Checking and clarifying phrases key words brainstorming
Try to remember or think of at least one phrase for checking and clarifying including each of the words below (for the person speaking and/ or the person listening). You don't need to change the words at all (although you can if you like). You may be able to use the same sentence in more than one place below, but please try to think of at least one different sentence for each key word.

again

spell(ed/ing)

mean(ing)

little

example

still

(an)other

explain/ explanation

one

simple/ simpler/ simply

too

clear(ly)

hope(fully)

Compare your phrases as a class or with the suggested answers. Many other answers are possible, so please check any different phrases with the teacher.

Test each other in pairs:
- read out phrases with one of the words missing until your partner guesses the key word.
- elicit all the phrases for one of the key words above from your partner, helping them if they get stuck

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Suggested answers

In approximate order of how common they are. The sentences in brackets and italics and marked with NOT and an X are wrong or too informal/ impolite, so are not acceptable answers.

- **again** – Can/ Could you say that **again** (a little more slowly/ a little more loudly)? – *(NOT Can you repeat that again? X)*
- **spell(ed/ing)** – How do you **spell**…?/ Can you **spell**… for me?/ How is… **spell**ed?/ That's quite difficult to **spell**, so…/ Not many people know how to **spell** that, so…/ I'm not sure if you will know how to **spell** that or not, so… - *(NOT What is the spell? X)*
- **mean(ing)** – What does… **mean**?/ Does that **mean**…?/ Do you **mean**…?/ …, which **means**… / Can you explain what… **means**?/ Did you **mean** (to say)…?/ I'm not (entirely) sure what… **means**.
- **little** – Can you speak a **little** louder?/ Can you speak a **little** more slowly?/ Can you say that again a **little** more slowly?/ Can you explain a **little** more about…?
- **example** – Can you give (me) an **example** (of what you are talking about)?/ To give an **example** (of what I mean),…/ I can illustrate that with an **example**.
- **still** – I'm afraid I **still** don't (fully) understand./ I'm **still** not sure (exactly) what you mean (by…)./ I **still** need a bit more explanation (of…)
- **(an)other** – In **other** words,…/ To put that **another** way,…/ Can you explain that (in) **another** way?/ Can you put that in **other** words?/ Is there **another** way of saying that?
- **explain/ explanation** – Can you **explain** a little more about…?/ Can you **explain** that another way?/ Can you **explain** that in other words?/ Have I **explain**ed myself (well)?/ You don't seem (entirely) happy with my **explanation**, so…/ That's probably not a good enough **explanation**, so…/ I can tell from your face that it still needs some **explanation** so…/ Hopefully you can understand from my **explanation** that… - *(NOT I don't understand your explanation. X/ NOT Please explain. X)*
- **one** – Can you say that (just) **one** more time? – *(NOT One more. X/ NOT One more please. X)*
- **simple/ simpler/ simply** – A **simpler** explanation is…/ Can you explain that in **simpler** words?/ In **simpler** terms,…/ To explain the same thing more **simply**,…/ – *(NOT If you need a simpler explanation,… X)*
- **too** – Am I going through it **too** quickly?/ Am I speaking **too** quickly? – *(NOT Is that too difficult for you to understand? X)*
- **clear(ly)** –I'm not (really) **clear** about the meaning of…/ Hopefully it's **clear** (that) I mean…
- **hope(fully)** – **Hopefully** you can understand from my explanation that…/ I **hope** it's clear that I mean…/ **Hopefully** I've made it obvious that…

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