

6 | Practice file

Working with words

1 Complete this text with the verbs from the list.

get try hit think look fall
figure get bounce run

Six tips for creative thinking

- Creativity often needs peace, so ¹ _____ out ways of getting some quiet time for yourself. Or have an 'away day' with colleagues to ² _____ around ideas together.
- To come up with new and unusual ideas, you need to ³ _____ outside the box. Be open to new perspectives. ⁴ _____ beyond your beliefs and usual ways of doing things.
- Writing down your ideas and thoughts will help the creative process. The more ideas you have, the greater the chance you might ⁵ _____ on a few good ones.
- Take risks! Expect that some ideas will fail or ⁶ _____ by the wayside. See them as experiments rather than mistakes then ⁷ _____ back on track and come up with new solutions.
- Be curious. Ask a lot of questions. Challenge existing methods and ⁸ _____ out different things.
- The end result of a creative idea needs a lot of hard work. So don't give up when you ⁹ _____ into problems or when projects fail to ¹⁰ _____ off the ground.

2 Match 1–10 to a–j.

- 1 In the service sector, quality is a measure of what the customer perceives, which shifts ____
- 2 From this point of view, employees are the most important part of a business, an idea which is causing quite ____
- 3 To serve customers better, employees are encouraged to pursue ____
- 4 Good managers know how far to tolerate ____
- 5 In fact, staff retention is now seen as the key driver to boosting ____
- 6 On the other hand, quality control measures such as Six Sigma demand ____
- 7 ... who sometimes criticize it for imposing ____
- 8 Nevertheless, strict measures are needed to control ____
- 9 ... otherwise they can significantly cut into ____
- 10 In the end, both innovation and control are needed to successfully outperform ____

- a costs and prevent overheads from spiralling out of control ...
- b ideas to achieve the best results for clients.
- c the emphasis from the product per se to the product and the employee.
- d precision in measuring, which may be unsuitable for many companies ...
- e the competition and maintain a competitive edge.
- f mistakes and see them as part of the innovation process – they also budget for learning costs.
- g targets which bear little relation to good service for the client.
- h a stir among traditional, number-crunching managers.
- i the bottom line and reduce profits.
- j earnings in service-oriented companies where employees need the freedom to choose how they serve.

Business communication skills

1 Put these words in the right order to make brainstorming phrases.

- 1 work / would / not / how / I'm / sure / how / but / practice / this / in / about ... ?

- 2 I / have / be / possible / would / it / thought / would / to ...

- 3 you / work / think / what / that / makes / would ?

- 4 could / about / we / it / thinking / even ...

- 5 you / would / like / on / expand / to / that ?

- 6 that / just / in / that / I / well / thought / way ...

- 7 certainly / thinking / it's / about / worth

- 8 we / shouldn't / be / more / thinking / about ... ?

- 9 the / lines / thinking / I / was / along / of ...

2 Complete this problem-solving brainstorm with appropriate phrases using the key words in brackets.

- A So we've got to make significant changes or face receivership.
- B ¹_____ (consider) poaching market share?
- C I don't see how that helps. Increasing market share doesn't necessarily help the bottom line.
- B So, where does that leave us?
- C ²_____ (supposing) ignore market share and our competition ...
- B ³_____ (sorry / saying) that we don't bother selling anything?
- C Not exactly. I mean, let's look at ourselves rather than outside.
- A Oh, I see, ⁴_____ (thinking) that we should be trying to reduce our costs rather than increase our revenues. Am I right?
- C Well, for example, we could look at which of our customers actually make us money.
- B Erm ... all of them?
- A Well, that's probably not quite true. But actually, ⁵_____ (bad idea). We could even drop those clients who don't make us enough of a margin!
- B ⁶_____ (concerned) how that would look.
- C I think it would be fine. By focusing on those clients who generate the most profits and selling to similar clients, we can increase revenues and profits without expanding the infrastructure or fixed costs. ⁷_____ (consider).

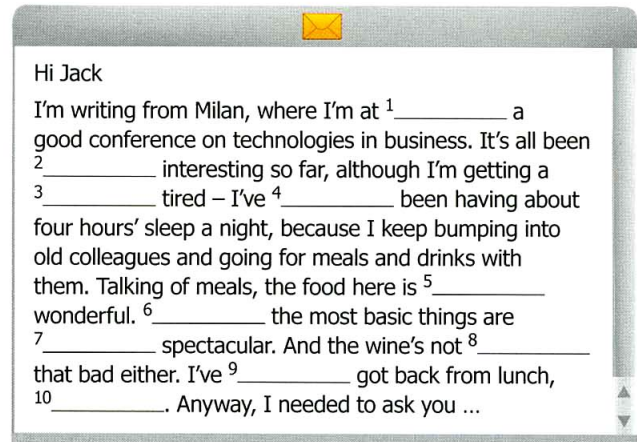
3 Correct these sentences.

- I'm a bit worried over the deadline – I don't think we can make it.
- I'd be more of happy to help out – just let me know what you'd like me to do.
- I just won't be able giving my full attention to this project, if I still have to complete all these administrative tasks.
- Let's try not to get personalized here – it's not just one person's fault that this has been such a disaster.
- The real issue is here that management simply aren't aware of the resourcing problems we've been having.

Language at work

1 Complete this email with words from the list.

quite (x2) rather little all absolutely
just actually even only



2 Complete this conversation with a suitable adverb / adverbial phrase.

- A That was ¹_____ a useful meeting, wasn't it?
- B Yes, although I'm not ²_____ convinced about the brainstorming.
- A To be ³_____, I'm not either. I found that part of the day ⁴_____ tiresome, ⁵_____.
- B Yes. Nick couldn't ⁶_____ keep his eyes open!
- A Well, yes, his attention did seem to wander, but ⁷_____ towards the end – for most of the meeting he was concentrating.
- B Of ⁸_____, and even if we didn't get a clear outcome, it was useful ⁹_____ to be thinking about all those issues together.
- A Yes, I don't ¹⁰_____ think it would have been possible to reach any firm decisions today, do you?
- B No, I suppose not. And I have to say, it was ¹¹_____ the most productive meeting of that kind we've had on this project so far.

