

How to report back on a trip

In this unit you will learn language for informing another person about a recent business trip.

Starter

- How often do you travel for work? What is the usual purpose of your business trips? What do you usually take with you?
- Describe what makes a business trip successful for you.



Expressions

- Last Thursday Morten Olsen left on a business trip to Taoyuan City in Taiwan, to visit Sanjang Electronics, a potential supplier of components for his firm. He sends his boss Sheila the following message. Check you understand it.

MESSAGE

Arrived back ok. Trip v interesting. No big probs
 quality ok only 2 or 3 doubts. Meet thurs @ 16.00? In
 manchester 2moro. Pls fone + confirm. M

- Some people use a '+ - ?' approach when they have to make a report. + for positive points, - for negative ones, and ? for doubts or points of interest. Listen to an extract from the meeting between Morten and Sheila and classify each point accordingly.

_____ shipment	_____ small orders
_____ trademark	_____ pricing policy
_____ competitors	_____ production schedule

Listen to the extract again to check your answers. Then give your teacher a brief summary of what Morten said.

Speaking

- You have just visited TK GmbH, a possible new supplier in Germany. Invent your own information to complete the table and then give a colleague (your teacher) a full description of your trip.

	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Satisfactory
Management	not very flexible		very experienced
Technical			modern installations
Terms	long delivery dates		
Prices			open to negotiations

Language box

When we want to add extra emphasis, especially when we introduce new information or to contrast with a previous statement, we can use the following forms, which are known as 'cleft sentences'.

Beginning a sentence with *It + to be* stresses the words we want to emphasize or contrast:

It's Peter who's really interested in the idea.
 It was on Saturday that we visited the plant.

Beginning with *What* focuses the attention to the final part of the sentence:

What I need is an aspirin!
 What's missing from their report is their final cost estimation.

Hint

The expression **just what** can express pleasure or satisfaction.

A We've decided to accept your offer!

B Fantastic! That's just what I was hoping!

The same expression or **That's all I needed** can also be used to respond to bad news:

That's all I needed! Another delay with this order!

The words **just** and **all** are normally stressed.

- 37.1
- 3 Match the sentence beginnings (1-6) with the endings (a-f) that Morten says at the meeting. Listen to the conversation again to check your answers.

- 1 Despite their size,
2 In spite of all their assurances,
3 Even though I'd prefer to use only ours,
4 Although it was a good trip overall,
5 I couldn't help thinking that
6 But on the whole I think
- a I wouldn't be happy with that.
b we should approach other suppliers.
c Sonjang could be an excellent supplier for us.
d they're incredibly flexible.
e I still have some reservations.
f I don't think it'd be a major problem.

- 4 What do you think Morten means by the phrase: *We shouldn't put all our eggs in one basket?* Can you think of an idiomatic phrase in your language which has a similar meaning?

Writing

- 1 You are organizing next year's national sales conference for 150 of your agents. You recently visited a possible venue and made these notes using the '+ - ?' approach in Expressions. Write a brief email informing your boss of the possible venue, mentioning all your points. Try to use language from Expressions and the Language box.

	Conference venue: Berlin Central Hotel
+	good location, airport 20 mins many daily flights excellent buffet breakfast good conference facilities
-	small car park + 80 coming by car no restaurant no Internet access in rooms
?	big discount if conference at weekend outside caterers for lunch/dinner? set up a WiFi area at conference?

Using expressions with *The thing (that) ...* :

The thing that most interested me was their production systems.

The first thing we did was discuss the new pricing policy.

We can sometimes replace *The thing* with *All* :

All we're asking for is a firm commitment from you. (= the only thing)

Look

Look at listening script 39.1 on page 136 and underline other examples of these structures.

Lesson record

3 new words from this lesson	3 useful phrases from this lesson
1	1
2	2
3	3

Things to remember

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