



3

On schedule

Starting point

- 1 What projects are you currently working on?
- 2 Think of one project. What are some of the key stages?

Working with words | Managing projects

- 1 Work in groups. Look at the picture of a ride at a theme park. Try to list six stages in a project to build a ride like this, starting with 'Brainstorming'.
- 2 Join another group and list your stages. Add any new ideas to your list.
- 3 Read the article about planning and building theme parks. Which of your stages does it mention?

A RIDE THAT RUNS ON TIME

Theme parks are big business these days. Millions of visitors buy tickets to enjoy the rides at Universal Studios in Florida or Disneyland Paris and each year visitor expectations are higher. To survive in this competitive world, every major theme park needs its new attraction, which requires years of upfront planning.

Phase one in most projects begins with brainstorming. The theme park designers think about the story behind the ride and its imagined geographical location. No idea is considered too crazy at this stage as there are no budget constraints – yet. Once the basic idea is agreed, each part of the ride is storyboarded, like scenes from a film. The images from the storyboard are then transformed into a combination of 3D models of the ride and images on a computer. At this point, the design team presents the concept to the main project manager and tries to provide an accurate forecast of the time needed to complete the project and a realistic budget.

Once the project is given the go ahead, phase two begins and the project team starts to work with other engineers, model makers and sound and lighting designers. In order not to miss the deadline, the project will need a wide range of people with specialist skills, and many parts of the process are outsourced. This is a critical period when it's easy to run into problems. It

would only take one of the teams to fall behind schedule or go over budget and the whole project could be delayed.

Assuming the construction phase stays on track, there then follows a long period of safety testing and assessment of the ride's performance. Having made the launch date, the park starts to monitor visitor feedback; they survey visitors, and the overall success of the new ride will be calculated over time by the number of visitors choosing to go on the ride every hour.



- 4 Work with a partner. Read the article again and answer these questions.
 - 1 Why do theme parks need a new attraction every year?
 - 2 How controlled are the early stages of a project?
 - 3 What does the team have to present at the end of phase one?
 - 4 In phase two, why does the number of people involved increase so much?
 - 5 What can go wrong at this stage of the project?
 - 6 How does the theme park know if the project is successful?

5 Match 1–10 to a–j to make phrases from the article.

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1 upfront | a constraints |
| 2 budget | b forecast |
| 3 accurate | c on track |
| 4 realistic | d budget |
| 5 miss | e planning |
| 6 run into | f launch date |
| 7 stay | g problems |
| 8 go over | h the deadline |
| 9 fall behind | i budget |
| 10 make the | j schedule |

6 Work with a partner. Do you associate the phrases in **5** with successful (S) or unsuccessful (U) projects, or both?**7** Match the words in **bold** in 1–6 with a phrase with the same meaning from **5**.

- To avoid problems later on, let's start with some **preparation before we do anything else**. upfront planning
- Do we have a **sensible amount of money** or are we supposed to do this without spending anything? _____
- Can I spend as much as I like or are there any **limitations to the amount of money I have**? _____
- At this rate, we won't **meet the deadline to have it in the shops**.

- I need a **correct prediction** about timings and costs before I give the go ahead.

- The project **didn't stay on track with regard to the timings**.

8 Choose a verb from the list that can go with all three phrases in each group.

miss stay go run make

- _____ smoothly / on time / into problems
- _____ the deadline / the launch date / the chance
- _____ on track / within budget / the course
- _____ over budget / ahead with the plan / out of control
- _____ the deadline / a plan / a mess of it

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 3** on page 110.

9 Work with a partner. Read the notes on a project review. Discuss and make a list of what went right and what has gone wrong for the project.

Example: The total cost of the work has gone over the original budget.

Project: increase plant space of factory by 25% and install new production line

Total cost of the work: estimate = €1 million; actual cost = €1.3 million

Time for completion of project = 18 months; actual time = 2 years

- project meetings not held on regular basis – communication often by email (not everyone copied in)
- clearing of site took place quickly and easily – met deadline
- production manager changed specification of production line equipment to increase capacity, but didn't tell project manager – software program had to be rewritten quickly – resulted in errors in program
- problems during construction – discovered length of new building 2 m short (due to changes in specification – suppliers not told of change)
- equipment for production line delivered two weeks late – not able to install power connections at scheduled time – loss of several weeks on schedule
- all other new equipment arrived on time
- kept to budget for first six months, but overspent after construction problems

10 Work with another pair and compare your lists.

Context

The Tech-Tariff project is a collaboration between MMT-Tec (service provider) and Anvikon (mobile phone manufacturer). The aim is to launch a hi-tech phone with new advanced features from Anvikon in combination with MMT-Tec's new tariff which includes free videophoning and multimedia message services. Sarah and Michelle from MMT-Tec and Ian from Anvikon are meeting to discuss the progress of the project.

Business communication | Running an update meeting



- 1 ▶ **3.1** Read the *Context*. Listen to Part 1 of the meeting and make notes about the items on the agenda.

TECH-TARIFF UPDATE MEETING 2 SEPT

Agenda

- 1 Update on marketing activities (MMT-Tec):
 - Launch date ¹ Set for 15th November
 - Advertising campaign ² _____
 - Launch party: Venue ³ _____
 - Catering: ⁴ _____
- 2 Update on Anvikon activities:
 - Handset ⁵ _____
- 3 Project schedule ⁶ _____

- 2 ▶ **3.1** Listen again and answer questions 1–3.

- 1 What four phrases does Sarah use to ask for an update on the project?
- 2 What three phrases do Sarah and Michelle use to clarify the problem with the battery?
- 3 Turn to audio script **3.1** and underline all the phrases Michelle and Ian use to give an update on the project.

- 3 ▶ **3.2** Listen to Part 2 of the meeting and answer questions 1–3.

- 1 Why didn't Ian like the idea of finding another battery supplier?
- 2 Why didn't Sarah like the idea of not mentioning the battery life?
- 3 Which proposal did they finally decide on?

- 4 ▶ **3.2** Listen again. Complete these suggestions made by the speakers. What do the speakers say to respond to each of the suggestions?

- a _____ another battery supplier?
response: _____
- b _____ keep the same battery but not mention its lifespan.
response: _____
- c _____ and see what the technicians suggest ...?
response: _____
- d Using a different phone for the launch _____.
response: _____
- e _____ look at what we can reschedule.
response: _____

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 3** on page 110.

Tip | things

Use *things* to speak/ask about situations in general.

How are **things** with you?

How does your side of **things** look?

Things aren't running as smoothly as I'd hoped.

Key expressions

Asking for an update

How does your side of things look?
How's the ... coming along?
How far are you with ...?
How are things with ...?
What's the current status of ...?

Giving an update

Up to now (the launch date) has been (set) ...
He (booked the venue) two weeks ago.
I've already ...
I haven't ... yet.
We're on track.
Things aren't running as smoothly as I'd hoped.
We've hit a problem with ...

Clarifying a problem

So what do you mean exactly?
So what you're saying is ...?
So the real problem lies with ...?

Making a suggestion

How about (+ -ing)
We could (+ verb)
Why don't we (+ verb)
... would be my proposal.
If you ask me, we should ...

Responding to a suggestion

That's a good idea.
It's worth a try.
I don't think that would ...
That's possible (but ...)
That's not an ideal solution.
I'm not convinced.
I suppose so.

- 5 Work with a partner. It is two days before the launch of the new Tech-Tariff phone. Student A, you are Michelle. Turn to page 136. Student B, you are Ian. Use the information below. Update each other on the progress of the project. Make sure you:

- clarify any information you're not sure about
- make and respond to suggestions as necessary

Student B

- 1 Read the 'To do' list you received from Michelle and the notes you have written under your tasks (I).
- 2 Michelle will call you. Answer Michelle's questions about your tasks.
- 3 Ask Michelle to update you on her tasks (M).
- 4 Make and respond to suggestions as necessary.

Launch date 'To do' list

- **Bring Anvikon merchandise to venue (I)**
Done! Already sent. Suggestion: bring extras and leave in car?
- **Finalize timetable of day with sound engineers (M)**
- **Brief Anvikon staff about handset demonstration (I)**
Problem - illness in office - rescheduled for tomorrow when all sales staff are present.
Suggestion: time - mid-afternoon?
- **Check replies from the press - who's coming? (M)**
- **Send Anvikon PR manager's speech to MMT-Tec (I)**
Not ready! Will contact him again today.
Suggestion: PR manager emails it direct to MMT-Tec?
- **Make sure Sarah's briefed on everything (I/M)**
On track! Have logged everything - will send brief to Sarah tomorrow p.m.

Practically speaking | Questioning a decision

- 1 When someone makes a decision, do you ever question it? What does it depend on? For example, do you ever question your manager's decisions? What might happen if we don't question decisions?

- 2 ▶ 3.3 Listen to three conversations and match each conversation 1-3 to the topics a-c.
a budget ___ b staffing ___ c schedule ___

- 3 ▶ 3.3 Listen again and tick (✓) the expressions you hear.

- 1 Are you sure that's the best way forward?
- 2 I don't think that would work.
- 3 That's not an ideal solution.
- 4 Is that really the case?
- 5 Sorry, but I'm not sure I agree.
- 6 I'm not entirely convinced.

- 4 Work with a partner. Make a list of three decisions you have made recently (either at work or at home). Then take turns to tell your partner about each decision. As you listen, question your partner's decision and make sure they have made the right decision.

Tip | softening

To sound less critical, you can soften your question like this:

I'm sorry, but I'm not sure I agree.

That's a good idea, but is it the only way forward?

I take your point, but is that really the case?

Language at work | Present perfect and past simple

- 1 Work with a partner. Read sentences a–f and decide if the tenses in **bold** are either present perfect or past simple.
- Up to now, the launch date **has been set** for the 15th of November ...
 - We've **hit** a problem with the handset battery life.
 - He **booked** the venue two weeks ago.
 - I've **already received** offers from various catering companies.
 - I **haven't made** a final choice **yet**.
 - I **sent** you a proposed agenda yesterday.
- 2 Answer the questions in the *Language point*.

LANGUAGE POINT

Which of the sentences in 1 refer to ...?

- a present situation resulting from a past action – we don't know or say when the action happened ____
- a finished past action – we know or say when it happened ____
- something that has/hasn't happened during an unfinished period of time ____

Which words in sentences d and e mean that ...?

- something has taken place earlier than expected _____
- we expect that something will take place _____

» For more information, go to **Grammar reference** on page 111.

- 3 Which of these time expressions can we use ...?
- with the past simple
 - with the present perfect
 - with either – but under what circumstances. Give examples.
- up to now so far (this week) since our last meeting in the last month
today last week a couple of weeks ago this morning yesterday
to date just over the last few months*

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 3** on page 111.

- 4 Work with a partner. Student A, turn to page 136. Student B, turn to page 137. Update each other on your project.
- 5 Work with a partner. Student A and Student B, turn to page 138. Follow the instructions and ask and answer questions about these 'To do' lists.

1 Print out and collate six copies of proposal to submit to management.

Contact office suppliers to check delivery date of latest order.

Email all staff with agenda for next team meeting.

Compile mailing list for this year's brochure.

2 Email colleague and ask for all the details about the conference.

Confirm acceptance of conference place with conference organizers.

Book return flights to Madrid – Friday to Monday.

Find two possible hotels in centre of Madrid.

- 6 Work with a partner. Think of five goals or plans you have had during the last six months. Tell your partner which of these you have achieved and when, and give some details. Which have you not achieved and why?

TALKING POINT

Five most common problems on projects

1

**Not enough planning time**

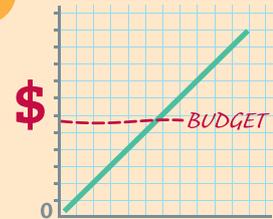
Lack of planning at the start of a project will always result in changes later on, eating up time and money.

2

**Communication breakdowns**

Breakdowns can occur between the teams, individuals within teams, third-party suppliers, and the end users.

3

**Unrealistic budget**

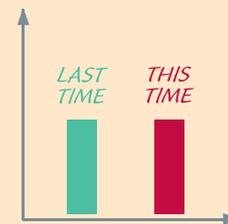
Ineffective forecasting means you run out of money, departments fall behind, resources are slow to arrive, and the project goes out of control.

4

**Not regularly checking progress**

When you assume everything is going well, you might find you're suddenly faced with a huge list of problems just before the deadline.

5

**Not reviewing existing standards**

If most of your projects run behind schedule and over budget, ask yourself why. If you keep doing the same thing, you'll get the same results.

Discussion

- 1 Do you agree with the list of the five most common problems on a project? Would you add any other problems to the list?
- 2 Which of these problems have you experienced on a project? What happened?
- 3 What have you learnt from your mistakes on previous projects? How do you do things differently now?

Task

- 1 Work in groups. Prepare a presentation entitled 'Five best solutions for Project Managers'. Use the list of the five most common problems and create a new list with the five best solutions.
- 2 Join another group and take turns to present your list of solutions. How similar or different were the five solutions in each group?

Working with words

1 Replace the words in *italics> in 1–8 with the phrases from the list. Change the form if necessary.*

miss the deadline *upfront planning*
fall behind schedule *an accurate forecast*
stay on track *budget constraints*
go over budget *make the launch date*

- A project like this needs plenty of *preparation beforehand*. _____ *upfront planning*
- The contractors failed to *keep to the agreed schedule* so the new bridge was completed one year late.

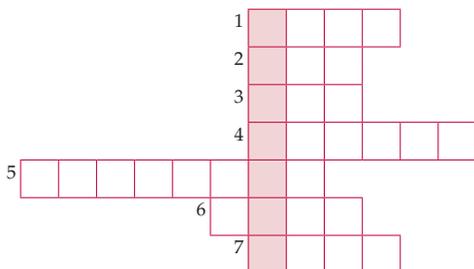
- The whole project has been difficult and we've *lost time* because of unforeseen delays.

- Can you give me *a detailed prediction*?

- They didn't *start selling the new product on the agreed date*. _____
- What *limitations on spending* do we have when it comes to travel costs? _____
- There are strict penalty clauses, so it'll be expensive if we *are late for that date*. _____
- I always look at our spending carefully so that we don't *spend more than we have*. _____

2 Complete sentences 1–7. Use the answers to complete the puzzle and find the hidden word.

- Did you make a detailed _____ before you started.
- The trains always _____ on time in this country.
- Their spending on the project went _____ of control!
- If you don't want to overspend, you need a realistic _____.
- I hope our next project runs more _____ than this one!
- Don't use that contractor. They made a real _____ of things last time.
- We can't afford to _____ the chance of securing the new contract.



Business communication

1 Sondra is discussing the progress of an HR project with Dimitri. Choose the best answer (a–c) from 1–8 below to complete their conversation.

Sondra OK, Dimitri. What's the current ¹ _____ of the staff satisfaction survey?

Dimitri Well, on the whole, we're ² _____. We've received replies from the questionnaires, but we haven't collated the answers yet.

Sondra You do know the regional HR conference date ³ _____ for next month, don't you?

Dimitri Yes, but we've ⁴ _____ with IT. They haven't set up the database for us yet, to collate the results.

Sondra So the real problem ⁵ _____ IT's time management?

Dimitri Partly, yes.

Sondra How about ⁶ _____ as much of the report as you can?

Dimitri That's ⁷ _____, but until we have results from the survey, there's nothing to put in the report.

Sondra So what you're really ⁸ _____ is, without the database you can't continue?

Dimitri Err, yes.

- a stand b status c view
- a up to scratch b in the lane c on track
- a had set b had already set c has already been set
- a knocked a problem b come to a problem c hit a problem
- a lies with b stands with c sits with
- a to prepare b prepared c preparing
- a likely b possible c probable
- a saying b telling c talking

2 Match 1–8 to a–h.

- How far are you _____
- Things aren't running _____
- We finalized the draft _____
- So what do you _____
- If you ask me, _____
- I'm not _____
- That's not _____
- Up to now _____

- the launch dates have been set for ...
- we should scrap the idea.
- as smoothly as I'd hoped.
- with the new packaging?
- an ideal solution.
- mean exactly?
- three weeks ago.
- convinced.

GRAMMAR REFERENCE

Present perfect

Use the present perfect

- 1 to link a present situation with something that took place at an unspecified time in the past

Ana **has sent** the new brochure to all our clients.

The present situation is that all the clients have the new brochure. The past event is that Ana sent the new brochure (we don't know when).

- 2 with *yet* and *already* to talk about tasks expected to be done or which are done earlier than expected

A **Have you finished** that report **yet**?

B Yes. And **I've already done** most of the next one as well.

- 3 with *how long*, *for* and *since* to talk about duration of states and activities

- 4 with *just* to talk about things that have happened very recently

I've just seen Tom in the cafeteria.

- 5 with unfinished time periods: *since*, *so far this week*, *up to now*, *recently*, *this month*, *today*.

You've been late three times this month – please be on time for the rest of the month.

Past simple

Use the past simple

- 1 when referring to (or thinking of) a finished time period like *yesterday*, *last week*, *at 5.30*, *on 11 May*, *at Christmas*, *in 2002*, etc.

I went to the sales conference last week.

- 2 for questions with *When?* *What time?* *How long ago?* etc. because the expected answer is a finished time period

A **When did you see** Mr Li?

(NOT: *When have you seen* Mr Li?)

B **I saw** him yesterday.

(NOT: *I have seen* him yesterday.)

- 3 with many present time expressions usually used with the present perfect, like *this week*, *today*, *just*, if they refer to a time period that is about to finish or has just finished

We've made a lot of progress this week. (said on Wednesday – the time period is still in progress)

We made a lot of progress this week. (said at 4.30 p.m. on Friday – the time period is about to finish)

Language at work

- 1 Complete the two dialogues with the past simple or present perfect form of the verbs in brackets.

A I need to ask David if he
1 _____ (decide) to set up the focus group.

B Don't worry. I 2 _____ (already / speak) to him about it.

A Really? When 3 _____ (you / see) him?

B I 4 _____ (call) him first thing today.

A What 5 _____ (he / say)?

B He 6 _____ (not / make) up his mind yet. He needs some documents from head office, and they still 7 _____ (not / arrive).

C 8 _____ (you / finalize) all the arrangements for Mr Eng's visit yet?

D I'm dealing with it now. I 9 _____ (fix) a date for him to come and visit – the 19th.

C What about Bob? I think he needs to be there.

D That's fine. I 10 _____ (speak) to Anna a couple of days ago, and the 19th is fine for him, too.

C 11 _____ (you / arrange) the visit to the warehouse yet?

D Yes, I 12 _____ (just / organize) that – for the afternoon.

C What about dinner that evening?

D I 13 _____ (book) a table yesterday – at The Mill – I hope that's OK.

C Fine. That all sounds excellent. You 14 _____ (be) very efficient.

- 2 Match 1–6 to contexts a–f.

1 Has our bid for the contract been successful? ____

2 Was our bid for the contract successful? ____

3 Have you spoken to the caterers this week? ____

4 Did you speak to the caterers this week? ____

5 I've just cancelled the order. ____

6 I just cancelled the order. ____

a The result of the contract bids was announced last week.

b I only cancelled the order. I didn't reorder or complain.

c They're announcing the results of the contract bids now.

d I am expecting you to speak to the caterers some time this week. (It is Wednesday.)

e I was expecting you to speak to the caterers this week. (It is 5 p.m. on Friday. I am about to leave the office.)

f I cancelled the order a couple of minutes ago.