

UNIT 5 — BUSINESS PROBLEMS, EXPERIENCES & SOLUTIONS

Asynchronous Session

Name: _____ Group: _____ Date: _____

Main goal: Analyse problems in subscription businesses, describe what was happening when a problem occurred, and reflect on what companies can do better.

Important: Complete every task in full. Mistakes are not penalised; only incomplete work is.

Task 1 — Key Vocabulary

Before you start, think about this question:

What problems can happen when a company grows quickly but its systems, prices, or customer service are not ready?

Match each word with its meaning. Write the letter in the box.

1. subscription		6. surge pricing	
2. subscriber		7. check in	
3. unlimited		8. outage	
4. monthly fee		9. bankrupt	
5. lose money		10. shut down	

Meanings

- | | |
|--|---|
| A. a time when a system does not work | F. the price goes up when many people want the service |
| B. the money you pay every month | G. you pay every month to use a service |
| C. a person who pays for a subscription | H. with no limit; as much as you want |
| D. close permanently | I. tell the app that you are at the cinema |
| E. spend more than you earn | J. a company that has no money and cannot pay what it owes |

Task 2 — Think About Subscription Services

1. What subscription service do you use or know? Why do you like it or think it is useful?

2. What problems can happen if an app has an outage? Give two examples.

3. Why can a company lose money even if many people pay a monthly fee? Think about costs, low prices, technology, employees, or customer use.

4. Have you ever had a problem with a subscription service or app? What happened? If not, describe a problem that a friend or family member had.

Task 3 — MoviePass: Before and While You Watch

MoviePass was a real subscription service for cinema tickets.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPJcwTXk8S4&t=40s>

Before you watch

What kind of service was MoviePass? Tick the best answer.

☐ a film streaming app ☐ a monthly subscription for cinema tickets ☐ a ticket delivery service



While you watch

Watch the video once. You may pause it. Write keywords for three problems, then use them to complete the table.

	Problem	Who was affected?	What was happening in the company at that time?
1.			
2.			
3.			

Task 4 — Your Role at FreshBox

Imagine that you have joined **FreshBox** as a Junior Operations Assistant. FreshBox is a fictional subscription start-up that sends fresh food boxes to customers every week.

MoviePass and FreshBox are different businesses, but both depend on regular subscriptions, reliable service, and customer trust.

Complete the sentence.

One lesson FreshBox should learn from MoviePass is that a subscription company should...	
...because...	

Task 5 — FreshBox Operations Report

FreshBox — Operations Report | Tuesday 14 May

FreshBox is a subscription start-up that sends fresh food boxes to customers every week.

At 8:45, our driver Marco was loading the vans when the warehouse system went down because of a major outage. While the IT assistant was trying to restart it, new orders were still arriving on the website. Nobody was checking the stock, so the system accepted orders for products that were already out of stock. At the same time, several subscribers were trying to make changes to their weekly boxes.



At 10:30, while Marco was driving to the first address, a customer phoned to say that her box was already two hours late. A few minutes later, the team discovered that 40 orders had the wrong delivery address. Meanwhile, customers were complaining on social media, and the customer service team was answering them without a clear response script.

The system was working again by 2:00 p.m., but the problems continued. Some customers asked for refunds, and 12 people cancelled their subscriptions. Because the company paid extra delivery costs and gave several refunds, FreshBox lost money that day. The manager later warned that the company could lose more subscribers if the same problems happened again.

A. True or False

Write T for True or F for False.

1. ____ The technical problem started while Marco was preparing the vehicles for delivery.
2. ____ Customers could not place any new orders while the system was being repaired.
3. ____ Some subscribers were making changes to their boxes at the same time as the system problem.
4. ____ A customer contacted FreshBox because her order had not arrived at the expected time.
5. ____ The company found incorrect address information in dozens of customer orders.
6. ____ Customer service employees already knew exactly how to respond when people complained online.
7. ____ All affected customers kept their subscriptions after the incident.
8. ____ The incident did not create any extra costs for FreshBox.

B. Put the Events in Order

Write numbers 1–6. Number 1 is the first event.

- ____ A customer called about a late box.
- ____ The warehouse system stopped working.
- ____ The system started working again.
- ____ The team discovered many incorrect delivery addresses.
- ____ Customers asked for refunds and some cancelled.
- ____ New orders continued to arrive while the system was down.

Task 6 — Language Awareness

Read the examples from the FreshBox report.

Marco was loading the vans when the warehouse system went down.

While customers were complaining online, the team was answering them.

Notice

1. Which action was already in progress?	
2. Which action happened during another action?	

3. In the second sentence, were both actions happening at the same time? ☐ Yes ☐ No

EXPLANATION BOX

Past Continuous

was / were + verb-ing. Use it for an action in progress in the past, or for two actions happening at the same time.

Past Simple

Use it for a completed event, or for a shorter event that happened during another activity.

when

Often connects an action in progress with another event.

Example: *Marco was loading the vans when the system went down.*

while

Often connects actions that were happening at the same time.

Example: *While customers were complaining, the team was answering them.*

Task 7 — Apply the Grammar

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs.

- Marco _____ the vans when the system _____. (*load / go down*)
- While the IT assistant _____ to restart the system, new orders _____ on the website. (*try / arrive*)
- A customer _____ FreshBox while Marco _____ to the first address. (*phone / drive*)
- Customers _____ online while the customer service team _____ to answer them. (*complain / try*)
- The team _____ the system at 2:00 p.m. and then _____ the affected orders. (*fix / check*)
- While two employees _____ the addresses, the delivery manager _____ the drivers. (*check / contact*)
- While the warehouse team _____ the remaining boxes, the manager _____ a message from a customer. (*prepare / receive*)
- The website _____ normally when the payment system suddenly _____ working. (*run / stop*)
- While customer service employees _____ refund requests, the operations manager _____ the delivery records. (*process / review*)
- The driver _____ the final package and then _____ the customer to confirm the delivery. (*deliver / call*)

Task 8 — Final Reflection

Go back to your answers from Task 2. Think about the subscription service you mentioned, the problem you described, the MoviePass case, and the FreshBox problem.

Step 1 — Organise your ideas

What subscription service or experience did I describe?	
What was happening when the problem occurred?	
What happened?	
How did the company react?	
What did MoviePass teach me about subscription businesses?	
What FreshBox problem was similar or different?	
What should companies do differently in the future?	

Step 2 — Write your reflection

Write 80–100 words. Connect your experience from Task 2, one specific idea from MoviePass, one FreshBox problem, and one lesson about subscription businesses.

Final checklist: before you finish, check that you...

- ☐ referred to your answer from Task 2.
- ☐ included one specific detail from MoviePass.
- ☐ included one specific FreshBox problem.
- ☐ used at least 2 examples of Past Continuous and at least 3 of Past Simple.
- ☐ used when and while at least once each.
- ☐ explained one lesson for subscription businesses.

