

How to describe a photo

Hints and tips for a B2
presentation

Credit: Federica Mezzano



Describing a photo



First impact description:

What do you see?



Analysis of circumstances:

How did it happen?



Your insight:

What would you do?



Memories:

What does this remind you of?

FIRST IMPACT DESCRIPTION:



Give a general description: *e.g., 'This picture/photo shows...' Or 'The first thing that catches my eye is...' Or 'In this picture/photo I can see'.*



Talk about the people: *e.g., 'There is one person/there are many people' - 'They look young/old' - 'I assume they are in their twenties/thirties ecc.'* (What are they wearing? Where are they standing? How do they look?)



Talk about the place: *e.g., 'The landscape is beautiful/interesting because...' - 'The café/market/street looks old, new, recently added to the town...'*




Use prepositions: *e.g., 'On (his/her/their/the) left/right' - 'Under the bridge/bench/tree' - 'In between the shops/the people' - 'Opposite the main character/the supermarket'.*

More thoughtful description:

Talk about people's feelings: *e.g., 'They seem happy/sad/angry ... because' - 'She seems frightened/troubled/frustrated'.*



Talk about what you would feel: *e.g., 'If I were there I would laugh/cry/be frightened as well' - 'If it were me in this situation I would ...'*



What happened before?: *e.g., 'I think they were fighting before going there' - 'She was probably walking alone and then found her friends' - 'He might have been very tired before joining them'.*

How do I say it?

Past continuous

Use to + infinitive

About yourself:

- Just like the people in the pictures, I remember one time when **I was doing** the same.
- When I was young **I used to go** to a lake as well. **I used to study** in the library/at home.





How do I say it? - CONDITIONALS

Conditionals are also known as if clauses, we use them to say that one thing depends on something else. They can be used to talk about something that always happens, might happen or might have happened as a result of another state, action or event.



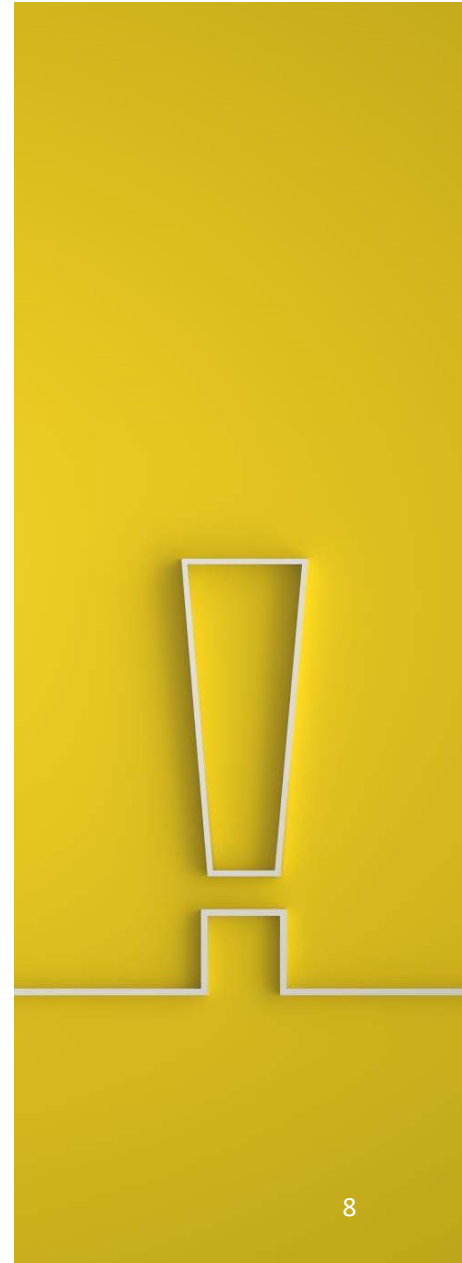
SECOND CONDITIONAL

If + past simple, ...
would/wouldn't +
infinitive

- This conditional will be useful to describe what would you do in a situation.
 - **Examiner:** If you were in the picture, what would you do?
 - **Student:** If I were there I would do this.
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Discourse markers to the rescue!



WHAT I MEAN IS

- This marker can help you clarify your statement or explain something.
- **Examiner:** "What do you think will happen to this piglet?"
- **Student:** "I think it will die. **WHAT I MEAN IS** it looks like the piglet is in a farm and unfortunately it is common for them to be slaughtered in order to produce meat."



ANYWAY



- This is a great discourse marker to use if the conversation has gone slightly off-topic and you want to bring it back.
- **Examiner:** If you were with the girl in the photo, what would you be doing?
- **Student:** Well, I believe the girl in the picture purposely chose to travel alone, probably she wanted to find some peace away from the chaotic world that we live in [...] **ANYWAY**, to shortly answer your question I would silently stare at the amazing view."

ACTUALLY

- This marker is used to express a different opinion to someone else or a differing opinion to what the person asking the question might expect.
- **Examiner:** “The man in the picture decided to spend his weekend reading a book. How do you like to relax during the weekend?”
- **Student:** “**ACTUALLY**, I don’t like relaxing during the weekends. I’m quite an active person and I see the weekend as my opportunity to do lots of activities, play sports and visit different places. So, for me, the weekends are a time to keep busy, I can always relax during the week after work.”



BASICALLY



- This marker can be used if you want to quite summarize your opinion, especially when talking about more complex topics.
- **Examiner:** Do you think it is a good idea to run a business with a family member?
- **Student:** Family should always be separate from your work life. When you run a business with a family member you can sometimes have too much confidence with them to express yourself. This can lead to lots of conflicts, and you could even end up ruining your entire relationship. **BASICALLY**, I think it's a very bad idea.



LET'S USE SOME PHRASAL VERBS!

- In order to achieve a B2 level of English, you are expected to know many phrasal verbs. Most of the time the meaning of a phrasal verb can be guessed according to the context of the sentence.





Most useful phrasal verbs

GET ON WITH

- It means to have a good or friendly relationship with someone.

END UP

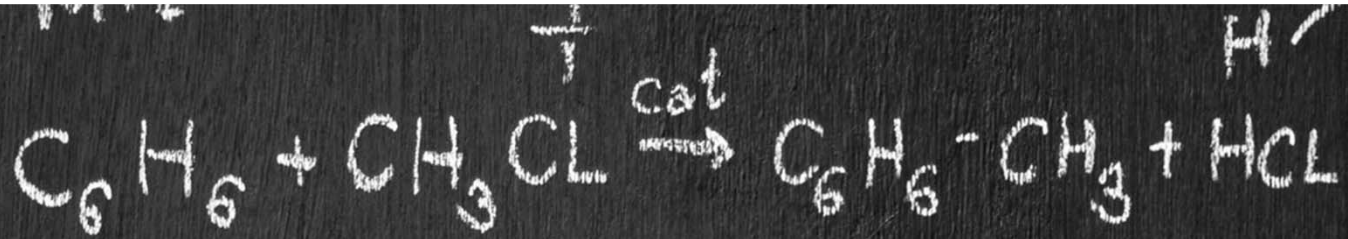
- It means to reach or come to a place, condition, or situation that was not planned or expected.

DEPEND ON

- It means to be influenced by something and is very commonly used in general conversation.

DEAL WITH

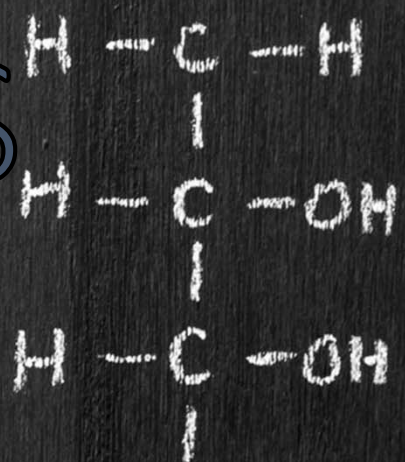
- It means to take action to solve a problem. This is a great phrasal verb to use if you are asked to give your opinion on a particular situation.



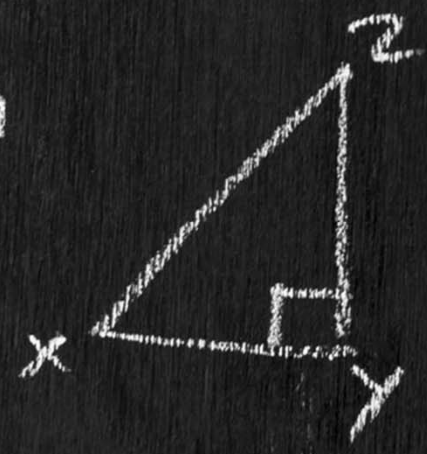
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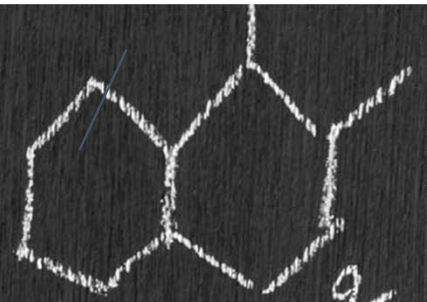
$$n = \frac{wM}{M}$$



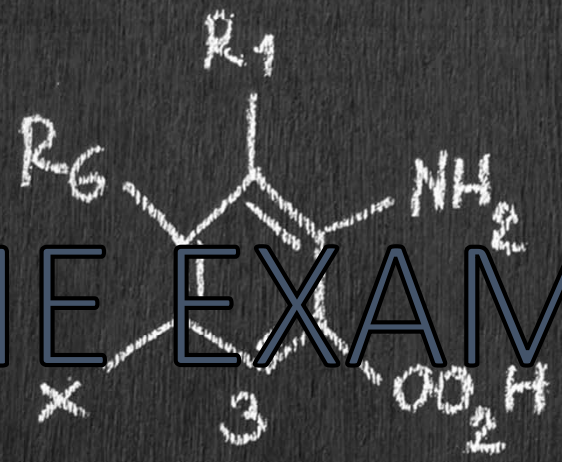
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SOME EXAMPLES

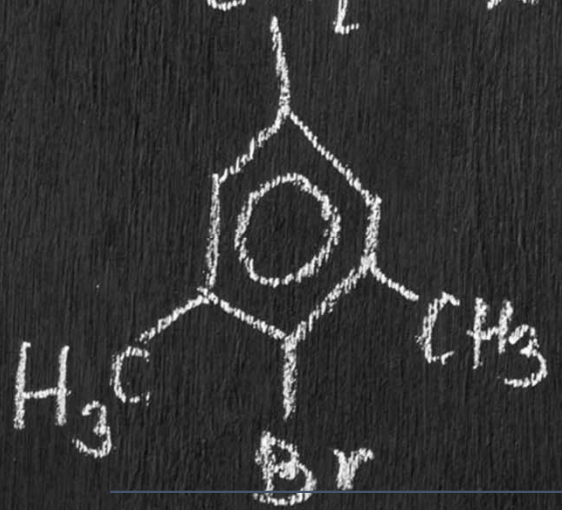


$$E = MC^2$$



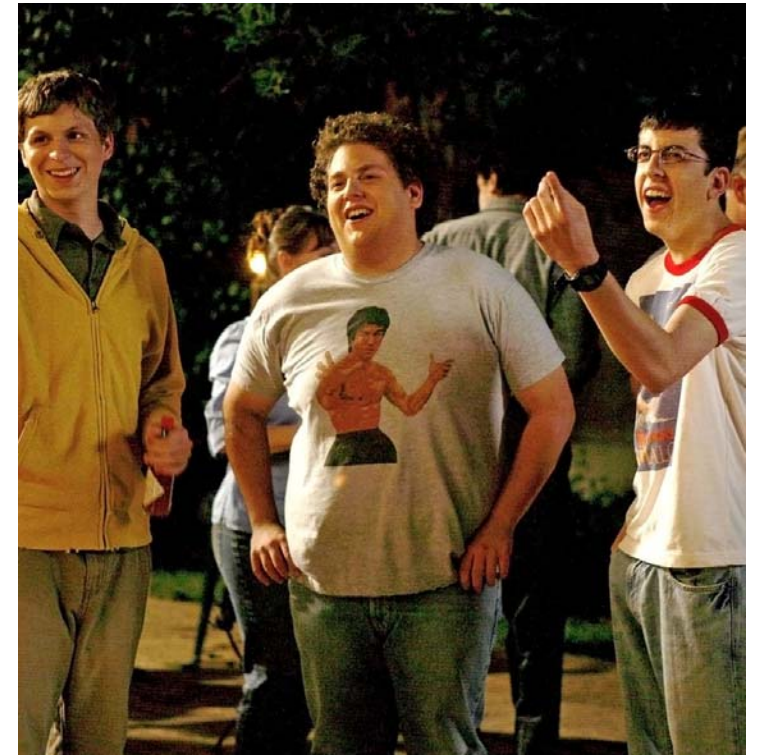
$$m = nM$$

$$n = \sqrt{(x_2 - x_1)^2 + (y_2 - y_1)^2}$$



What do you see? What would you do?

- In this photo, I see three people; they are probably good friends and they are laughing together. They look young, maybe they are in their twenties.
- It looks like they are partying either in someone's yard or in a park, judging by the background. I can see trees and what looks like a streetlamp. There are people in the background as well, and they are engaged in conversation.
- They are all looking in the same direction, so I assume something funny is happening over there. Maybe someone fell, or did something embarrassing, or they told a funny joke.
- If I were there, I would be laughing too, but I guess it would depend on the situation. Usually, if someone falls, I would first help them to get up, and only after ensuring they were okay, would I laugh. On the other hand, if someone embarrasses themselves, I would not laugh, as I firmly believe it's better to laugh with someone instead of laughing at someone.





NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

Describe the following photos.



- What can you see in this photo?
- How many people are there?
- What are they doing?
- Imagine you were going with them. Where are you going? How long are you staying?
- Did you travel when you were young?
- What was your favorite place?

- What can you see in this photo?
- What are the people in the photo doing?
- What are your thoughts about this picture?
- What would you do if you were there?
- What do you think will happen next?
- Do you think the beach was littered or was the rubbish washed onto it by the waves?





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- What do you see in the photo?
 - What do you think they are doing?
 - What are their roles in the photo?
 - If you were with them what would you be doing?
 - What do you think they are studying?