

Supply Chain and Logistics English Dialogue Lab

Realistic field-specific dialogues, role-play variations, and observer checklists

Audience: supply-chain managers, planners, buyers, logistics coordinators, warehouse leaders, procurement teams, customs staff, and operations managers

Focus: A supply-chain English curriculum for forecasting, shortages, purchasing, inventory, warehouse operations, logistics delays, supplier performance, customs, risk, and crisis communication.

Designed for advanced ESL learners who already use professional English and need industry-specific terminology, realistic meetings, role-play pressure, careful pushback, and polished workplace outputs.

Teaching stance: this is language and workplace-communication training, not legal, medical, financial, safety, or regulatory advice. Instructors should connect every scenario to the learner's current company policies, local rules, and approved procedures.

Dialogue Practice Method

Read each exchange once for meaning, once for tone, and once for decision structure. Then replace the ESL learner line with a version from the learner's own workplace.

1. Demand Planning and Forecast Bias

Setting

Sales raises the forecast after a promotion begins.

| Speaker | Line |
|----------------|---|
| Demand planner | Increase production commitments immediately. |
| Sales manager | Forecast bias, lead time, capacity, and inventory exposure need review. |
| ESL learner | I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm forecast, forecast bias, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit. |
| Demand planner | What would let us move forward without slowing everything down? |
| ESL learner | Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short demand-planning exception note. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan. |

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: forecast, forecast bias.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

2. Procurement and Supplier Performance

Setting

A supplier misses delivery but promises recovery next week.

| Speaker | Line |
|--------------------------|---|
| Buyer | Accept the promise and update the plan. |
| Supplier account manager | Capacity, allocation, purchase order terms, and recovery evidence are unclear. |
| ESL learner | I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm purchase order, lead time, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit. |
| Buyer | What would let us move forward without slowing everything down? |

| Speaker | Line |
|-------------|---|
| ESL learner | Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short supplier recovery plan. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan. |

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: purchase order, lead time.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

3. Inventory, Safety Stock, and Service Levels

Setting

Finance wants to reduce inventory across all SKUs.

| Speaker | Line |
|----------------------|--|
| Supply-chain analyst | Cut safety stock by the same percentage. |
| Finance partner | Demand variability, lead time, margin, service level, and stockout risk differ by item. |
| ESL learner | I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm safety stock, stockout, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit. |
| Supply-chain analyst | What would let us move forward without slowing everything down? |
| ESL learner | Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short inventory segmentation memo. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan. |

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: safety stock, stockout.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

4. Warehousing and Fulfillment

Setting

Orders are late because pick accuracy is falling.

| Speaker | Line |
|---------------------|---|
| Warehouse manager | Add overtime until backlog clears. |
| Operations director | Slotting, labor, scanner data, training, and error types need diagnosis. |
| ESL learner | I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm pick rate, slotting, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit. |
| Warehouse manager | What would let us move forward without slowing everything down? |
| ESL learner | Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short fulfillment recovery update. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan. |

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: pick rate, slotting.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

5. Freight, Routing, and Carrier Delays

Setting

A carrier misses pickup before a major customer shipment.

| Speaker | Line |
|--------------------------|--|
| Logistics coordinator | Blame the carrier and wait. |
| Customer service manager | Mode, route, cutoff time, expedite cost, and customer promise need a decision. |
| ESL learner | I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm incoterms, carrier, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit. |
| Logistics coordinator | What would let us move forward without slowing everything down? |
| ESL learner | Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short freight escalation notice. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan. |

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: incoterms, carrier.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

6. Customs, Trade Compliance, and Documentation

Setting

A shipment is held because the commercial invoice has inconsistent data.

| Speaker | Line |
|-----------------------|--|
| Trade compliance lead | Ask customs to release it anyway. |
| Freight forwarder | Classification, country of origin, valuation, and document consistency matter. |
| ESL learner | I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm HS code, country of origin, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit. |
| Trade compliance lead | What would let us move forward without slowing everything down? |
| ESL learner | Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short customs hold response. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan. |

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: HS code, country of origin.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

7. Supply Risk and Business Continuity

Setting

A port strike threatens inbound components.

| Speaker | Line |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Supply-chain director | Promise no customer impact. |

| Speaker | Line |
|-----------------------|--|
| Sales operations | Allocation, alternate sources, inventory position, and customer priority need governance. |
| ESL learner | I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm business continuity, dual sourcing, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit. |
| Supply-chain director | What would let us move forward without slowing everything down? |
| ESL learner | Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short supply risk brief. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan. |

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: business continuity, dual sourcing.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?

8. Executive S&OP Decisions

Setting

Sales, finance, and operations disagree on next quarter's plan.

| Speaker | Line |
|----------------------|--|
| Operations VP | Use the most optimistic demand view. |
| Demand planning lead | The executive team must agree on assumptions, risk, upside, and owners. |
| ESL learner | I understand the goal, but we need to separate urgency from control. For this decision, I need to confirm S&OP, consensus plan, the owner, and the evidence standard before we commit. |
| Operations VP | What would let us move forward without slowing everything down? |
| ESL learner | Let's document the assumption, define the risk trigger, and create a short S&OP decision summary. Then we can decide whether to proceed, escalate, or revise the plan. |

Language notes

- The learner names the field-specific control point instead of giving a vague no: S&OP, consensus plan.
- The response preserves the business goal while adding evidence, owner, and next-step discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner name the decision and the risk?
- Did the learner use at least two industry terms accurately?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step without overpromising?