

Series 1 – No.8 Business

Audioscript

Welcome to **Words Alive**. The **Words Alive** series helps with the pronunciation of, and listening to, words and their examples in the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary. **Words Alive** is written and recorded by Richard Cauldwell, and brought to you by Cambridge University Press.

Part 1 Today's Word

Today's word is 'business'. The dictionary gives three main meanings for 'business', and we will work with the first one: 'business' in its 'selling' meaning. It is a two-syllable word, with stress on the first syllable: BUSiness. The dictionary tells us that it means 'the activity of buying and selling goods and services, or a particular company that does this, or work you do to earn money'.

Part 2 Examples

We will work with the first four examples that the dictionary gives. As I say them, listen for the word 'business'. You should be able to hear all four occurrences of the word clearly, but in one of the examples, it is not highlighted. Which one? Listen.

Example 1

My brother's in business.

Example 2

He's in the frozen food business.

Example 3

The two brothers started up a clothes retailing business.

Example 4

Our firm does a lot of business with overseas customers.

The example in which the word business was not highlighted was number 2 – "He's in the frozen food business". In this example, although the word can be clearly heard, it is a lot quieter, and fading away. It is falling gently downwards as it carries the falling tone which has started on the words 'FOOD' – 'FOOD business', 'FOOD business', 'FOOD business'. It is very common, when you are describing someone's job, and using the word 'business' at the end of a noun group like this, for the word 'business' to be not highlighted.

Part 3 Practice

To help you handle this non-highlighting in both pronunciation and listening, let's work with the second example at different speeds. Say these words slowly, emphatically, with four stresses:

Example 3A

// he's IN the FROzen FOOD BUSiness //

Emphatic speech is, however, very rare. So let us take a step towards more natural speech by making this sentence a little faster, with three rhythmic beats:

Example 3B

// he's in the FROzen FOOD BUSiness //

As I have said previously, such rhythmic speech units are relatively rare in everyday speech. So we will say the words in one speech unit, with just the first syllable of 'FROzen' and the word 'FOOD' highlighted – we will do it at three different speeds: 120, 200, and 300 words per minute.

Example 3C

C1 // he's in the FROzen FOOD business // 120

C2// he's in the FROzen FOOD business // 200

C3 // he's in the FROzen FOOD business // 300

The last version at 300 words per minute may seem too fast for you, but these kinds of speeds are very common in natural speech. Note also that it is common to have non-highlighted words (unstressed syllables) coming before the first stress of a speech unit. Thus, the words "HE'S IN THE" become 'heezinthe', 'heezinthe', 'heezinthe' - // he's in the FROzen FOOD business //.

Part 4 Pairwork

To end with, let's add a response in the form of a question, which would lead to further discussion:

Example 3D

A // he's in the FROzen FOOD business //

B // REALLY // DOES he enJOY it //