

EPISODE 41

LEVEL B2

READING COMPREHENSION



VISITING A BANK'S BRANCH OFFICE

"You know, my dear", says Julia's grandma at the end of their internet banking session, "I see the convenience of it, I really do. But I must admit that I simply like my bank's **branch office** where I go.

What is important for me is to be able to talk to people face-to-face. The cashiers are so nice! I went there recently to change the **limit** of my **overdraft** (= the amount of money you can take out of your account even though you don't have so much; a temporary loan, usually quite small in amount). The lady advised me that I might want to order a new **cheque book**, since I was running low on **cheques**. So she saved me another trip there - wasn't that nice of her? Also, I asked her about the available options of **upgrading** my **current account**, just out of curiosity. You know, my **current account**, like pretty much any other account, **yields** (= generates) practically no **interest**. I can only take out as much as I put in. My **savings account**, on the other hand, brings quite a handsome amount of interest - 7% a year, I think.

So I was wondering if maybe they could offer a better deal in current accounts too, and guess what, the same nice lady gave me a brochure and explained what I should do to upgrade. So with all this, I am quite reluctant to move online. See what I mean?"

Julia does, and she remains silent for a while, and then says, with admiration: "You're a real expert, you really are!"



More contexts for the new words:

- Current accounts are usually called **checking accounts** in the USA.
- You **make huge savings** by flying a day later, on Sunday.
(= save a lot of money)
- I spent my life's **savings** on this house.
(= the money I had saved)



EXERCISE 1

Write words and expressions next to their definitions.

1. = to generate
2. = the percentage that grows on your money
3. = an account for daily operations
4. = an account for keeping bigger sums of money for longer
5. = a place where you can go to do your bank operations (opposed to online banking)
6. = to make something better
7. = a small temporary loan from the bank
8. = a piece of printed paper that you can use instead of money to pay for things



EXERCISE 2

Match the question halves, then answer them.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. How much interest do you get | a. current account |
| 2. What is your overdraft | b. limit? |
| 3. When did you last upgrade your | c. on your savings account? |

ENGLISH IN USE 

Have a look at this sentence from the text:

What is important for me is to be able to talk to people face-to-face.

In this sentence, in contrast to the sentences from the previous two weeks, we do use the word "what".

This however is not a relative clause. This is a ***cleft sentence*** (from the verb *cleave*, which means to divide into two). The first part is the part that receives emphasis, which is more important. Here's more examples:

What we now need are actions, not words!

What I enjoyed most in the performance was the brilliant music.

Cleft structures with *what*-clauses are often used with *does/do/did* and with the verb *happen* when we want to give emphasis to the whole sentence, rather than a particular clause:

What the police did first was to interview all the witnesses.

What happened was that their car broke down on the motorway so they didn't get to John's wedding on time.

IDIOM CLOSE-UP



A/ Dad, come on give me \$5. It's only **CHICKEN FEED** for you!
B/ It might be, but little by little it adds up to a lot of money.

Chicken feed is a small amount of money.

PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



1. When you **CHIP IN**, you contribute money or pay jointly.

*Everyone in our company **chipped in** some money to buy a birthday present for our boss.
The three of us **chipped in** and bought the motorbike for Dad.*

2. When you **CUT BACK ON** something, you try and reduce it.

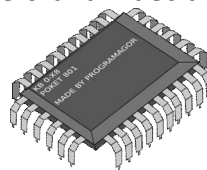
*I have to **cut back on** my spending in order to save up some money.
The doctor advised me to **cut down on** salt.*



EXERCISE 3

Use the pictures to complete the mini-story.

It was Dad's birthday last week, so my brothers and I decided to buy him a boat. We all



decided to (1)

in \$1000. My brothers are



investment bankers, so this sum is (2)

feed to

them. For me, however, this is an awful lot of money, so I'll have to (3)



.....
few months.

back on my spendings for the next

NEWS



BANK STREET

Have you been to the **high street** of your town or city recently? Have you tried to buy some groceries there, **have your nails done**, or have a leisurely coffee and a cookie at a **confectioner's**? If you have tried to do these things, I'm sure you were bitterly disappointed, for the most prestigious streets of most Polish cities have long been taken over by banks and their branch offices. Why is that? Because only the banks can afford the **exorbitant** rent fees imposed by the **municipal** authorities, and smaller **entrepreneurs** quickly go out of business, unable to pay their rent. Ironically, the bank offices are huge, yet empty, for most inhabitants of large cities prefer to do their banking online.

GLOSSARY

- **high street** - the main street in a town or city, with a lot of businesses along it
- **have your nails done** – have manicure done
- **confectioner's** – shop with cakes
- **exorbitant** – extremely high
- **municipal** – local government
- **entrepreneurs** – small businessmen

KEY TO EXERCISES

Ex.1

1. to yield
2. interest
3. a current account
4. a savings account
5. a branch office
6. to upgrade
7. overdraft
8. a cheque

Ex.2

1. c
2. b
3. a

Ex.3

1. chip
2. chicken
3. cut