

Small car companies struggle to adapt to change

Level: Intermediate – Upper-intermediate (B1–B2)

Time: 60–90 minutes

Business topics: Engineering and construction, change management, sustainability

Business language focus: language associated with manufacturing, cost, the car industry and economies of scale

Activities: In this lesson, students will:

- read a business article and look at the language necessary to understand and talk about it;
- look at business-specific words and expressions and apply them to a specific context;
- discuss aspects of the article in greater depth;
- research an issue connected to the article and present it to another group.

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student, internet access for Exercise 5 (if available)

Group size: All of the tasks can be completed in pairs or groups, so that as much communication as possible takes place in the class. However, this lesson plan can also be used in a one-to-one teaching situation.

This lesson is based on an authentic article, republished here with its full, original text.

The article talks about how smaller car companies are likely to struggle to adapt to changes in the industry such as electric vehicles and self-driving cars.

1. Warmer

Ask students to write down their ideas individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Feedback as a whole class.

To prepare students for reading the article, you may want to have a discussion about how important the size of a company is. Ask them why they think it's important and if other students agree.

The article will explore why size is important in manufacturing. Having a large-size company can reduce costs, improve negotiation power and reduce risk. This is because larger companies have access to multiple markets.

2. Key words and expressions

Elicit ideas about the meaning of 'scale' from the group. If a student gives the general meaning, 'the size of something', ask if anyone knows what it means in a business context – in simplest terms, 'the benefits of being big'.

Next, ask students to quickly read the article and write a definition of the term *scale*, setting a time limit of approximately five minutes.

Key:

b

3. Understanding the article and Business language

A

Ask learners to find and underline the words in the article. Then ask them to complete the questions using the words in the box.

Key:

1. *consolidation*
2. *critical*
3. *groups*
4. *mergers*
5. *susceptibility*
6. *agility*

B

Encourage learners to check the words in part A in a dictionary and write an example sentence for each. Ask learners to check their sentences in pairs and then ask a few students to give suggested example sentences to the whole class.

C

Ask students to read the article more carefully and match the answers to the questions. When they've finished, ask them to compare their answers in pairs.

Key:

- a. Question 5
- b. Question 6
- c. Question 1
- d. Question 2
- e. Question 4
- f. Question 3

4. Discussion

Divide students into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions. Monitor and record examples of both good language and errors. Lead a general discussion and feedback session at the end of the activity.

5. Wider business theme – Scale

Ask students to complete part A individually. Then, ask them to compare their answers in pairs before leading open class feedback.

Key:

- 1, 2 & 4 are advantages
- 3, 5 & 6 are disadvantages

Next, divide students into small groups of three or four and ask them to discuss the issues. Monitor and help where necessary. Suggest students use the internet to help them (if available). Issues to think about: *money to be made, decision making ability, im/personal, budgets, numbers of people, choice, prices, customer service.*

Record examples of errors and good language and lead a feedback session at the end.



One-to-one teaching

Ask the student to complete the first exercise and discuss their answers with you. Then discuss the second exercise together.