

# Working with words

## 1 Collocations



Complete with say, speak, talk, or tell.

- 1 I can \_\_\_\_\_ three languages fluently: English, French, and German.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ me the truth. Did you **really** do this yourself?
- 3 This situation can't go on. We need to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 What did you \_\_\_\_\_? I couldn't hear you because of the noise.
- 5 Did you \_\_\_\_\_ Mark about the party next week?
- 6 Hi. Could I \_\_\_\_\_ to Gill, please? It's Jane here.
- 7 You could learn the basics in, let's \_\_\_\_\_, six months.
- 8 Sorry, I can't \_\_\_\_\_ now. I'm in a meeting.



## 2 Phrasal verbs



Match the phrasal verbs in 1–5 to their meanings A–E.

- 1  I spent a month in Florence and I was able to **pick up** quite a bit of Italian.
- 2  I'll need to **brush up** my Spanish before we go to Mexico. I haven't spoken it since university!
- 3  **A** How will you manage in Germany if you don't speak the language?  
**B** I think I'll be able to **get by**. I can speak a bit of German and most people speak some English.
- 4  Your pronunciation is fantastic. You could almost **pass for** a local!
- 5  Even though my English is fluent, I found it hard to **take in** what my boss said in the meeting because he spoke so fast.

- A** be accepted as sb / sth
- B** to quickly improve a skill, especially when you haven't used it for a long time
- C** to absorb, understand
- D** to learn a new skill or language by practising it rather than being taught
- E** to manage to live or do a particular thing using the money, knowledge, equipment, etc. that you have



### 3 Synonyms and register



**a Match the words or expressions 1–5 to synonyms A–E.**

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>1</b> error         | <b>A</b> respond to sb |
| <b>2</b> answer sb     | <b>B</b> language      |
| <b>3</b> request sb to | <b>C</b> vocabulary    |
| <b>4</b> tongue        | <b>D</b> mistake       |
| <b>5</b> lexis         | <b>E</b> ask sb to     |

**b Which word is more formal in each pair?**



## 4 Idioms



### Match sentences 1–5 to A–E.

- 1  I think we're talking at cross purposes.
- 2  The word's on the tip of my tongue.
- 3  I'm terribly sorry, I got the wrong end of the stick.
- 4  I just can't get my tongue round this word.
- 5  I can't get my head round this definition.
- A** I was asking you about your family, but you're telling me about mine!
- B** It's really hard for me to pronounce.
- C** It's too complicated and I can't understand it.
- D** I can't remember it at this moment, but I'm sure I will soon.
- E** When you said 'lunch on Sunday' I thought you meant this Sunday, not next Sunday.