

CHEAT SHEET · STUCK FOR WORDS?

7 phrases that buy you time.

A few seconds to think, without silence. Say one of these, then answer.

1 That's an interesting question.

= gives you a moment before you answer

ALSO TRY That's a good question. · Interesting.

INSTEAD OF

Umm... I don't know.

SAY

That's an interesting question. Let me see...

2 Let me think for a moment.

= says honestly that you need a second

ALSO TRY Let me see... · Give me a second.

INSTEAD OF

(silence)

SAY

Let me think for a moment. I'd say yes.

3 I've never thought about it, but

= for a question you didn't expect

ALSO TRY I'm not sure, but I'd guess

INSTEAD OF

I don't know.

SAY

I've never thought about it, but I'd say yes.

4 It depends on

= lets you start with the conditions

ALSO TRY It depends what you mean by · That depends on

INSTEAD OF

Yes. No. Maybe.

SAY

It depends on the person, really.

5 Do you mean ...?

= checks the question and buys time

ALSO TRY Sorry, could you say that again?

INSTEAD OF

What?

SAY

Do you mean at school or at home?

6 What I'm trying to say is

= restarts a sentence that went wrong

ALSO TRY What I mean is · Let me put it another way.

INSTEAD OF

No, no, sorry, I mean, no...

SAY

What I'm trying to say is that it saves time.

7 Anyway, as I was saying,

= brings you back to your point

ALSO TRY So, going back to · Where was I?

INSTEAD OF

Hmm. So... yes.

SAY

Anyway, as I was saying, the train is cheaper.

NEXT STEP

Practise speaking in a B2 mock.

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