

C1

MEETINGS & STATUS UPDATES

DIALOG · 5 MIN.

Giving a No-Blame Account of a Failed Milestone · Podcast

A milestone has failed — how to analyse causes instead of culprits: nuanced English for an honest post-mortem (C1).

Listen to the episode +
comprehension test:

<https://www.englisch-lehrer.com/podcasts/giving-a-no-blame-account-of-a-failed-milestone>

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
contributing factors	Einflussfaktoren, mitverursachende Faktoren	<i>The report lists three contributing factors for the delay.</i>
to drop the ball	einen Fehler machen, etwas versäumen	<i>Nobody dropped the ball — the process itself was flawed.</i>
single point of failure	die eine kritische Schwachstelle	<i>Having only one admin is a single point of failure.</i>
with hindsight	im Nachhinein, rückblickend	<i>With hindsight, we should have escalated in March.</i>
warning signs	Warnsignale	<i>The warning signs were there weeks before the failure.</i>
lessons learned	Lehren, Erkenntnisse (aus einem Projekt)	<i>We documented the lessons learned in a short review.</i>
to apportion blame	Schuld zuweisen	<i>The review focused on causes rather than apportioning blame.</i>
recovery plan	Sanierungs-/Aufholplan	<i>The recovery plan brings the pilot back on track by Q4.</i>





BRICK 2 · FILL THE GAPS



Complete the missing word from the conversation.

chef

boss

cook

chief

failure

error

fault

weakness

01 Unless the kitchen is running the pilot, you mean your _____ .

02 That was a single point of _____ we created ourselves.

BRICK 3 · TRUE OR FALSE?



Tick one. T = true, F = false.

01 Jonas's team noticed the risk as early as they should have.

T ☐ F ☐

02 Jonas suggests presenting the recovery plan to the customer jointly with leadership.

T ☐ F ☐

BRICK 4 · ORDER



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

01 ☐ They agree on a joint presentation of the recovery plan

02 ☐ Jonas presents three contributing factors

03 ☐ Jonas presents three lessons learned

04 ☐ Richard asks for causes, not culprits

05 ☐ Jonas admits the risk was seen too late

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/giving-a-no-blame-account-of-a-failed-milestone>

contributing factors

The report lists three contributing factors for the delay.

Einflussfaktoren, mitverursachende Faktoren

to drop the ball

Nobody dropped the ball — the process itself was flawed.

einen Fehler machen, etwas versäumen

single point of failure

Having only one admin is a single point of failure.

die eine kritische Schwachstelle

with hindsight

With hindsight, we should have escalated in March.

im Nachhinein, rückblickend

warning signs

The warning signs were there weeks before the failure.

Warnsignale

lessons learned

We documented the lessons learned in a short review.

Lehren, Erkenntnisse (aus einem Projekt)

to apportion blame

The review focused on causes rather than apportioning blame.

Schuld zuweisen

recovery plan

The recovery plan brings the pilot back on track by Q4.

Sanierungs-/Aufholplan

Answer key

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

BRICK 2 · FILL THE GAPS

01 **boss**

German trap: your "Chef" is your "boss" or "manager" in English. An English "chef" cooks in a kitchen.

02 **failure**

"Single point of failure" is the fixed technical term for the one element the whole system depends on.

BRICK 3 · TRUE OR FALSE?

01 **False**

False — "Honestly? Later than we should have." With hindsight the warning signs were visible in April.

02 **True**

True — "I'd rather we present it to the customer jointly"; it lands better with leadership visibly behind it.

BRICK 4 · ORDER

01 **1.** Richard asks for causes, not culprits

02 **2.** Jonas presents three contributing factors

03 **3.** Jonas admits the risk was seen too late

04 **4.** Jonas presents three lessons learned

05 **5.** They agree on a joint presentation of the recovery plan

KEEP PRACTISING LIVE

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