

**THE GROCERY STORE 1**  
Instructor's Manual



*Business  
English*

*with  
Business Simulations*



**DVBE**  
DAVE VOLEK'S BUSINESS ENGLISH

www.dvbe.biz



## About Dave Volek

*Engineer. Businessman. ELT Instructor. Inventor.* At the heart of the comprehensive suite of Dave Volek's Business English (DVBE) modules lies my diverse expertise in business, engineering, and finance; my interest in people and education; and my passion for creating innovative solutions that bridge the inherent gaps of traditional business English instruction. My proven, unconventional approach helps business and technical professionals build strong, practical English skills for the dynamic workplace.

## DVBE Modules



**The Billionaires** Your group will follow some instructions to determine which billionaire really controls the world. There's lots of suspense to keep you guessing, but you need your business English to find out.

**The Grocery Store** You will communicate with big numbers and use "increase" and "decrease" a lot. There's some good vocabulary for income statements.



**The Tractor Deal** You will either be a farmer looking to buy a tractor or a farm equipment dealer trying to sell a tractor. Lots of talk about "specs." No experience with tractors is necessary: the buyer and seller worksheets will guide you.

**Stan's Tents** You will follow an entrepreneur prepare his marketing plan and make a similar plan of your own. There's lots of useful marketing words you need to learn.



**Company Articles** You will use about six pages of legal text to resolve various financial, accounting, and legal problems. You wanted some practice with legal English, didn't you? Here it is!

**Risk & Reward** Your group will choose one of three risky investments. The group who makes the best choices wins the contest.



## Credits

- Designer & Writer: Dave Volek, B. Sc.
- EFL Advisor & Editor: Les Thompson, B. Ed., B.F.A.
- Illustrations: Tim Rotheisler
- Layout & Marketing Consultant: Third Stage Alliance [www.ThirdStageAlliance.com](http://www.ThirdStageAlliance.com)



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## INTRODUCTION

Two classroom activities, each coupled with complementary online listening activities, comprise the DVBE module “The Grocery Store 1”. Both activities use financial sheets of a fictitious grocery store as the basis for language learning and practice.

The first activity—“Big Numbers”—involves listening to and speaking of 4 to 8 digit numbers.

The second activity—“Increase & Decrease”—has learners working with these two important business and technical words and their synonyms.

### Engage

“Big Numbers” is a great icebreaker to help start your DVBE seminar on a positive note. The exercise is relatively easy, yet valuable practice, for all business English learners. After the learners find success with “Big Numbers,” they have more confidence for the bigger DVBE challenges.

Many learners in business and technical fields will readily recognize the importance of the language study inherent in “Increase & Decrease” without any encouragement from the instructor.

### Study

The website activities have easy access to a downloadable PDF for language study. Learners can go through this document in their own time, or an instructor can formally present it in a classroom. The document is also useful for business English instructors who want some ideas on teaching numbers English.

### Activate

By spending a little time with the online activities, learners should understand the classroom activities before they get to class. The learning curve is very small.

### Business

Business-wise, the two activities of The Grocery Store 1 are easily mastered by both instructor and learner. In other words, there really isn’t much business with this DVBE module. It is mostly lots of practice using numbers.

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## SETTING UP A DVBE SEMINAR

Before you move deeper into putting The Grocery Store 1 into your classroom, let's digress a bit and imagine how you can use DVBE for training business English learners.

First, DVBE offers great flexibility in classroom use. You can occasionally insert a DVBE activity into your current BE programs to give learners a bit of a change and expose them to more numbers English than what mainstream BE publishers are offering. When the DVBE activity is over, you then continue with your regular curriculum.

But a weekend DVBE seminar might be a better way to use DVBE and promote your language school. Each month, set up one such seminar for "Business English with Business Simulations". The six DVBE available modules are more than enough material for 20 hours of classroom activities, focusing on business conversation, business numbers, and building confidence.

The DVBE program is well suited to having classes for learners of different abilities. The simulation nature of DVBE thrusts learners into resolving various situations using whatever English skills they currently have. In the real world of international business, intermediate learners will struggle with difficult language (and need the confidence to take on this challenge) and advanced learners will be communicating with intermediate learners and their limited abilities. So you can invite intermediate, upper intermediate, and advanced learners of business English into the same DVBE seminar.

If your language school adopts these once-a-month weekend DVBE seminars, it will gain the following three benefits. First, you have a new program to offer your current students and clients. Second, a seminar of "Business English with Business Simulations" will attract new students to your school because, most likely, no one else in your locality is offering DVBE training. Third, by being innovative and the only local provider of DVBE, your school enhances its overall reputation as a quality provider of language training. These once-a-month weekend DVBE seminars can only be good for your overall business.



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## LANGUAGE STUDY

The website has a downloadable study guide for learners to do some self study. You could turn parts of this study into formal grammar lessons in your classroom. If you do so, you should be aware that this numbers grammar is not as easy to teach as the grammar you usually teach in class. So be well prepared.

You will notice that the study guide goes into fair detail into how to properly express percentages—and also shows how words shape the calculations. For business and technical learners, the link between language and math is much higher than what the mainstream BE publishers (if we look at the syllabus they are offering) are suggesting. In my opinion, learners need exposure to numbers English at the intermediate level because many of them are already doing international business and technology with their intermediate abilities.

One important reason for including the math in the study guide is to give you—the instructor—a bit of a math refresher. So download the study guide and go through it yourself. And do the online activities (listen and fill in the blanks). These activities are not as easy as it seems—even for native speakers!



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## BIG NUMBERS

### Online

Encourage the learners to spend at least 15 minutes with the BNO (Big Numbers Online) ([www.dvbe.bz/bno](http://www.dvbe.bz/bno)) before you do the classroom activity. If half the class does this, it will quickly move into the classroom activity.

### Small Class Setup

If your class numbers are from two to six, photocopy the A & B sheets from the Resource Manual. The A sheet has information the B sheet doesn't have, and vice versa. Make up learner pairs with the A and B sheets and have them verbally exchange the numbers to fill in the blanks on the empty parts of their sheets. Take on an A or B role if the class has an odd number of students.

Remind learners that they are not allowed to show their sheets to each other. They must communicate the numbers verbally.

### Mid-Sized Class Setup

If the class size is around four to twelve, photocopy and handout the sheets in this order: C, D, E, F, G, H, I, & J. Ensure that at least one learner has one of the sheets from C to F. Otherwise a data set may not be available and the sheet cannot be completely filled in.

Pair the learners up and ask them to exchange whatever information they have. When a pair is done, ask them to change partners to get information their former partners did not have.

Once again, strongly encourage them to do this exercise completely verbally, without looking at each other's sheets. The value is in the listening and speaking, not in the numbers!

It is possible for a learner to pass information that he or she has gained from another learner; i.e., indirectly from a previous meeting of pairs. Encourage this second-hand transfer of information! Encourage them to recheck their figures if they find a partner with the same data.

Maybe you could offer a small prize to all learners who complete their sheet correctly. Towards the end of the class, recite the numbers yourself and the students will mark each other's worksheets.



## Larger Class

If the class number is at least eight, Big Numbers becomes a great bustling classroom activity. Imagine the buzz with learner pairs forming and reforming, all trying to get that small prize.

Photocopy the handouts K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, & R. Set up each participant with one of these worksheets. Ensure that at least one learner has one of the sheets from K to R. Otherwise a data set may not be available and the sheet cannot be completely filled in.

Set the learners to make and reform their own pairs. Suggest the learners should re-check figures when a pair has the same data sets filled in.



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## INCREASE & DECREASE

### Online

Encourage the learners to spend at least a half hour with IDO (Increase & Decrease Online) “[www.dvbe.bz/ido](http://www.dvbe.bz/ido)” before you actually do the classroom activity.

The online activity provides lots of difference examples for stating increases and decreases.

### Classroom

There are two worksheets in the Resource Manual for “Increase & Decrease” called S & T. Each worksheet has all eight sets of starting data. Worksheet S has the final data for the first four sets, and Worksheet T has the final data for the other four.

Photocopy S & T worksheets. The two S sheets (S-1 & S-2) and two T sheets (T-1 & T-2) can be photocopied back-to-back. Divide the class into two halves. Give one half the S worksheets and the other half the T worksheets.

*Note that the S & T worksheets represent the same set of data as the A to R worksheets. However, some rounding and slight data modifications were applied to S & T to increase the engagement by the learners.*

Tell the class to write short sentences describing the data changes on their worksheets. Note that this instruction only applies to the four sets of data which have both the start and finish data. By writing, they have a chance to reflect what they learned online and from the study guide and apply that knowledge. If there is a little chatter within the S and T groups, this is OK as long as most of it is in English.

When the two groups are making their sentences, explain to them that they will later be reading these sentences to provide information to partners from the other side.

A class of intermediate learners who have not had much exposure to this grammar might have a tendency to use the simpler forms; i.e. “increase to,” “increase by,” “decrease to,” & “decrease by.” If this activity helps them become more fluent in these constructions and helps build their confidence, the activity has achieved its goal.

But some learners may be ready for a bigger challenge. Set up the scavenger hunt, which you photocopy from the Resource Manual. Ask the learners to build sentences using words and expressions from the



list. The learners can work as individuals or as S and T teams, trying their best to fit this grammar into their sentences.

Both the S and T data have opportunity to apply each expression in the scavenger hunt list at least once. Like most scavenger hunts, this scavenger hunt has some items easy to find, and others not so easy.

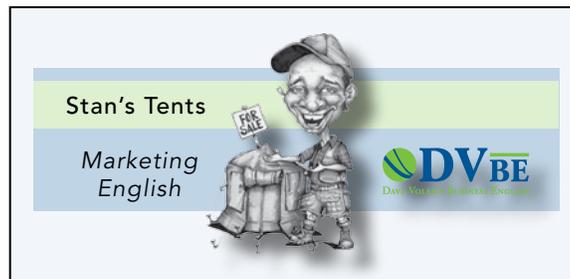
Then make pairs of S & T learners. Have them read aloud the sentences they have created. The listener must interpret the sentence, make the appropriate calculation, and enter the value in the appropriate blank on his or her sheet.

## Summary

In essence, “Increase & Decrease” is a comprehensive grammar/speaking/listening drill that is very important for learners in business and technology. They get six drills in six different ways:

1. The listening from the website.
2. The answer popups from website.
3. The Language Study (plus whatever classroom grammar you choose to teach).
4. Classroom writing practice.
5. Classroom speaking practice.
6. Classroom listening practice.

Most intermediate learners who go through these six activities should have a basic understanding about communicating increases and decreases.



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## REALITY CHECK

The data for The Grocery Store 1 (and the upcoming The Grocery Store 2) was artificially designed to make good classroom & online listening challenges. While the data is reasonably believable, it should not be construed as being representative of any particular grocery store or chain.

These financial statements only calculate the gross profit of each department. There are no other expenses mentioned with running a grocery store, such as the front end (cash registers, cashiers, grocery baggers, and grocery bags), building maintenance, utilities, warehousing, shipping, insurance, management salaries, etc. Limiting the design to gross profit was more than enough to practice the important business grammar of “increase” and “decrease.” Increasing the reality would not have enhanced the language learning opportunity this DVBE module provides.



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