

C1

MEETINGS & STATUS UPDATES

DIALOG · 5 MIN.

Explaining That Ninety Percent Complete Is Not Nearly Finished · *Podcast*

"Ninety per cent complete" sounds like the home straight — it rarely is. How to explain in English why the last ten per cent is the hardest, without sounding like excuses.

Listen to the episode +
comprehension test:

<https://www.englisch-lehrer.com/podcasts/explaining-that-ninety-percent-complete-is-not-nearly-finished>

NAME

DATE

BRICK 1 · LEARN THE KEY PHRASES

● ○ ○ ○

Read the eight phrases with meaning and example. You will hear all of them in the episode.

ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	EXAMPLE
to hold off on	mit etwas noch warten, etwas aufschieben	<i>Let's hold off on the announcement until the tests pass.</i>
to unpack	etwas aufschlüsseln, im Detail erklären	<i>Can you unpack that figure for the leadership call?</i>
edge case	Sonderfall, seltene Randsituation	<i>One edge case with deleted contracts crashed the invoice view.</i>
defect rate	Fehlerquote	<i>The defect rate from this week drives the new estimate.</i>
buffer	Zeitpuffer, Reserve	<i>The fourth week is a buffer, not free capacity.</i>
code freeze	Entwicklungsstopp für neue Funktionen	<i>The code freeze starts on the fifteenth.</i>
to commit to	sich verbindlich festlegen auf	<i>I'd commit to four more weeks, including a buffer.</i>
remaining effort	Restaufwand	<i>Report remaining effort in days, not percentages.</i>

BRICK 2 · FILL THE GAPS



Complete the missing word from the conversation.

buffer

bonus

burden

barrier

possibly

eventually

actually

currently

- 01 I'd commit to four more weeks: two for integration and security, one for the remaining edge _____ cases, one as a
- 02 We will definitely freeze the code on the _____ need an extra week if security testing surfaces anything serious.

BRICK 3 · TRUE OR FALSE?



Tick one. T = true, F = false.

- 01 Finding and fixing the invoice edge case took less time than building the invoice view. T ☐ F ☐
- 02 Thomas wants to keep reporting progress in percentages next week. T ☐ F ☐

BRICK 4 · ORDER



Number the steps of the conversation (1–5).

- 01 ☐ They agree to report remaining effort instead of percentages
- 02 ☐ Thomas explains what the last ten per cent contains
- 03 ☐ Sarah corrects the "eventually" false friend
- 04 ☐ Sarah wants to announce the launch for next week
- 05 ☐ He gives the invoice edge case as a concrete example

BRICK 5 · YOUR VERSION



Write two sentences of your own using phrases from Brick 1.

MINI-CHECK – CAN I DO THIS YET?

- ☐ I can announce a delay politely.
- ☐ I can propose an alternative.
- ☐ I can promise written confirmation.

Listened twice and ticked everything? Then you are ready for the real conversation.

Cut-out flashcards

× Cut out, fold on the line – English in front, German on the back. Or practise digitally:

<https://www.englisch-lehrer.com/podcasts/explaining-that-ninety-percent-complete-is-not-nearly-finished>

to hold off on

Let's hold off on the announcement until the tests pass.

mit etwas noch warten, etwas aufschieben

to unpack

Can you unpack that figure for the leadership call?

etwas aufschlüsseln, im Detail erklären

edge case

One edge case with deleted contracts crashed the invoice view.

Sonderfall, seltene Randsituation

defect rate

The defect rate from this week drives the new estimate.

Fehlerquote

buffer

The fourth week is a buffer, not free capacity.

Zeitpuffer, Reserve

code freeze

The code freeze starts on the fifteenth.

Entwicklungsstopp für neue Funktionen

to commit to

I'd commit to four more weeks, including a buffer.

sich verbindlich festlegen auf

remaining effort

Report remaining effort in days, not percentages.

Restaufwand

Answer key

Check only when you have finished. Every answer comes with the **why**.

BRICK 2 · FILL THE GAPS

01 **buffer**

"Buffer" = planned time reserve. A C1 status report names the buffer openly instead of hiding it inside the estimate.

02 **possibly**

The "eventuell" trap: "eventually" means "in the end, for certain" — not "maybe". For German "eventuell", use "possibly", "perhaps" or "we may need".

BRICK 3 · TRUE OR FALSE?

01 **True**

True — but only just: building took three days, the single edge case took two. The ratio shows how expensive edge cases are relative to feature work.

02 **False**

False — he switches to remaining days and open defects: remaining effort is what leadership needs to steer.

BRICK 4 · ORDER

- 01 **1.** Sarah wants to announce the launch for next week
- 02 **2.** Thomas explains what the last ten per cent contains
- 03 **3.** He gives the invoice edge case as a concrete example
- 04 **4.** Sarah corrects the "eventually" false friend
- 05 **5.** They agree to report remaining effort instead of percentages

KEEP PRACTISING LIVE

Want to practise these phrases in a real conversation?

Online lessons with real teachers — English training since 2004 · Berlin · Hanover · Online.

CALL US

+49 511 95733819