

**B1/B2**

SHORT COURSE SERIES

# English for **Logistics**



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# English for Logistics

B1/B2

SHORT COURSE SERIES

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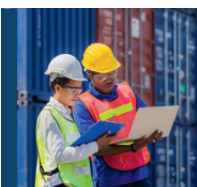
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## IN THIS UNIT YOU WILL ...

- review inventory, demand, and procurement vocabulary
- learn about and discuss RFID and barcode technologies
- practice successful written communication

Discuss how the following situations would affect the inventory of a smartphone warehouse.

- a one-day, 50% off, flash sale online
- the launch of a newer model
- inflation
- microchip shortage
- influencer support
- a news story about a counterfeiting ring

What other events could impact inventory and how can companies plan ahead better?



**1 Procurement in logistics is the act of sourcing (or buying) the materials needed to produce something. Read the questions below and the text on the next page about the role of procurement at an outdoor clothing manufacturer to find out more. Then answer the questions.**

- 1 What are the three main tasks of the procurement team at Mudpuppy Mittens?
- 2 What is the difference between production times and minimum order quantities in the context of procurement?
- 3 In what ways does the procurement team work with other departments at Mudpuppy Mittens?
- 4 Why is it important for the procurement team to forecast sales for specific mitten styles?
- 5 What are some of the challenges the procurement team might face in sourcing materials for Mudpuppy Mittens and how can they manage these?
- 6 What does the phrase “mitigate the impact” mean in the context of risk management for the procurement team?
- 7 How does the procurement team contribute to the overall success of Mudpuppy Mittens?

## VOCABULARY

**dependable** verlässlich  
**durability** Widerstandsfähigkeit  
 to **ensure sth** etw. sicherstellen  
**mitten** Fäustling  
 to **negotiate** verhandeln  
 to **purchase sth** etw. kaufen  
**tailor** Schneider/in  
**testament** hier: Beweis  
**yarn** Garn

## Berlin's Mysterious Makers of Mudpuppy Mittens

Picture yourself battling the icy Berlin winter with a pair of Mudpuppy Mittens, their warmth and dependable design a testament to more than just talented tailors. Sure, the Berlin-based hardworking manufacturing crews are the stars of the show, but behind the scenes, a dedicated procurement team ensures that only the highest-quality materials are used for the production of these winter must-haves. Mudpuppy searches tirelessly to source the very best yarn from every corner of the globe, to provide the perfect combination of warmth, durability, and comfort to every happy customer.



But the procurement team does not just choose a partner and order. They carefully research possible suppliers, prioritizing ethical sourcing practices, superior fibers, and value for money. Negotiating contracts is more than just agreeing on the cost per kilo; it is about things such as production times, minimum order quantities, and even the sustainable farming practices of raw cotton or wool. In addition to negotiating the purchase of raw materials, the procurement team works together with designers and production teams to forecast sales for specific mitten styles. Which mittens will be flying off the shelves this winter: the timeless cable-knit mitten or the new touchscreen-friendly design? Based on these carefully-made forecasts, Mudpuppy procurement communicates with their suppliers to make sure they have the right materials and production capacity to satisfy predicted demand.

In terms of seeing the future, the outdoor clothing industry is particularly at risk. The cost of wool can fluctuate, and unpredictable weather patterns can disturb international supply chains. This is where the procurement team's risk management skills become important. In order to protect Mudpuppy from these sudden changes, they might diversify yarn suppliers across different regions or negotiate flexible order terms.

So, when you next head out into the cold wearing a pair of Mudpuppy Mittens, think of the hidden heroes of procurement. It was their tactical sourcing, cost optimization, and risk management efforts which allowed you to know the warmth and comfort of Mudpuppy quality.

**2 Mudpuppy Mittens experiences a significant demand in fall and winter. Discuss the strategies the company could use to create a more balanced production and sales cycle throughout the year.**



**3 You come across an interview with Mudpuppy's Head of Inventory Management explaining how they manage lower demand in the summer. Listen and mark the following statements as true or false.**

- 1 Mudpuppy Mittens use the same warehouse year-round.
- 2 Elastic logistics is a practice which increases sales in the summer.
- 3 Mudpuppy Mittens wish to create items to sell during the warmer months.
- 4 Mudpuppy donates its unused raw materials to promote its business.
- 5 The interview suggests that Mudpuppy Mittens uses some form of data analysis to inform their inventory management decisions.

True False

|                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4 Look at the companies described below and make notes on how they would benefit from both traditional and on-demand warehousing.

| Company  | Traditional warehousing | On-demand warehousing |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Colossal-e:</b><br>Online marketplace giant empowering independent brands. AI-powered personalization meets seamless online-offline shopping, all wrapped in a sustainable mission. |                         |                       |
| <b>Fast Fashion:</b><br>Trendy styles at lightning speed. Micro-trends hit stores weekly, keeping your wardrobe on-point without breaking the bank.                                    |                         |                       |
| <b>Crumby Cookies:</b><br>Freshly baked heaven weekly. Rotating flavors keep it exciting, with classics always satisfying your sweet tooth.  |                         |                       |

5 Complete the definitions below using the words in the box.

adjust | costs | demand | fixed | fluctuating | forecasting | in and out | inefficiencies | manufacturing | production line | purchasing | raw | sales | spare | stock

- 1 **Procurement** plays a crucial role in logistics by \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> the necessary materials for the \_\_\_\_\_<sup>2</sup> process to function efficiently. This encompasses \_\_\_\_\_<sup>3</sup> materials, \_\_\_\_\_<sup>4</sup> parts, and various supplies that keep the \_\_\_\_\_<sup>5</sup> operational.
- 2 **Elastic logistics** allows companies to rapidly \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> their logistics operations (warehousing, transportation, etc.) to match \_\_\_\_\_<sup>2</sup> demand. This is achieved through accurate supply chain \_\_\_\_\_<sup>3</sup> and automation. Traditionally, companies had to maintain large, \_\_\_\_\_<sup>4</sup> logistics setups to handle peak demand periods, leading to \_\_\_\_\_<sup>5</sup> during slower times.
- 3 **Inventory management** is the art of balancing the flow of goods \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> of a business. It ensures companies have enough \_\_\_\_\_<sup>2</sup> to meet \_\_\_\_\_<sup>3</sup> without unnecessary storage \_\_\_\_\_<sup>4</sup> or lost \_\_\_\_\_<sup>5</sup>.

6 Both RFID and barcodes are important tools for inventory management. Listen to part of a training workshop explaining both and fill in the table below. Listen again to complete your table.

|  | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|------------|---------------|
| <b>RFID</b><br>R _____<br>F _____<br>I _____ |            |               |
| <b>Barcode</b>                               |            |               |

7 Your colleague has asked you to help them choose which technology is better suited for four companies' inventory management. Answer them in a chat message with your suggestions, using the reasons from Exercise 6.

Hey 🗨️ Do you have a minute to help me with something?

Yeah, sure, no problem 👍 What's up?

I need help deciding between barcode and RFID technology for four companies' inventories. I know you just attended a training – can you help me out? 🙏😊

Of course. What are the companies?

Remy Pharmaceuticals, they need to track high-value drugs throughout the supply chain.

Bella's Belle Boutique, a small clothing boutique with a more curated selection of high-end garments.

Freddie's Fresh Grocery Store, a busy grocery store which needs a system to track everyday items like cans of soup or boxes of cereal.

And finally, Juniper Construction, a large construction company which needs to keep tabs on valuable equipment like power tools and generators across multiple sites.

GREEN LOGISTICS

RFID tags require specialized equipment and dedicated recycling facilities to break them down into their component parts. The plastic casing, metal antenna, and silicon chip all need to be separated for proper recycling. Unfortunately, these specialized facilities are not yet widespread, leading many RFID tags to end up in landfills, harming the environment. Some companies allow customers to return used tags for proper processing. Alternatively, specialized e-waste recyclers can handle these tags if take-back programs are unavailable.



8 Discuss the following aspects of inventory management technology.

- 1 Some RFID tags can track an item's location in real-time. What are the potential privacy concerns associated with this technology? Are they outweighed by the benefits?
- 2 Many businesses operate on tight budgets. How can companies find the right balance between the cost-effectiveness of barcodes and the efficiency benefits of RFID?
- 3 How do you think advancements in technology will impact the use of RFID and barcodes in the future? Will one technology eventually become obsolete, or will they continue to co-exist?



9 Your colleague has forwarded you an email from Heavenwood Pharmaceuticals. Find at least four differences in tone and register between the two emails.

Subject: FW: Tracking Tech for High-Value Drugs – Heavenwood Pharmaceuticals

Hey,  
So sorry to bug you with this as I know you're busy, but I'm not gonna have time to reply to them – can you handle ASAP? Thanks! I owe you one!  
Best,  
V.

Subject: Tracking Tech for High-Value Drugs – Heavenwood Pharmaceuticals

Dear Hi-6 Logistics Team,

I am Amanda Birchfield, Director of Supply Chain at Heavenwood Pharmaceuticals. We are evaluating inventory tracking for high-value medications (> \$350 per unit) and seeking advice on the best solution: RFID vs. barcodes.

To inform our decision, could you please provide a comparative analysis of both technologies by next week? We plan to track 3.2 million high-value drug units annually, shipped in blister packs within cartons. Our primary concern is maintaining security throughout the supply chain.

Your recommendation on the most suitable tracking solution, with justification, would be highly appreciated.

Thank you for your time and expertise.

Sincerely,  
Amanda Birchfield  
Director of Supply Chain Operations  
Heavenwood Pharmaceuticals

- 10 Write a formal reply to Amanda at Remy Pharmaceuticals recommending either barcodes or RFID based on your previous selection in Exercise 7. Use the Useful Phrases below and make sure your email includes the following points.
- Appropriate greeting and introduction
  - Acknowledgment of her email and question
  - Your recommendation including supporting reasons
  - Offer to answer any follow-up questions
  - Appropriate closing including your job title (Senior Inventory Specialist) and company (Hi-6 Logistics)

Remember: *successful emails* are as long as they need to be and as short as possible.



USEFUL PHRASES Writing successful emails

Informal/neutral emails (internal partners)

- Greetings: Hi, Hello, Hey, Good morning
- Contractions are OK: (I'm / let's / gonna, ...)
- Direct is OK: Can you...?, Will you...?
- Closing: Best, Cheers, Thanks, See you later

Formal emails (clients and external partners)

- Greetings: Dear [name], Dear [company name] Team
- Avoid contractions
- Polite requests: Could you...?, Would you...?
- Closing: Sincerely, Kind regards, Faithfully

- Use no more than one title when addressing someone:  
Dear Prof. Schmidt / Dear Ms. Schmidt (NOT: Dear Ms. Prof. Dr. Schmidt).
- When addressing men: Dear Mr. Jones
- When addressing women:  
Dear Ms. Jackson
- If unsure about the person's titles, gender, or pronouns, simply use their first and last name:  
Dear Henry Morgan



11 Listen to a conversation among colleagues about the dos and don'ts of email writing and complete the table below with their tips.

| Dos | Don'ts |
|-----|--------|
|     |        |

Your boss at Hi-6 Logistics has asked you to put together a short, formal presentation about the future of smartphones for one of your clients, VoltaicTel, a fast-growing smartphone company. You find a few articles and a very interesting podcast. The podcast interviews tech wunderkind Camila Human and is quite informal.

**Objective:** Listen to the podcast and take notes to add to your presentation. Then, transform your notes into a more formal presentation outline that you would give to the client. You can practice giving your presentation with a partner.



## 13 SIMULATION

VoltaicTel was very impressed with your presentation on the future of smartphones. They are looking to re-evaluate their inventory and warehousing needs and have asked for your logistics expertise with the launch of their new phone, the Volta XI. Pre-order numbers look promising, but VoltaicTel is worried about managing inventory across various regions with fluctuating demand.

**Objective:** Develop a dynamic strategy and flexible inventory management plan for VoltaicTel's Volta XI launch, utilizing your knowledge of demand forecasting and elastic logistics. Use the data below to:

- analyze historical sales data, market trends, and pre-order information to predict demand for the Volta XI in different regions,
- propose a flexible inventory management plan that adapts to regional variations,
- outline your strategy in a formal email to Eóin Hughes, your contact at VoltaicTel.

You may want to consider pop-up kiosks, mobile sales representatives, and strategic partnerships with regional distributors.

### Global Pre-Orders:

1.2 million units (as of last week)

### Historical sales data (first quarter sales):

- Volta X5 Model (2022) 800,000 units
- Volta X6 Model (2023) 1.1 million units
- Volta X7 Pro Model (2024) 500,000 units

### Market research:

- Consumers want longer battery life, faster charging, bigger screens, and advanced security features.
- North America and Europe prefer high-end phones, Asia (excluding China) seeks value mid-range phones, China buys both premium and budget options, while Latin America prioritizes affordable devices.

### Regional Breakdown:

- North America: 350,000 units (29%)
- Europe: 280,000 units (23%)
- Asia (excluding China): 220,000 units (18%)
- China: 200,000 units (17%)
- Latin America: 150,000 units (13%)

## OVER TO YOU

### The Hidden Gender Gap: Elastic Logistics Empowering Women

Mobile phones, particularly those with internet access, have drastically changed women's lives globally by providing access to health information, education, and countless economic opportunities. Nevertheless, a clear gender gap still exists, with an estimated 785 million women without access to mobile internet, most of them living in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. This is according to "The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2024," research done by the GSMA, a non-profit association representing international mobile network operators.



But what does this have to do with elastic logistics and how can it help close the gender gap? Well, the GSMA report identified five main barriers to women's mobile phone ownership: cost, network coverage, security concerns, operator trust, and technical literacy—basically, how much they know about using modern technology. When women are prevented from accessing this technology, they are essentially cut off from many aspects of modern society, such as the digital economy—which includes things like ecommerce and online banking.

Since elastic logistics is able to quickly shift resources to satisfy fluctuating demand, it could be a valuable approach to getting more phones into women's hands. Mobile network companies could use real-time data to find "dark" areas which have a large number of women without phones. This data can then be used to set up temporary pop-up shops in those regions to provide the women with basic phone models. It is crucial that these phones are affordable, include apps like online banking for financial empowerment, and address women's safety concerns with features like call blocking or easy-to-reach emergency services.

The GSMA report also highlighted examples of past initiatives which have successfully made use of elastic logistics principles. One example from Somaliland saw a massive increase in female mobile money service users after employing female agents and using targeted marketing campaigns. These initiatives demonstrate how adapting products, distribution channels, and marketing strategies can unlock new customer segments.

A more inclusive and equitable digital world cannot be achieved with a single method. But with a logistics approach, mobile network operators can make a significant difference in women's use of mobile internet, as well as their empowerment and quality of life.

- 1 How can elastic logistics principles be applied to other industries to improve accessibility for underserved groups?
- 2 What are the ethical considerations involved in using real-time data to target specific demographics for mobile phone sales?
- 3 Could there be unintended consequences of using pop-up kiosks or mobile sales representatives for phone distribution in certain regions? If so, how could they be mitigated?

### VOCABULARY

**affordable** bezahlbar  
**equitable** gerecht  
**network coverage** Netzabdeckung  
**operator** Betreiber/in  
**ownership** Besitz  
**trust** Vertrauen

# English for Logistics

**English for Logistics** offers the language needed for effective communication with colleagues, business partners, customers, and officials. The book provides you with a wide range of technical terms dealing with important logistics trends and topics, key processes, and common business situations. The course is suitable for learners at CEF levels B1, B2, and above.

## Key features

- A comprehensive range of topics from international logistics
- Simulations and mediation activities allowing learners to draw on their personal and professional experience
- Regular opportunities for discussion with useful phrases for effective communication
- Strategies for becoming a more confident communicator when using spoken and written English in a wide range of contexts
- Diverse and authentic listening extracts in the webcode and the Cornelsen Lernen App
- An extensive appendix that includes partner files, transcripts of the audio recordings, a comprehensive answer key, useful phrases, an A-Z wordlist, and a glossary of frequently used logistics terms
- Interactive exercises in the Cornelsen Lernen App expanding on the useful phrases provided in this book

## The author

**Wiktorija Allan** has extensive experience teaching Business English and English for Specific Purposes in Germany. She is a researcher in the field of inclusive language testing and teaching.

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