

ProTalk

Discussion Files

afaq

Language Center

C2. Describing problems

Afaq Language Center

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Goals

- Can recognise and understand fixed expressions and collocations to describe problems
- Can utilise technical terms to address complex problematic issues clearly and in depth



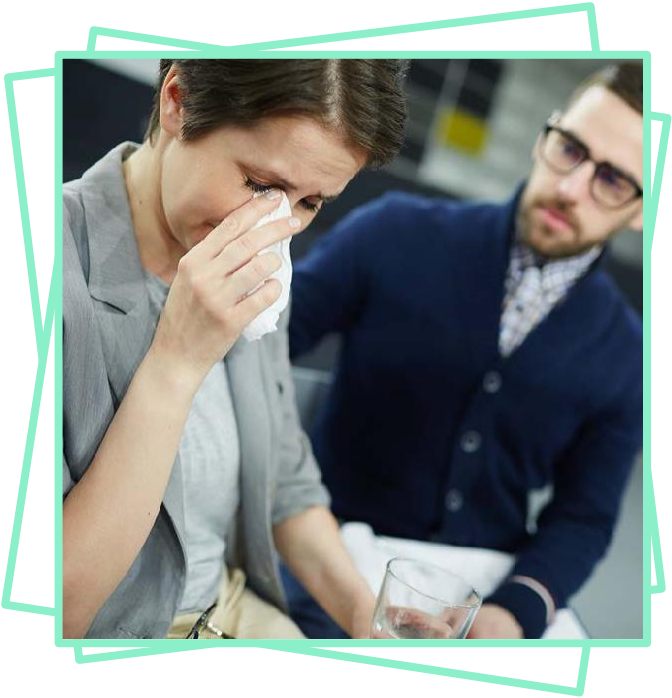
What do you think?

The way a problem is described can sometimes **be a part of the problem** itself.

On the other hand, sometimes being able **to properly describe a complex problem** means you are already **halfway towards solving it**.

Problem solving

Who helps you out the most when you have a problem?
Does it depend on the type of problem?





Problem idioms

Look at the two idioms below that are connected to problems. Do you know what they mean? Give an example of when you have been in these situations.

He's in a real pickle.

It's a catch-22 situation.



Describing a problem: Discuss the meanings with your teacher and use each in a sentence.

Here are some **phrases** that you can use to **describe a problem**.

to raise an issue	The new law raises an issue.
to go unresolved	The problem went unresolved for years.
a problem arises	A problem arises when we look at both projects together.
to have clear shortcomings	This project has clear shortcomings.
to place obstacles in someone's way	This issue has placed so many obstacles in our way.

Collocations with *difficulty:* Discuss the meanings with your teacher and use each in a sentence.

foreseeable difficulties	There are some **foreseeable difficulties** which we should plan for.
insurmountable difficulties	The **difficulties** might prove **insurmountable**.
to encounter difficulties	We have **encountered** some **difficulties** but nothing we can't get over.
to experience difficulties	The team is **experiencing** some **difficulties**.
difficulties lie in...	The **difficulties lie in** the supply chain.
to be fraught with difficulties	The project was **fraught with difficulties** from start to finish.

Collocations with *mistake:* Discuss the meanings with your teacher and use each in a sentence.

a fundamental mistake

a monumental mistake

an unavoidable mistake



a deliberate mistake

to be littered with mistakes

to contain significant mistakes

to acknowledge a mistake

It was all a mistake!

Answer the questions

Have you ever read a document at work that was littered with mistakes? What was your reaction?

Have you ever experienced difficulties with a new team member? How did you overcome them?

Are you comfortable raising issues with your boss? Is there anyone you prefer to go to?

Have you worked on any projects for your company that were controversial?

Have you ever worked on a project which was fraught with difficulties? Did you manage to complete it?

Do you try to acknowledge the mistakes you make and learn from them?

Collocations with *problem:* Discuss the meanings with your teacher and use each in a sentence.

to react to a problem

to deal with a problem

an irreversible problem



to alleviate problems

to tackle a problem

the crux of the problem

to address a problem

The problem takes up all my energy.

Problems

Have you ever had to mediate between conflicting parties at work?

How would you iron out difficulties you were having with a colleague?

Have you ever come up against an irreconcilable problem?

What is the greatest difficulty you have overcome in your professional life?

Problems

Look at both sides of the problem below and think about how you would solve it.

- Your colleague often takes time off to take care of their child. You get left with a lot of their work and think that they should take work home with them when their child is ill.



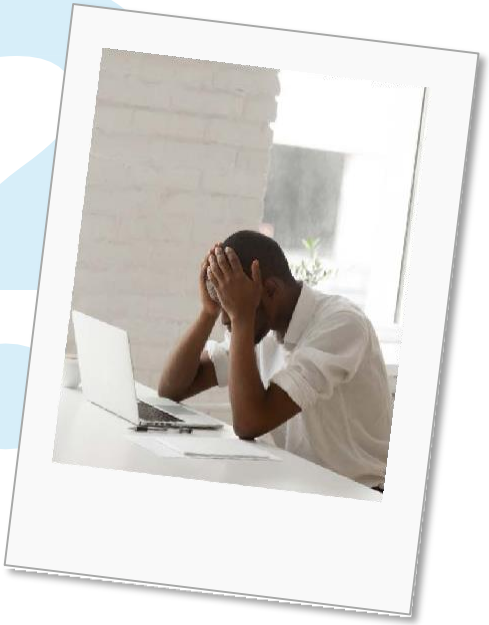


- Your child is often ill. You have to take time off to look after her. You know you leave work for colleagues to do but taking care of an ill child is exhausting.

Role play

Role play a dialogue of solving the problem on the previous page.





Role play

Role play a dialogue between the two friends who disagree over money. Can you resolve the problem?

Look, there's an issue I need to raise!





The difficulties were not foreseeable.

Student A (or teacher): you lent money to your friend and haven't been paid back yet.

Student B (or teacher): you borrowed money but you can't pay it back yet.

What would you do about these problems?



Your dog chews up everything it can find.

Your friend's son draws on the walls of your house every time he comes over.

Complete the sentences

Complete the sentences with your own ideas.

1. An example of an insurmountable difficulty is...
2. I made a deliberate mistake when I...
3. Where I work, problems often arise due to...
4. I am good/not good at tackling problems because...

Presentation

Describe a mistake that you made at work or at university. Say what the mistake was, why it happened and how you fixed it.
Use some of the phrases from the lesson.
Prepare a two-minute presentation.
Give your presentation to the class. Answer questions.

