BrE (British English); AmE (American English).

---

Independently of the degree of formality, there are some standard phrases to express common ideas in business letters. For example:

**Explaining the purpose of your letter:**

- *I am interested in (applying for the post of personal assistant) ...*
- *I am writing about (the meeting) ...*

**Referring to the last contact with the receiver:**

- *With reference to your letter of (28th October), ...*
- *Following our phone conversation (yesterday), ...*
- *Thank you for your letter of last (28th October), ...*

**Referring to the subject of the letter:**

- *Regarding the question of (your complain), ...*
- *Regarding your advertisement for (the post of personal assistance), ...*

**Referring to enclosures (if any):**

- *I am enclosing (my CV)*
- *Enclosed is a copy of (my CV)*

**Making requests:**

- *I would be grateful if you would (send me a copy of your complain)*
- *I would appreciate it if you would (send me a copy of your complain)*

**Ending the letter (before the closing phrase):**

- *I look forward to hearing from you*
- *Many thanks for your help in this matter*

**Remember:**

1. A business letter should never be handwritten.
2. Do not use contractions (I don't, I'm writing, etc.). Contractions reproduce the spoken language, so they do not correspond to the formality of the text.
3. Do not add postscripts. Give all the information in the body of the letter.

## Emails

An email is nowadays the fastest and cheapest means of communication in the business world. In emails, we do not need to worry about the layout.

In general, emails are more informal than business letters and have fewer rules. However, there are some points that we should remember when we write an email:

1. Write your email as short as possible.
2. Do not write in capital letters. The use of capital letters in emails implies that you are shouting and it is considered very rude.
3. Write formal emails to people that you do not know (the opening and closing phrases and the language are the same of business letters).
4. Write semi-formal emails to people that you know.
5. Emails to colleagues and friends can be informal.

As for the contents of the email:

1. Start with the most important information.
2. Write the less important information in a separate paragraph.
3. If the other person does not know about the situation you are writing about, explain it carefully at the beginning.

If you are replying to a previous mail:

1. Avoid replying only “yes” or “no”. Refer back to the question and then give your answer. A “No” answer normally requires an explanation.
2. Use the “Reply” tool to send your message. In this way, the original message will be revealed and it will be easier to refer to the previous message.
3. Do not forget to write the subject of your email. The subject should summarize the purpose of the message in as few words as possible
4. Always sign your email.

As with business letters, emails also have a standard format that organizes the information. However, the places for your name, the receiver’s address, the date and the subject are clearly indicated and often appear automatically. Two other elements that are common in emails are “carbon copy” (abbreviated to CC), where you can include the names of other people who will also receive the message, and “blind carbon copy” (abbreviated to BCC), where you include other people who will receive a copy of the message, but their names will be invisible to the main receiver (the person in the field “TO”).

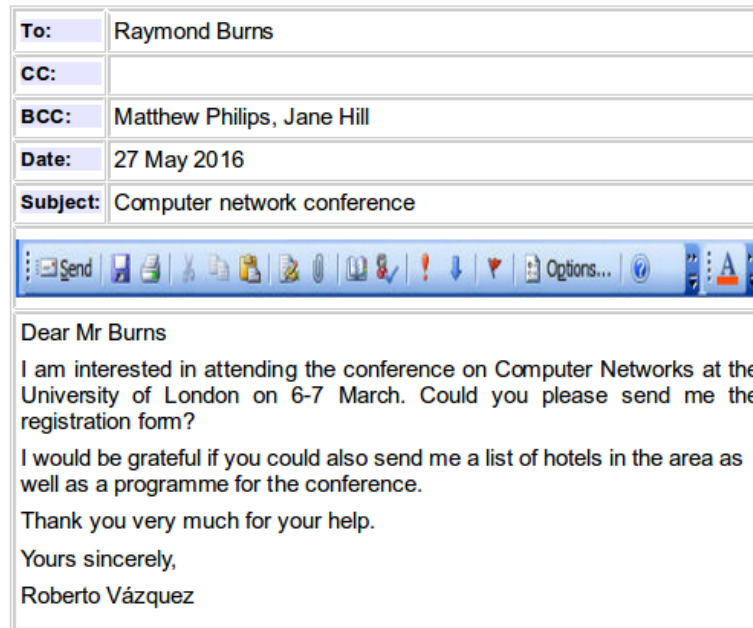
In this figure you can see an example of the language in a formal email message:

---

The set of rules that governs the correct style of emails is called ‘netiquette’.

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FIGURA 2.7. An email



## Connectors

Connectors (also called *linking words*) show how the ideas are related to one another. Connectors are very important because they give coherence and clarity to the texts. Compare a text without connectors and the same text using connectors.

Here is a text without connectors:

“The Internet has some advantages. It is useful to broaden your knowledge and meet new people. It has some disadvantages. Its free access to pages which show cruel violence and crimes. There are people who think that the Internet should be a free space to express ideas. Some people consider that the Internet can be dangerous. Its use is not controlled. The Internet has both advantages and disadvantages. People must learn to use it for positive aims.”

Here is the same text with connectors (in bold type):

“**Although** the Internet has some advantages **because** it is useful to broaden your knowledge and meet new people, it **also** has some disadvantages **due to**, **for example**, its free access to pages which show cruel violence and crimes. **On one hand**, there are people who think that the Internet should be a free space to express ideas. **On the other hand**, some people consider that the Internet can be dangerous **if** its use is not controlled. **In conclusion**, the Internet has both advantages and disadvantages, **but** people must learn to use it for positive aims.”

From a syntactical point of view, some connectors are placed at the beginning of

the sentence, others are placed in the middle and others are placed at the end. The connectors below are classified according to their meaning. The examples show their usual position in the sentence:

### Positive addition:

- **and** (Cat. i): *I like reading **and** listening to music.*
- **as well as** (Cat. així com): *I play football **as well as** handball.*
- **also** (Cat. també): *He likes music - I **also** like music.*
- **too** (Cat. també): *He likes music - I like music **too**.*
- **as well** (Cat. també): *He likes music - I like music **as well**.*
- **besides** (Cat. a més a més): *It rained all the time. **Besides**, it was cold.*
- **moreover** (Cat. a més a més): *It rained all the time. **Moreover**, it was cold.*
- **in addition** (Cat. a més a més): *It rained all the time. **In addition**, it was cold.*

### Negative addition:

- **or** (Cat. ni): *I don't like getting up early **or** going out at night.*
- **neither...nor** (Cat. ni...ni): *They **neither** work **nor** study.*
- **either** (Cat. tampoc): *He doesn't like music - I don't like it **either**.*

### Disjunctive conjunctions

- **or** (Cat. o): *Do you prefer working in the morning **or** in the evening?*
- **either...or** (Cat. o...o): *I like working **either** in the morning **or** in the evening.*

### Condition:

- **if** (Cat. si): *I will help you **if** you want.*
- **unless** (Cat. a menys que, si no...): *We can eat outside **unless** it's very cold.*

### Contrast:

- **but** (Cat. però): *It's quite expensive **but** it's very good.*
- **however** (Cat. malgrat tot, no obstant): *It's quite expensive. **However**, it's very good:*
- **although** (Cat. tot i que, encara que): ***Although** it's very expensive, it's very good.*

- **even though** (Cat. tot i que, encara que): *It's quite expensive **even though** it's very good.*
- **though** (Cat. malgrat tot): *It's quite expensive. It's very good **though**.*
- **in spite of** - (Cat. malgrat): *We had a great time **in spite of** the rain.*
- **while** (Cat. mentre que): *In the morning it was fine **while** in the evening it rained very hard.*
- **whereas** (Cat. mentre que): *In the morning it was fine **whereas** in the evening it rained very hard.*
- **on the other hand** (Cat. per altra banda): *I was very tired. **On the other hand**, I was very satisfied with the work.*
- **on one hand...on the other hand** (Cat. per una banda...i per l'altra): ***On one hand**, I was very tired. **On the other hand**, I was very satisfied.*
- **on the contrary** (Cat. al contrari): *It was not cold. **On the contrary**, we were very hot all the time.*

#### Exception:

- **except for** (Cat. excepte, llevat de): *I finished everything **except for** some small details.*
- **apart from** (Cat. a part de): ***Apart from** Tommy, nobody else came to the meeting.*

#### Explaining ideas:

- **that is to say** (Cat. és a dir): *The reason is crystal clear, **that is to say**, very clear.*
- **that is** (Cat. és a dir): *The reason is crystal clear, **that is**, very clear.*
- **in other words** (Cat. en altres paraules): *The reason is crystal clear. **In other words**, it's very clear.*

#### Giving examples:

- **like** (Cat. com): *We visited several cities, **like** Liverpool and Manchester.*
- **such as** (Cat. com ara): *We visited several cities, **such as** Liverpool and Manchester.*
- **for example** (Cat. per exemple): *We visited several cities. **For example**, Liverpool and Manchester.*
- **as for example** (Cat. com per exemple): *We visited several cities **as for example** Liverpool and Manchester.*

**Listing ideas:**

- **first** (Cat. primer): ***First**, I'll speak to Mr Smith.*
- **firstly** (Cat. primerament): ***Firstly**, I'll speak to Mr Smith.*
- **in the first place** (Cat. en primer lloc): ***In the first place**, I'll speak to Mr Smith.*
- **first of all** (Cat. primer de tot): ***First of all**, I'll speak to Mr Smith.*
- **at first** (Cat. en un principi): ***At first**, I didn't see anything.*
- **to begin with** (Cat. per començar): ***To begin with**, you shouldn't get nervous.*
- **secondly** (Cat. en segon lloc): ***Secondly**, I'll listen to his proposal.*
- **after this** (Cat. després d'això): ***After this**, I'll listen to his proposal.*
- **next** (Cat. després, a continuació): ***Next**, I'll listen to his proposal.*
- **then** (Cat. després, aleshores): ***Then** I'll listen to his proposal.*
- **afterwards** (Cat. després) ***Afterwards**, I'll listen to his proposal.*
- **finally** (Cat. finalment): ***Finally**, I'll decide what to do.*
- **in the end** (Cat. al final, en últim lloc): ***In the end**, I'll decide what to do:*

**Time connectors:**

- **when** (Cat. quan): *He called me **when** I wasn't at home.*
- **whenever** (Cat. sempre que): *You may come **whenever** you want.*
- **as soon as** (Cat. tan aviat com, així que): *Please call me **as soon as** you get home.*
- **while** (Cat. mentre): *I was trying to concentrate **while** he was speaking on the phone.*
- **meanwhile** (Cat. mentrestant): *He was speaking on the phone. **Meanwhile**, I was trying to concentrate.*
- **before** (Cat. abans de): *Please turn off the lights **before** you leave the office.*
- **after** (Cat. després de): *we went out **after** work.*
- **then** (Cat. aleshores, després): *We waited for Laura. **Then**, we went home together.*

**Expressing purpose:**

- **to** (Cat. per a, per tal de): *I work **to** earn a salary.*

**'After' and 'afterwards'**

Do not confuse the meaning of the time connectors *after* and *afterwards*. *After* is a preposition, so it is placed before a noun (*after the class*). *Afterwards* is an adverb and it is followed by a sentence (*Afterwards, I went out*).

- **in order to** (Cat. per a, per tal de): *I work **in order to** earn a salary.*
- **in order not to** (Cat. per a no, per tal de no): *I didn't say anything **in order not to** damage your reputation.*

#### 'Because' and 'because of'

These two connectors are easily confused. *Because* is placed before a sentence (*because it is raining*). *Because of* is followed by a noun or pronoun (*Because of the rain*).

#### Expressing reason and cause:

- **as** (Cat. com que, ja que): *As it was raining, we stayed at home.*
- **because** (Cat. perquè): *We stayed at home **because** it was raining.*
- **because of** (Cat. a causa de, degut a): *We stayed at home **because of** the rain.*
- **due to** - (Cat. a causa de, degut a): *We stayed at home **due to** the rain.*
- **as a result of** (Cat. com a conseqüència de): *As **a result of** the economic crisis, many people have lost their jobs.*

#### Expressing a result:

- **so** (Cat. per tant, així que, de manera que): *It was raining hard **so** we stayed at home.*
- **therefore** (Cat. en conseqüència, per tant): *It was raining hard. **Therefore**, we stayed at home.*
- **for this reason** (Cat. per aquesta raó, per aquest motiu): *It was raining hard. **For this reason**, we stayed at home.*

#### Summarizing:

- **in conclusion** (Cat. en conclusió): *We spent everything we had. **In conclusion**, we can lend you no money.*
- **in short** (Cat. en resum, en poques paraules): *We spent everything we had. **In short**, we can lend you no money.*
- **to sum up** (Cat. en resum, resumint): *We spent everything we had. **To sum up**, we can lend you no money.*
- **summing up** (Cat. en resum, resumint): *We spent everything we had. **Summing up**, we can lend you no money.*

#### Spelling and punctuation

When we write, we do not usually pay much attention to the punctuation marks. However, punctuation is very important in a written text because it contributes to mark the pauses and to separate the meanings of a sentence. On the other hand, we should also pay attention to spelling: a text with spelling mistakes indicates carelessness on the part of the writer and diminishes the value of the message.

## Punctuation

Here are some basic rules for the punctuation of a text:

- Do not write a comma (,) between the subject and the verb.
- Write a full stop (.) at the end of a sentence. If the sentence ends with a question mark (?) or with an exclamation mark (!), do not write the full stop.
- Adverbials and connectors at the beginning of a sentence are usually separated from the sentence by a comma. For example: *Nowadays , a message takes only second to travel to the other end of the world, In the first place , decide what you want to say.*
- Write a colon (:) to introduce a list of items or an explanation. Example: *The continents are: Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Oceania.*
- Write a comma to separate the elements in a list, except those separated by *and* or *or*. Example: *the days of the week are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday , Thursday , Friday , Saturday and Sunday.*
- Use the semi-colon (;) to separate the groups of items in a list. Example: *In computing, we must distinguish between hardware and software. Hardware refers to the material parts of a computer (keyboard, monitor, printer, loudspeakers, etc.) ; software refers to programming and includes operating systems, compilers, editors, etc.*
- Use the brackets to add some extra information to a sentence. Example: *All letters must be signed ( that is, write your name and surname at the end ).*

## Spelling

Spelling refers to the way in which the words are written. We must learn the correct spelling of words at the same time as their meanings, but there are some basic rules that can help us with the spelling:

- Words ending in -Y change to -I- when we add a suffix: *family > families; heavy > heavier; happy > happiness*
- Words ending in -F or -FE change to -V- when adding a suffix: *half > halves; knife > knives*
- One-syllable words with 1 vowel + 1 final consonant double the consonant when adding a suffix: *big > bigger; swim > swimming*
- The final, silent -E is dropped when adding a suffix (except in words in -CE and -GE): *close > closing; write > writing, but: notice > noticeable; courage > courageous*

### Differences between British and American English

There are some differences in the spelling between British and American English. The most common are:

- BrE. -RE > AmE. -ER: *centre/center, theatre/theater*
- BrE. -OUR > AmE. -OR: *colour/color, labour/labor*
- BrE. -IZE/-ISE > AmE. always -IZE: *organise (or organize)/organize, apologise (or apologize)/apologize*
- BrE. -ENCE > AmE. -ENSE: *defence/defense, licence/license*
- BrE. vowel + L, the L is doubled when adding a suffix > AmE. the L is not doubled: *travel>traveller/traveler; fuel>fuelled/fueled*

An important aspect of spelling is **capitalization**, that is, the correct use of capital letters. As in Catalan and Spanish, capital letters are used at the beginning of a sentence, after a stop (.) and with proper names. Apart from this common use, in English we also capitalize words in the following cases:

- The subject pronoun *I*.
- The adjectives derived from proper names: *English, Catalan, Spanish, Freudian*, etc.
- Days of the week and months of the year: *Monday, Tuesday, January, February*, etc.
- Names of holidays: *Christmas, Easter, Halloween*, etc.
- Titles with the person's name: *Mr Smith, Mrs Brown, Queen Elizabeth*, etc.

### 2.3.2 Grammar reference: sentence structure (II)

Sometimes, the complement of a verb is another verb. When this happens, the verbal complement can take either the infinitive or the gerund, which are two invariable forms of the verb. The following structures are very common:

- VERB + INFINITIVE
- VERB + GERUND

There are no rules for knowing which verbs take the infinitive and which verbs take the gerund as their complements, so we must learn the syntactical structure as a whole.

Apart from being verbal complements, the infinitives and gerunds are also used in some other cases.

#### Use of the infinitive

The infinitive is the form of the verb without any inflections. We can distinguish between the *to-infinitive* (as for example, *to write, to do, to speak*, etc.) and the *bare infinitive*, or infinitive without 'to' (for example, *write, do, speak*, etc.). The negative is formed by adding *not* before the infinitive (*not to write, not to do*, etc.)

## The to-infinitive

The to-infinitive is used:

1) As verbal complements of certain verbs. The table includes shows common verbs followed by *to* + infinitive:

TAULA 2.3. Verbs followed by infinitive (with to)

agree	appear	arrange	ask	attempt
begin	can't afford	can't wait	care	chance
choose	claim	come	consent	continue
dare	decide	deserve	determine	elect
endeavour	expect	fail	get	guarantee
hate	hesitate	hope	hurry	intend
learn	like	love	plan	manage
mean	offer	pay	prepare	pretend
promise	prove	refuse	request	say
seem	swear	tend	threaten	want
wish	would like			

### Attempt and intend

The meanings of these verbs are confusing: *attempt* (=try) (Cat. intentar); *intend* (Cat. pretendre, tenir la intenció de).

Examples:

- *He attempted to get up* (Cat. Va intentar aixecar-se).
- *He can't afford to pay for the rent* (Cat. No pot permetre's pagar el lloguer).
- *He doesn't dare to say anything* (Cat. No s'atreveix a dir res).
- *I failed to get the job* (Cat. No vaig aconseguir la feina).
- *I intend to ask for a rise* (Cat. Tinc la intenció de demanar un augment de sou).
- *He refused to listen to me* (Cat. Es va negar a escoltar-me).

2) After an adjective:

- *It's interesting to talk to people.* (Cat: És interessant parlar amb la gent)
- *It's strange to be here again.* (Cat: És estrany tornar a ser aquí)

3) As the subject of a sentence (in the formal, written language):

- *To smoke is very bad* (Cat. Fumar és molt dolent)
- *To retire is my lifelong dream* (Cat. Jubilar-me és el somni de la meva vida)

4) To express the purpose or intention:

- *I studied hard to pass the exam* (Cat. Vaig estudiar molt per a aprovar l'examen)

- *He came **to see** you* (Cat. Va venir a veure't)

Some verbs must have an indirect object. In this case, the sentence structure is:

- SUBJECT + VERB + INDIRECT OBJECT + TO + INFINITIVE

The table below includes some common verbs with an indirect object:

TAULA 2.4. Verbs with object + to-infinitive

advise	allow	cause	convince	encourage
forbid	force	hire	invite	order
permit	persuade	remind	require	teach
tell	urge	warn		

Exemples:

- *I advise you **to go** and talk to the director* (Cat. T'aconsello que vagis a parlar amb el director).
- *You should encourage Jim **to take** the exam* (Cat. Hauries d'animar a Jim a fer l'examen).
- *They forced me **to unlock** the door* (Cat. Em van obligar a obrir la porta).
- *I must remind you **not to say** anything* (Cat. T'haig de recordar que no diguis res).

### Bare infinitive

The bare infinitive is used in these cases:

1) After modal verbs:

- *Can I **go**?* (Cat. Puc marxar?).
- *You should **get up** earlier* (Cat. T'hauries de llevar més d'hora).

2) After the auxiliary *do* in negative and interrogative sentences:

- *We **didn't like** the show* (Cat. No ens va agradar l'espectacle).
- *Do you **speak** French?* (Cat. Parles francès?).

3) As a complement of the verbs *let* (Cat. permetre) and *make* (Cat. obligar a):

- *I **didn't let** her **go** alone* (Cat. No la vaig deixar que hi anés sola).
- *He **made** me **cry*** (Cat. Em va fer plorar).

4) After the following expressions:

- *Had better* (Cat. Més val que): *You had better go now* (Cat. Més val que que te'n vagis).
- *Would rather* (Cat. M'estimaria més, preferiria): *I would rather live in the country than in the city.* (Cat. Preferiria viure al camp que a la ciutat).

### Use of the gerund

The gerund is formed with the verb + the ending *-ing* (for example: *writing, doing, speaking, etc.*). The negative is formed by adding *not* in front of the gerund (*not writing, not doing*). The gerund is used:

1) As the complement of certain verbs and verbal expressions. The following table below shows the most important verbs followed by a gerund.

**TAULA 2.5.** Verbs followed by the gerund

acknowledge	admit	advise	allow	attempt
avoid	be worth	begin	can't bear	can't help
can't stand	celebrate	confess	consider	continue
defend	delay	deny	detest	discuss
dislike	enjoy	explain	feel like	finish
forgive	hate	imagine	justify	keep
like	love	(not) mind	miss	postpone
practise	prefer	prohibit	propose	prevent
quit	recommend	regret	report	start
suggest	support	tolerate	try	understand
urge				

Examples:

- *He acknowledged **stealing** the money* (Cat. Va reconèixer que havia robat els diners).
- *The idea is worth **trying*** (Cat. Val la pena intentar posar en pràctica la idea).
- *I can't bear **waiting** for people* (Cat. No suportó esperar la gent).
- *I can't help **laughing** when I think about it* (Cat. No puc evitar riure quan hi penso).
- *He can't stand **driving** in the city* (Cat. No aguanta conduir per la ciutat).
- *I feel like **having** a coffee, and you?* (Cat. Tinc ganes de prendre un cafè, i tu?).
- *Do you mind **going out** please?* (Cat. T'importa sortir si us plau?).

2) After a preposition:

- *I went to bed without **having** dinner* (Cat. Vaig anar a dormir sense sopar).
- *He's sure of **not finding** a job* (Cat. Està segur de no trobar feina).

3) When the verb is the subject or the object of a sentence (in this case the verb has the function of a noun):

- ***Smoking** is very bad* (Cat. Fumar és molt dolent).
- *His main duty is **attending** meetings* (Cat. La seva feina principal és assistir a reunions).

### Verbs that take the gerund or the infinitive

Some verbs can take the gerund or the infinitive **without any change in meaning**.

Some of these verbs are:

- **Like:** *I like reading* or *I like to read* (Cat. M'agrada llegir).
- **Love:** *I love driving* or *I love to drive* (Cat. M'encanta conduir).
- **Prefer:** *I prefer waiting* or *I prefer to wait*. (Cat. Prefereixo esperar)
- **Hate:** *I hate getting up in the morning* or *I hate to get up in the mornings* (Cat. Detesto llevar-me d'hora als matins).

In general, BrE prefers the forms in gerund and AmE prefers the forms in infinitive. The forms with *would* always take the infinitive with *to*:

- *I would like to go* (Cat. M'agradaria anar-hi).
- *I would prefer to go immediately* (Cat. Preferiria anar-hi immediatament).
- *I would hate to do this* (Cat. Odiaria fer això).

### 3. Logistics

Whenever I make a purchase from Amazon and choose overnight shipping on a group of unrelated items, I marvel at the logistics involved in getting my items gathered from a warehouse several miles away and delivered to my door within 24 hours.

From a [forum posting](#) at *BD Business dictionary*.

Logistics is the process of planning, implementing, and controlling procedures for the efficient and effective transportation and storage of goods from the point of origin to the point of consumption for the purpose of conforming the customer's requirements. The concept of logistics involves the integration of information, transportation, inventory, warehousing, material handling and packaging.

Logistics is crucial in international trade. In order to manufacture a product, different materials will be required which will be transported from the supplier to the factory where they will be processed and result in a final product which will be, at the same time, shipped somewhere else until it reaches the final consumer, the last point of the distribution channel. All this process is what we call the supply chain, a system of organizations, people, activities, information, and resources involved in moving a product or service from supplier to customer. The supply chain is actually a complex and dynamic supply and demand network.

#### 3.1 The modes of transport in logistics

The choice of one or more means of transport depends upon the quantity of product to be shipped, the type of product, the distance between the source and the destination, the price, etc. Transportation may take place via air, water, rail, road, pipelines or cables.

Haulage is the business of transporting the goods by road or rail. Road transportation is done through lorries or trucks, and it plays a major role in handling cargo. It is cost effective and ideal for short distances and for transporting perishables. Trucks have different capacities and they can reach small towns which do not have railway stations. On the other hand, through rail freight transport, a larger volume of cargo can be handled in a short period of time. It is energy and cost effective and very reliable. It has the downside of lack of flexibility, being subject to rail freight operators timetable. Moreover, suppliers and customers are not always located near a rail freight depot, which is a limitation in final destinations.

Waterways is the cheapest means of transportation, large volume of world trade is done through ships. It is used by businesses for the delivery of goods from distant suppliers. It is ideal for transporting heavy and bulky goods, suitable for products

with long lead time. Unlike the road transport, when you can contact the driver at any time, ships are difficult to monitor, so you do not know the exact location of the goods in transit. Additionally, bad weather can put the cargo at risk. While sea transportation is the cheapest, airways is the most costly, though the fastest. It is normally used for valuable goods having less volume.

Many transport companies provide scheduled delivery days. Goods can be packed or grouped in box vans or in containers which are also used for sea transportation.

Merchandise being transported internationally is usually subject to the Incoterms standards issued by the International Chamber of Commerce.

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**Merchandise** are goods that are sold and bought in trade. When merchandise is being moved or shipped, it may be called **freight** or **cargo**.

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TAULA 3.1. Vocabulary

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<b>Airway (n):</b> ruta aèrea	<b>Handle (v):</b> gestionar, enarregar-se de
<b>Box van (n):</b> camioneta, furgoneta	<b>Haulage (n):</b> transport de mercaderies
<b>Bulky (adj):</b> gran, voluminós	<b>Incoterm (n):</b> incoterm
<b>Business (n):</b> negoci, empresa	<b>Lead time (n):</b> temps d'elaboració
<b>Cargo (n):</b> càrrega	<b>Lorry (n):</b> camió
<b>Container (n):</b> contenidor	<b>Perishable (adj):</b> perible, que es fa malbé
<b>Cost effective (adj):</b> rentable	<b>Rail (n):</b> ferrocarril
<b>Customer (n):</b> client	<b>Rail freight depot (n):</b> terminal de càrrega (en una estació)
<b>Delivery (n):</b> lliurament, enviament, entrega	<b>Rail freight transport (n):</b> transport de mercaderies per ferrocarril
<b>Downside (n):</b> inconvenient	<b>Reliable (adj):</b> fiable
<b>Energy efficient (adj):</b> eficient en l'ús d'energia	<b>Ship (v):</b> enviar, trametre
<b>Freight (n):</b> càrrega	<b>Supplier (n):</b> proveïdor, venedor
<b>Freight operator (n):</b> empresa de transport de mercaderies	<b>Truck (n):</b> camió
<b>Goods (pl n):</b> productes, béns	<b>Waterway (n):</b> ruta marítima

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### 3.2 Business agreements

One of the most important tools of International Trade is language. In any complex business every single word can be very relevant and have big impact on all aspects of the business agreement.

Parties of a contract (the seller and the buyer) from two different countries are not always aware that there are different trading practices in their respective countries and, therefore, essential aspects of a contract can have different interpretations depending on the country. This is especially common in global trade and it could lead to misunderstandings as well as have a direct financial impact on a company's business.

In order to avoid disagreements resulting from differences in trading practices in different countries, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) created incoterms in 1936 describing clearly the duties of the seller and the buyer.

The **International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)** is an international organisation that works to promote and support global trade and globalisation. It serves as an advocate of world business in the global economy, in the interests of economic growth, job creation, and prosperity. As a global business organisation, made up of member states, it helps the development of global outlooks on business matters. ICC has direct access to national governments worldwide through its national committees among others.

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**ICC** stands for International Chamber of Commerce ([www.iccwbo.org](http://www.iccwbo.org)). It provides tools for trade and online training; they fight commercial crime, resolve international disputes and organize ICC world events.

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### What are incoterms?

The word incoterms is an abbreviation of International Commercial Terms. Incoterms are a set of international rules for the interpretation of the most commonly used terms in international trade and are used to divide transaction costs and responsibilities between buyer and seller and reflect state-of-the-art transportation practices.

Incoterms deal with questions related to the delivery of the products from the seller to the buyer. This includes: the transport of products, export and import clearance responsibilities, who pays for what, and who has risk for the condition of the products at different locations within the transport process. Therefore, they are very helpful to reduce confusion over interpretations of shipping terms.

Incoterms are used quite frequently in international contracts and they have been updated various times since 1936. There are different Incoterms, and the goal of each one is to specify the responsibilities of the seller and the buyer in every agreement for the purchase and shipping of goods internationally.

The terms basically refer to the following details:

#### Agreement

- Expenses: who is responsible for the expenses involved in a shipment at a given point in the shipment's journey?
- Control: who owns the goods at a given point in the journey?
- Responsibility: who is responsible for paying damage to goods at a given point in a shipment's transit?

#### Incoterms categories

Incoterms are standard trade definitions and grouped in four different categories:

- Terms beginning with E: a seller's responsibilities are fulfilled when goods are ready to depart from their facilities.

- Terms beginning with F: refer to shipments where the primary cost of shipping is not paid for by the seller.
- Terms beginning with C: deal with shipments where the seller pays for shipping.
- Terms beginning with D: cover shipments where the shipper/seller’s responsibility ends when the goods arrive at some specific point. Because shipments are moving into a country, D-terms usually involve the services of a customs broker and a freight forwarder. In addition, D-terms also deal with the docking charges found at virtually all ports and determining who is responsible for each charge.

The table below displays the detailed description of some of the most common incoterms.

**TAULA 3.2.**

Group	Incoterm	Meaning	When to use it
E (Departure)	EXW	Ex Works	Title and risk pass to buyer including payment of all transportation and insurance cost from the seller’s door. The buyer is responsible for loading, transportation, clearance and unloading.  Used for any mode of transportation.
F (Main Carriage Unpaid)	FCA	Free Carrier	The seller delivers the goods, cleared for export, to the first carrier. The buyer normally pays for the carriage to the port of import, and risk passes to him when the goods are handed over to the first carrier. The buyer also pays for insurance. Used for any mode of transportation.
	FAS	Free Alongside Ship	Title and risk pass to buyer including payment of all transportation and insurance cost once delivered at the dock. The export clearance obligation rests with the seller. FAS is usually followed by a place name, which indicates the port where the goods are to be delivered on the quay beside the carrier ship. Used for sea or inland transportation, usually for heavy and bulk cargoes.

**TAULA 3.2** (continuació)

<b>Group</b>	<b>Incoterm</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>When to use it</b>
	FOB	Free On Board Vessel	The seller clears the goods for export and loads the goods on the vessel and at the port that have been nominated by the buyer. Cost and risk are divided when the goods are on board, but delivery occurs when the goods are on board ship. Used for sea or inland waterway transportation..
<b>C (Main Carriage Paid)</b>	CFR	Cost and Freight	Title, risk and insurance cost pass to the buyer when goods have been loaded on board the ship. The seller pays the transportation cost to the destination port, but it is not the seller's job to clear them through customs. Used for sea or inland waterway transportation.
	CIF	Cost, Insurance and Freight	Title and risk pass to the buyer when the goods are delivered on board the ship in the country of Export. The seller pays transportation and insurance cost to destination port. Used for sea or inland waterway transportation.
	CPT	Carriage Paid To	The seller pays for carriage. The risk passes to the buyer when the goods are handed to the first carrier at the place of Importation. The seller also has to pay for cargo insurance, in the name of the buyer, when goods are in transit. Used for any mode of transport.
	CIP	Carriage and Insurance Paid To	Title and risk pass to buyer when delivered to carrier by seller who pays transportation and insurance cost to destination. Used for any mode of transportation, usually for road/rail or road/sea.
<b>D (Arrival)</b>	DAP	Delivered at Place	The terms provide for delivery on the arriving means of transport, ready for unloading at the named port. Used for any means of transportation.

. . . . .

**TAULA 3.2** (continuació)

Group	Incoterm	Meaning	When to use it
	DAT	Delivered at Terminal	Title and risk pass to the buyer when goods are unloaded from the arriving means of transport and are placed at the disposal of the buyer at the named terminal. The seller delivers goods on dock at destination point. Used for sea or inland waterway transportation.
	DDP	Delivered Duty Paid	Title and risk pass to the buyer when the seller delivers goods to named destination point cleared for import. The seller assumes all costs, risks and obligations, including import duties, taxes, clearance fees, etc. up to the destination point, where the buyer is responsible for unloading the shipment. Used for any mode of transportation.

**TAULA 3.3.** Vocabulary

<b>Advocate (n):</b> defensor	<b>Incoterm (n):</b> incoterm
<b>Agreement (n):</b> acord	<b>Inland waterway transportation (n):</b> transport fluvial
<b>Border (n):</b> frontera	<b>Insurance (n):</b> assegurança
<b>Buyer (n):</b> comprador	<b>International trade (n):</b> comerç internacional
<b>Carriage (n):</b> càrrega	<b>Job creation (n):</b> creació de llocs de treball
<b>Carrier (n):</b> transportista, empresa de transport	<b>Journey (n):</b> viatge
<b>Clearance (n):</b> autorització d'un producte per a la importació	<b>On board (adv):</b> a bord
<b>Committee (n):</b> comitè	<b>Outlook (n):</b> previsió, pronòstic
<b>Customs broker (n):</b> agent de duanes	<b>Parties of a contract (n):</b> (persones que formen) part d'un contracte
<b>Damage (n):</b> desperfecte	<b>Port (n):</b> port
<b>Deliver (v):</b> lliurar, trametre, enviar	<b>Primary cost (n):</b> cost primari, cost inicial
<b>Delivery (n):</b> lliurament, tramesa, enviament	<b>Responsability (n):</b> responsabilitat
<b>Depart (v):</b> sortir, partir	<b>Rule (n):</b> norma
<b>Disagreement (n):</b> desacord	<b>Sea waterway transportation (n):</b> transport marítim
<b>Discharge (n):</b> descàrrega	<b>Seller (n):</b> venedor
<b>Dock (n):</b> moll de càrrega	<b>Shipment (n):</b> lliurament, tramesa
<b>Docking charge (n):</b> càrrec per l'ús del moll de càrrega	<b>Shipping (n):</b> enviament
<b>Economic growth (n):</b> creixement econòmic	<b>State-of-the-art (adj):</b> d'última generació, de vanguardia
<b>Expense (n):</b> despesa	<b>Trading practice (n):</b> pràctica comercial

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<b>Facilities (pl n):</b> instal·lacions (lloc)	<b>Transaction cost (n):</b> cost d'una transacció comercial
<b>Freight forwarder (n):</b> agent de transport	<b>Unload (v):</b> descarregar
<b>Global trade (n):</b> comerç global, comerç mundial	<b>Vessel (n):</b> vaixell, embarcació
<b>Globalisation (n):</b> globalització	

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### 3.3 Packaging logistics

Packaging is a vital component of export success. The basic functions of packaging are the protection and the identification. Products need to be preserved and protected in order to reach their destination in perfect condition. On the other hand, packaging has the functions of promotion of the product, creation of a public image, communication and product differentiation.

Packaging has been classified into primary, secondary and tertiary. The primary packaging is the material that first envelops the product and holds it, it is in direct contact with the contents. For food and beverage packaging we may use tin cans, coffee capsules, milk cartons, aluminium foil containers, cardboard pizza boxes, resaleable plastic zipper bags, woven packaging bags, disposable paper cups, flexible or rigid packets, etc.

Secondary packaging is outside the primary packaging, perhaps used to group primary packages together and with information to the consumer about the product. It could be a carton box, a shipping box, a cardboard box for wine, a bubble envelope, etc.

Tertiary packaging is used for bulk handling warehouse storage and transport shipping. It is used to group secondary packaging together and prevent damage to the products. The normal form is a unit load that packs tightly into containers. It carries information about the product, such as the fragility, etc. Examples of this category are pallets, wooden crates, shrink wrap, etc.

Once the products have been properly packaged and sealed, they are ready for transport. The most common system used is the containers. Containerization is a system of intermodal freight transport using standard shipping containers that can be loaded with cargo, sealed and placed onto container ships, railroad cars, and trucks.

Containerization has revolutionized cargo shipping and the role of stevedoring companies. Originally, immediately as the vessel entered a harbour to load or unload the cargo from there, dockers or longshoremen would handle the goods as soon as the vessel was in the dock. Nowadays, stevedoring companies and their skilled personnel operate a selection of expensive and sophisticated cargo handling equipment in ports and terminals around the world. They use huge container cranes and ground handling equipment, such as straddle carriers or low loaders.

**G&A**

G&A is a logistics company based in Liverpool. They store and ship products from and to any point in the world. Mr Gary Clerk works for G&A. Let's see what he tells us about his job.

**FIGURA 3.1.** Gary Clerk



“My name's Gary Clerk. I'm from Los Angeles, in USA, but I moved to Liverpool two years ago because I got married to my wife, Helen. I work in the company warehouse. Here we select the products that will be shipped according to the orders received. There is a pick line for every product. We use scan guns to scan the products we pick, put them on pallets and then move the pallets back and forth. Then, we take them outside the pick line where the forklift is used to move them to the replenishment area. Once there, we wrap each pallet and make sure that it's properly secured. There is a separation between each pick line so that we can visually inspect any discrepancies that we may have with the pallets waiting to be picked.

The job is tough, but I still love it. I was doing something similar back in the US, but the relationship with my new colleagues is different. Even though we all speak the same language, there are a lot of cultural differences between America and Britain. My American colleagues were not so formal, but bit by bit I'm trying to cope, and I know I'll get on well with them.”

**TAULA 3.4.** Vocabulary

<b>Aluminium foil (n):</b> paper d'alumini	<b>Milk carton (n):</b> cartró de llet, tetrabrik
<b>Beverage (n):</b> beguda	<b>Pack (v):</b> empaquetar
<b>Bubble envelope (n):</b> sobre de bombolles	<b>Package (v):</b> embalar
<b>Bulk handling (n):</b> transport de materials industrials	<b>Packaging (v):</b> embalatge
<b>Cardboard box (n):</b> capsas de cartró	<b>Packet (n):</b> paquet
<b>Cargo shipping (n):</b> transport de mercaderies	<b>Pallet (n):</b> palet
<b>Carton box (n):</b> envàs de cartró	<b>Paper cup (n):</b> got de paper
<b>Coffee capsule (n):</b> càpsula de cafè	<b>Railroad car (n):</b> vagó de tren
<b>Container (n):</b> contenidor	<b>Resaleable (adj):</b> revendible, que es pot tornar a vendre
<b>Container ship (n):</b> vaixell de càrrega	<b>Seal (v):</b> segellar
<b>Containerization (n):</b> contenidorització	<b>Shipping box (n):</b> caixa de transport
<b>Contents (pl n):</b> contingut	<b>Shrink wrap (n):</b> film transparent
<b>Crane (n):</b> grua	<b>Stevedoring company (n):</b> empresa d'estiba
<b>Damage (n):</b> desperfecte	<b>Storage (n):</b> emmagatzematge

<b>Disposable (adj):</b> d'un sol ús, rebutjable	<b>Straddle carrier (n):</b> carretó pòrtic
<b>Dock (n):</b> moll, dàrsena	<b>Tin can (n):</b> llauna
<b>Docker (n):</b> estibador	<b>Transport shipping (n):</b> transport marítim
<b>Envelop (v):</b> envolta, embolica	<b>Truck (n):</b> camió
<b>Export (n):</b> exportació	<b>Unit load (n):</b> unitat de càrrega
<b>Food (n):</b> menjar	<b>Unload (v):</b> descarregar
<b>Harbour (n):</b> port	<b>Vessel (n):</b> embarcació, vaixell
<b>Hold (v):</b> contenir	<b>Warehouse (n):</b> magatzem
<b>Intermodal freight transport (n):</b> transport de mercaderies intermodal	<b>Wooden crate (n):</b> caixa de fusta
<b>Load (v):</b> carregar	<b>Woven packaging bag (n):</b> bossa de tela
<b>Longshoreman (n):</b> estibador	<b>Zipper bag (n):</b> bossa amb cremallera
<b>Low loader (n):</b> semitràiler	

### 3.4 Language in use

In this section we are going to see an example of a business transaction. Read the case study and then see Ms Gracia and Mr Geonhui's phone conversation, where they discuss the terms of the shipment of some sport items. After the discussion there is the email that summarizes the contents of their conversation.

#### Case study

Anna Garcia works for the purchasing department of Keep Immer Fit, a sports company based in Barcelona. They are planning the new season and there is a high demand of training shoes for outdoor sports. The manager has prepared a list of items to order for the Chinese company Lin SportsWear.

Anna calls the company Lin SportsWear to place the order for some trainers. She requests to speak to Ms Younghi in order to discuss the terms and conditions of the transaction. Her secretary, Mr Geonhui, tells Ms Garcia that Ms Younghi is on a business trip and she will not be back till the next day, but that he can discuss the terms on her behalf. Ms Garcia agrees and goes further to place an order for a series of items. He advises her to send an email with the order. Ms Garcia discusses the terms of the shipment and a possible discount and she requests for the final price and the proforma invoice.

**Ms Younghi's secretary:** Lin SportsWear. How can I help you?

**Ms Garcia:** This is Dolores Garcia, from BCNfitness, Barcelona. Could I speak to Ms Younghi, please?

**Ms Younghi's secretary:** Sorry, Ms Garcia. I'm afraid she's on a business trip and she won't be back until tomorrow.

**Ms Garcia:** Oh, I see.

**Ms Younghi's secretary:** What does it concern, please?

**Ms Garcia:** Well, I would like to place an order for some sport shoes, and discuss about the trading terms.

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**30/70TT** is a standard form of payment. It means that 30% will be paid on the placement of the order and the remaining 70% on shipment. TT (Telegraphic Transfer) refers to the mode of payment.

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**Ms Younghi's secretary:** ok, Ms Garcia. I can handle it on Ms Younghi's behalf. Is it a large order?

**Ms Garcia:** Yes, it is. We are preparing for the next season.

**Ms Younghi's secretary:** Could you send an email with the order?

**Ms Garcia:** Certainly. When can the shoes be shipped?

**Ms Younghi's secretary:** The earliest is 25th February.

**Ms Garcia:** Ok, and what are the conditions for the shipment?

**Ms Younghi's secretary:** We use CIF terms. The payment will be done by letter of credit, and the payment terms will be 30/70 TT. The port of departure will be Qingpu, in Shanghai, and the port of destination Bilbao.

**Ms Garcia:** All right. And is there the possibility of a discount?

**Ms Younghi's secretary:** We can offer a 10% discount for a large order.

**Ms Garcia:** It's ok. Will you send a proforma invoice with the final price?

**Ms Younghi's secretary:** Of course, I will.

**Ms Garcia:** Thank you.

**Ms Younghi's secretary:** Thank you for your order, Ms Garcia. Goodbye.

**Ms Garcia:** Goodbye.

FIGURA 3.2. Email shipping

**To:** geonhui@linsportswear.net.cn  
**Bcc\*:** younghi@linsportswear.net.cn  
**Subject:** Order for sport shoes (ref. num. NS145)

Send [Icons] Options...

Dear Ms Younghi,

I am writing in reference to our phone conversation last Monday regarding the following order (ref. num. NS145):

**ORDER num. NS145**

Number of pairs	Description	Model	Size	Price
1500	Men running shoes	MBS100	39-47	17\$
980	Women running shoes	RS14	35-46	15\$
540	Tennis shoes	TS78	36-45	20\$
460	Air Max Athletic shoes	AMS56	36-45	25\$

We agreed that the shipping would take place on 25th February, leaving from the port of Shanghai (Qingpu) and arriving at the port of Bilbao.

The terms of the shipment are CIF. The terms of payment will be 30/70 TT, that is, 30% of the price will be paid before the products are manufactured and 100% of the price paid before the products are shipped. And the payment will be through letter of credit (L/C). You agreed on a 10 % discount of the total amount.

Please, send a mail confirming the terms and a proforma invoice with the final price.

We look forward to your prompt reply.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Garcia  
 Purchasing Department  
 Keep Immer Fit

\*Bcc: Blind Carbon Copy (copia oculta)

**TAULA 3.5.** Vocabulary

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<b>Business trip (n):</b> viatge de negocis	<b>Port of departure (n):</b> port d'origen
<b>Discount (n):</b> descompte	<b>Port of destination (n):</b> port de destinació
<b>Handle (v):</b> encarregar-se de	<b>Proforma invoice (n):</b> factura proforma
<b>Large order (n):</b> comanda gran	<b>Season (n):</b> temporada
<b>Letter of credit (n):</b> carta de crèdit, crèdit documentari	<b>Ship (v):</b> enviar, trametre
<b>On (sb's) behalf (adv):</b> de part (d'algú)	<b>Shipment (n):</b> enviament, tramesa
<b>Order (n):</b> comanda	<b>Trading terms (pl n):</b> condicions comercials
<b>Payment terms (pl n):</b> condicions del pagament	<b>TT(Telegraphic Transfer) (n):</b> transferència electrònica
<b>Place an order (v):</b> fer una comanda	

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### 3.4.1 Communication: talking about time and place

The expression of time is very often materialized in the expression of dates and clock times. Dates are very often expressed in the written form (mostly in business letters) whereas clock times are more widely used in speaking.

#### Dates

To ask for the date, we can say:

- *What's the date (today)? - It's 9th June.*
- *What date is it (today)? - It's 9th June.*

A date can also answer a question with *when*:

- *When did you start in this company? - (I started) on 9th June 2007.*

#### Writing the dates:

The expression of the date typically includes the day, the month and the year. The day is expressed with an ordinal number (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.). The date formats are different in British and American English.

TAULA 3.6. The dates in English

	British English	American English
A	The ninth of June 2007	June the ninth, 2007
B	9th June 2007	June 9th, 2007
C	9 June 2007	June 9, 2007
D	9/6/2007	6/9/2007
E	9/6/07	6/9/07
F	09/06/07	06/09/07

Notice the following:

- Format A is very formal and it is mostly used in printed items, such as invitations.
- Formats D, E and F may cause misinterpretations. We can interpret the date *9/6/2007* in two ways: *9th June 2007* (in the British format) or *6th September 2007* (in the American format). In order to interpret the date correctly, it is necessary to know the context.
- Numerical formats may use a slash (/): *9/6/2007*, a full stop (.): *9.6.2007* or a hyphen (-): *9-6-2007*.

- The names of the months are written with an initial capital letter: *June, May, April*, etc.

### Saying the dates:

The way in which we write and say the dates often differs. All the dates, irrespective of their written form, are pronounced like this:

- *the ninth of June two thousand and seven* (in British English).
- *June the ninth two thousand and seven* (in American English).

The years are generally pronounced like this:

- 1900: *nineteen hundred*
- 1908: *nineteen hundred eight*
- 1985: *nineteen eighty five*
- 2000: *two thousand*
- 2007: *two thousand and seven*
- 2015: *twenty fifteen*

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There are no rules for saying the years, only generally accepted conventions based on brevity and convenience.

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- We use the preposition *on* to say in which date something happens: *I started on 14th May 1985* (Cat. vaig començar el 14 de maig de 1985).
- We use the preposition *in* when we say only the month or the year: *I started in May* (Cat. vaig començar el maig); *I started in 1985* (Cat. vaig començar el 1985).
- Sometimes it is not necessary to say the complete date: *I started on the 14th* (Cat. vaig començar el dia 14).

### Clock times

We can ask for the time like this:

- *What's the time? - It's 10 (in the morning).*
- *What time is it? - It's 10 (in the morning).*

We can also ask about the time something happens:

- *What time did you arrive? - At 6:15 (a quarter past six).*

- *What time does the meeting start? - At 4:30 (half past four).*

The following table shows the ways in which we write and say the time in English.

TAULA 3.7. Clock times in English

We write	We say (Formal)	(Informal)
3:00	three o'clock	
3:05	three oh five	five past three
3:12	three twelve	twelve minutes past three
3:15	three fifteen	a quarter past three
3:30	three thirty	half past three
3:40	three forty	twenty to four
3:45	three forty-five	a quarter to four
3:56	three fifty-six	four minutes to four
4:00	four o'clock	

To indicate the exact time of an action, we must use the preposition *at*: *come at four!* (Cat. vine a les quatre!). We can add *about* if we mean *approximately*: *come at about four!* (Cat. vine cap a les quatre!).

In English-speaking countries, the 24-hour clock is not widely used. They prefer adding the labels 'am' (ante meridian) and 'pm' (post meridian) to indicate the part of the day. Therefore, 11:40 is *11:40 am* and 23:40 is *11:40 pm*.

*Ante meridian* (am) means 'before midday': it refers to the times between 00:00 and 12:00; *post meridian* (pm) means 'after midday' and it refers to the times between 12:00 and 00:00.

To say the part of the day, we can use the following expressions:

- In the morning: *it's ten in the morning* (Cat. són les deu del matí); *it's three in the morning* (Cat. són les tres de la matinada).
- In the afternoon: *it's four in the afternoon* (Cat. Són les quatre de la tarda).
- In the evening: *it's eight in the evening* (Cat. Són les vuit del vespre); *it's eleven in the evening* (Cat. són les onze de la nit).

The English term *morning* includes the idea of the Catalan terms *matí* and *matinada* (Sp. mañana/madrugada) whereas the term *evening* includes the idea of both *vespre* and *nit* (Sp. tarde/noche). The term *night* is not generally used to speak about a specific time. It refers to the dark hours of the day and it stands in opposition to the term *day*.

The times included in each part of the day are not clearly established. Approximately, they are the following:

- Morning: 00:00 to 12:00
- Afternoon: 12:00 to 17:00
- Evening: 17:00 to 00:00

Other expressions related to time are:

- At night (Cat. durant la nit, de nit)
- During the day (Cat. durant el dia, de dia)
- At midnight (=00:00) (Cat. a mitjanit)
- At midday (=12:00) (Cat. al migdia)
- At dawn (Cat. a la matinada)
- At sunset (Cat. a la posta del sol, al capvespre)

### 3.4.2 Grammar reference: prepositions of time and place

Prepositions are used to introduce adverbials of place and time. For example:

- *In the office* (adverbial of place): it indicates where the action takes place.
- *In 1978* (adverbial of time): it indicates when the action takes place.

The use of English prepositions is sometimes confusing, so it is better to learn the adverbials as a whole rather than the individual meanings of the preposition.

#### Prepositions of time

Here are the most common prepositions of time and their use (Catalan translations available only when there is an equivalent meaning).

- **In** is used with:

1. Years, centuries and historical periods: *in 2010, in the 19th century, in the Middle Ages*
2. The names of the months: *in April, in September*
3. The names of the seasons: *in spring, in summer, in autumn, in winter*
4. The parts of the day (except 'night'): *in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening*

- **On** is used with:

1. The days of the week: *on Mondays, on Tuesday, on Saturday morning*
2. Dates: *on 9th June, on 4th February 2009*

- **At** is used with:
  1. Clock times and nouns denoting clock times: *at 4 o'clock, at 3:30 pm, at midnight, at dawn*
  2. The names of holidays and festivals: *at Christmas, at Easter*
  3. The words 'night' and 'the weekend': *at night, at the weekend*
  
- **For** (Cat. durant) (it expresses the duration of an action): *for five years, for three hours*
- **Since** (Cat. des de) (it expresses the starting point of an action): *since last year, since yesterday, since three, since I work here*
- **During** (Cat. durant) (it expresses a moment within a longer period of time): *during the Christmas holidays, during the class, during his convalescence*
- **Ago** (it expresses the moment when an action took place in the past. Unlike the other prepositions, it is placed after the noun): *four years ago, three hours ago*
- **Before** (Cat. abans de): *before 1997, before three o'clock, before summer, before Christmas, before he came*
- **After** (Cat. després de): *after 1997, after three o'clock, after summer, after Christmas, after I met you*
- **Until** (Cat. fins a) (it indicates the end of an action): *until midnight, until 2023, until Sunday, until I call*
- **From ... to** (Cat. des de...fins) (this double preposition indicates the beginning and the end of an action): *from three to four; from April to May, from the 18th to the 20th century*

### Notes:

1) The prepositions *since, before, after* and *until* can also be placed in front of a sentence. For example:

- *since I work here*
- *before he came*
- *after I met you*
- *until I call you*

2) Do not confuse the meanings of *for* and *during*:

- *For* expresses the whole period of time: *I'll go to London for a week* (Cat. aniré a Londres durant tota una setmana)
- *During* refers to a moment in the period of time: *I'll go to London during this week* (Cat. aniré a Londres en algun moment d'aquesta setmana)

## Prepositions of place

The most common prepositions and prepositional phrases of place are:

- **In** (Cat. a, dintre de): *in the garden, in the box, in the street, in England, in the city.*
- **Into** (Cat. cap a dintre de): *into the house, into the pocket, into the forest.*
- **Inside** (Cat. dintre de): *inside the kitchen, inside the pocket.*
- **Outside** (Cat. fora de): *outside the house, outside the country.*
- **On** (Cat. a, a sobre de): *on the desk, on the shelf, on the chair, on the wall, on the floor.*
- **At** (Cat. a): *at the door, at the table, at the cinema, at the window, at the tree.*
- **To** (Cat. a, cap a): *to the cinema, to London, to work, to the street.*
- **Opposite** (Cat. al davant de, enfront): *opposite the park, opposite Sandra, opposite the school.*
- **In front of** (Cat. davant de): *in front of a man, in front of the house .*
- **Next to** (Cat. al costat de): *next to the bank, next to my friend, next to the lamp.*
- **Behind** (Cat. al darrera de): *behind the curtains, behind a bus, behind the door, behind the tree.*
- **Near** (Cat. a prop de): *near London, near the road, near the window .*
- **Over** (Cat. per damunt de): *over the bed, over my head.*
- **Under** (Cat. a sota de): *under the table, under a tree, under my jacket.*
- **Above** (Cat. per damunt de): *above the vice-president, above the house.*
- **Below** (Cat. per sota de): *below the president, below the standards.*
- **From** (Cat. de): *I'm from Barcelona, these products are from China.*
- **On the corner of** (Cat. a la cantonada de): *on the corner of the street, on the corner of London Rd and High St.*

### Notes:

1) Some prepositions have similar meanings. For example:

- *He is **in** the cinema* (Cat. És a dins del cinema) (meaning that he is inside the cinema, and not in the street).
- *He is **at** the cinema* (Cat. És al cinema) (in a general sense, stressing the purpose of going to the cinema rather than the location).

- *The lamp is **on** the table* (Cat. La làmpara és al damunt de la taula) (=resting on the table).
- *The lamp is **over** the table* (Cat. La làmpara és a sobre de la taula) (=hanging, with no contact with the table).

2) *Above* and *below* are used to refer to a higher or lower position in status, whereas *over* and *under* are used to refer to a physical place. For example:

- *The president is **above** the vice-president*. (Cat. El president està per damunt del vice-president)
- *The plane is flying **over** the Alps*. (Cat. L'avió està volant per damunt dels Alps).