



## Session 4 (Ch. 8-11) — Fall 2026 ESL360 Book Club

### READING SCHEDULE

| Session # | Date       | Chapters         |
|-----------|------------|------------------|
| 1         | 9/3/2026   | Letter + Ch. 1-2 |
| 2         | 9/10/2026  | Ch. 3-5          |
| 3         | 9/17/2026  | Ch. 6-7          |
| 4         | 9/24/2026  | Ch. 8-11         |
| 5         | 10/1/2026  | Ch. 12-18        |
| 6         | 10/8/2026  | Ch. 19-25        |
| 7         | 10/15/2026 | Ch. 26-28        |
| 8         | 10/22/2026 | Ch. 29-32        |
| 9         | 10/29/2026 | Ch. 33-36        |
| 10        | 11/5/2026  | Ch. 37-40        |
| 11        | 11/12/2026 | Ch. 41-44        |
| 12        | 11/19/2026 | Ch. 45-47        |
| 13        | 12/3/2026  | Ch. 48-51        |
| 14        | 12/10/2026 | Ch. 52-56        |

## SESSION 4: VOCABULARY



### **figure things out** Phrasal verb / conversational expression

If you figure things out, you think about a situation until you understand it or decide what to do.

**Usage:** Very common in conversation. Figure things out often refers more generally to working through a situation when you do not yet have all the answers.

“I’m still figuring things out. Like I said, I haven’t decided anything yet.”



### **be on a roll** Idiom / informal expression

If you are on a roll, you are having a period of success or making good progress and want to keep going.

**Usage:** Informal and usually positive. Often used when someone has had several successes in a row or is making unusually good progress.

“Suddenly I’m on a roll.”



### **burned out** Adjective / figurative expression

If you are burned out, you feel physically or emotionally exhausted because you have been working hard or dealing with stress for a long time.

**Usage:** Common when talking about work, school, caregiving, or other long-term demands. Common patterns include *be/feel/get burned out* and *burned out from/by something*. It describes deeper exhaustion than simply being tired.

“People can get burned out working at a retirement home.”



### **get someone off your back** Idiom / informal expression

If you get someone off your back, you make that person stop criticizing, questioning, reminding, or pressuring you.

**Usage:** Informal. Use it when someone keeps criticizing, questioning, reminding, or pressuring you. *Get off my back!* is a direct way of telling someone to stop and can sound irritated or confrontational.

“I mostly said all that stuff about Bellevue to get everybody off my back . . .”

## SESSION 4: VOCABULARY (cont.)



### put something behind you Idiom / figurative expression

If you put something behind you, you stop allowing a difficult or unpleasant experience to affect you and try to move forward.

**Usage:** Usually used for an unpleasant event, mistake, conflict, or difficult period that someone wants to stop dwelling on: *put the past/a mistake/an argument behind you. It suggests accepting what happened and moving forward.*

“After we hang up I resolve to put the video behind me once and for all.”



### get it together Idiom / informal expression

If you get it together, you become more organized, capable, or in control of yourself and your situation.

**Usage:** Informal and flexible. It can mean becoming more organized, capable, emotionally controlled, or generally in control of a situation. *Get it together!* can be said directly to someone but may sound impatient or critical.

“I feel like finally, I’ve gotten it together: I’ve hit my stride. I can do this.”



### laugh something off Phrasal verb / idiomatic expression

If you laugh something off, you treat an embarrassing, upsetting, or unpleasant situation as if it is not important, usually by laughing or joking about it.

**Usage:** Often used when someone responds to embarrassment, criticism, an insult, or an awkward situation by laughing or joking instead of showing that it bothers them. It does not necessarily mean the person truly finds the situation funny.

“Peter tried to laugh the first one off, but now we are a few days in and I can tell it’s bothering him.”



### set the record straight Idiom / fixed expression

If you set the record straight, you correct false or inaccurate information so that people know what really happened.

**Usage:** Use this when correcting a rumor, misunderstanding, false impression, or inaccurate version of events. A common pattern is *set the record straight about something*.

“I’m glad Peter set the record straight, though.”

## SESSION 4: VOCABULARY (cont.)



### sweet-talk Verb / informal expression

If you sweet-talk someone, you speak to them in a charming or flattering way in order to persuade them to do what you want.

**Usage:** *Informal. Usually implies deliberately using charm, compliments, or especially pleasant language to persuade someone. Common patterns include sweet-talk someone into/out of something and sweet-talk your way into/out of something.*

"Nah. I sweet-talked my way out of it."



### make do Fixed expression / verb phrase

If you make do, you manage with what is available even though it is not as much or as good as you would like.

**Usage:** *Used when the ideal thing is unavailable and you manage with what you have instead. Make do with something is especially common: We didn't have enough chairs, so we had to make do with what we had.*

"I'm sure Margot's told you how we have to make do around here."



### look up to someone Phrasal verb

If you look up to someone, you admire and respect that person and may want to be like them.

**Usage:** *Always refers to someone you admire or respect, often because of their character, abilities, accomplishments, or example. The opposite expression is look down on someone, but its meaning is stronger than simply "not admire."*

"It's only because she looks up to you."



### do the trick Idiom / informal expression

If something does the trick, it succeeds in producing the result you wanted or needed.

**Usage:** *Informal and very common when a solution, action, or object produces the desired result. Often used when something fairly simple is enough: Try restarting your phone. That might do the trick.*

"I'm sure Peter's grandstanding did the trick and people will leave it alone."

## SESSION 4: GRAMMAR: CONCESSION & CONTRAST

### *Although / Even Though & But*

Concession means acknowledging that something is true or understandable before introducing a contrasting fact or point of view. Use concession and contrast to acknowledge one truth, feeling, or point of view while introducing a different one.

### What's the difference between *Although / Even Though & But*?

*But* connects two complete ideas (two main clauses). *Although* and *Even Though* make one idea dependent on the other (a dependent clause & a main clause).

### Two core patterns

#### A. *Although / Even though* + dependent clause, main clause

- Although I understand your point, I disagree.
- Even though I understand why you're upset, I see the situation differently.

#### B. Clause, *but* + clause

- I understand your point, but I disagree.
- I understand why you think it was Genevieve, but I'm not convinced she did it.

### Important grammar

Choose ONE pattern—A or B—don't mix them when connecting to a single idea.\*

✓ Although I understand your point, I disagree. [only pattern A ("although"), not A&B (no "but")]

✓ I understand your point, but I disagree. [only pattern B ("but"), not B&A (no "although")]

✗ Even though I understand your point, ~~but~~ I disagree. [use pattern A or B, not both]

✗ Although I understand your point, ~~but~~ I disagree. [use A or B, not both]

\**Although / Even though* and *but* can legitimately appear in the **same sentence**, but they just can't both make the **same connection**. For example, the following sentence is correct: I went to the party **even though** I was tired, **but** I left early. Here, "even though" is connected to "tired," and "but" is connected to something different—"left early."

### Why this matters in conversation

Putting the acknowledgment first can soften disagreement and help maintain the relationship.

✓ I understand your point, but I see it differently.

△ I see it differently, but I understand your point. [grammatically correct, but less effective for softening disagreement.]

✓ Even though I understand why you feel that way, I'm not sure I agree.

△ I'm not sure I agree, even though I understand why you feel that way. [grammatically correct, but less effective for softening disagreement.]

## SESSION 4: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### GRAMMAR IN CONVERSATION

Understanding ≠ agreeing. When a classmate gives an opinion different from yours, show that you understand the person's reasoning **before** giving your own view. Try: "I can see why you think that, but ..." / "Although I understand your point, ..." / "Even though I see it differently, I understand why ..."

1. **Disagreeing When You're Both Convinced:** Lara Jean is convinced that Genevieve posted the video, but Peter does not believe she did. *Whose reasoning do you find more convincing—Lara Jean's or Peter's? Why?*

**Put It Into Practice:** How might you respond when a friend firmly believes something that you think is not true?

**Part A:** A friend tells you, "I know Maria started that rumor about me. She has always been jealous of me." You are not convinced that Maria started it, but your friend is very sure. What could you say to show that you understand why your friend suspects Maria while also expressing your doubts?

#### PART A Language to Model:

- I understand why you suspect Maria, but we don't know for sure that she started the rumor.
- Although you have reasons to be suspicious of Maria, there could be another explanation.
- I know you've had problems with Maria before, but that doesn't necessarily mean she did this.
- Even though Maria has been jealous of you in the past, I wouldn't assume that she started the rumor.

**Part B:** Your friend responds, "I know Maria. This is exactly the kind of thing she would do." How might you respond without dismissing your friend's feelings or pretending that you now agree?

#### PART B Language to Model:

- I know you know Maria well, but I still think it's possible that someone else started it.
- Although you may be right about her, I'd be careful about accusing her until you know for sure.
- I understand why you feel certain, but I'm just not as convinced as you are.
- Even though this sounds like something Maria might do, that doesn't mean she actually did it.

## SESSION 4: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (cont.)

2. **Finding a Solution When You Disagree.** Lara Jean wants to make Bellevue's cocktail hour more special, but Janette is concerned about the limited budget and the extra work. *Do you think Lara Jean does a good job of responding to Janette's concerns? Why or why not? What does Lara Jean do to make her idea more acceptable to Janette?*

**Put It Into Practice:** How can you respond when you and another person want different things but need to find a solution together?

You and another volunteer are planning an event. You would like to add something special that you think people will really enjoy.

**Part A:** The other volunteer tells you, "That sounds nice, but we already have too much to do. Let's just keep it simple." You still think your idea is worth considering. How could you acknowledge the other person's concern while explaining why you think your idea is worthwhile?

### **PART A Language to Model:**

- I know we already have a lot to do, but I think this would make the event much more memorable.
- Although it would mean a little extra work, I think people would really enjoy it.
- I understand why you want to keep things simple, but maybe there's an easy way we could make this work.
- Even though we don't have much time, we might be able to do a simpler version of my idea.

**Part B:** The other volunteer responds, "I still think it's too much. Who is going to have time to do all of that?" How could you respond by modifying your idea, offering a compromise, or taking responsibility for some of the extra work?

### **PART B Language to Model:**

- What if we simplified it and only did part of the idea?
- I see your point. Although we probably can't do everything I suggested, maybe we could choose one part.
- What if I took care of the extra work so you wouldn't have to worry about it?
- You're right that the original idea may be too much, but I think we could find a simpler way to do it.

## SESSION 4: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (cont.)

3. **When Someone Won't Let an Embarrassing Subject Go.** Lara Jean wants to put the video behind her, but other people continue talking about it and joking about it. *Where is the line between harmless joking and disrespectful behavior? Do you think someone has the right to ask others to stop joking about something even if the others think it is funny?*

**Put It Into Practice:** How can you speak up when you think joking about someone has gone too far?

Several people in your friend group keep joking about an embarrassing mistake another person made. At first you laughed along, but now you think the jokes have gone too far.

**Part A:** What could you say to get your friends to stop making fun of the other person?

### **PART A Language to Model:**

- I laughed too at first, but I think we've teased her enough.
- Although it was funny at first, I think it's time to let it go.
- She made an embarrassing mistake, but we don't need to keep reminding her about it.
- Even though she laughed about it too, she might be getting uncomfortable now.

**Part B:** Someone in the group responds, "Come on! I'm just kidding. Don't be so sensitive." *How could you stand up for the other person without turning the conversation into an argument?*

### **PART B Language to Model:**

- I know you're just joking, but I think the jokes are starting to go too far.
- Even though you don't mean to hurt her, she might not think it's funny anymore.
- Yeah, it was embarrassing, but imagine how you'd feel if everyone kept bringing it up.
- I know you don't think it's a big deal, but I'd rather not keep making her the joke.

## SESSION 4: PRACTICE QUESTIONS

### GRAMMAR

#### Section A – Concession and Contrast: *although, even though, but*

Choose the sentence that is both grammatically correct and appropriate for the situation.

1. *Your friend is upset because she thinks a coworker intentionally ignored her. You understand why she is hurt, but you think there may be another explanation.*
  - a. Although I understand why you're hurt, but maybe she didn't see your message.
  - b. But I understand why you're hurt, although maybe she didn't see your message.
  - c. I understand why you're hurt, but maybe she didn't see your message.
  - d. Even though maybe she didn't see your message, but I understand why you're hurt.
2. *You understand your sister's opinion, but you have reached a different conclusion.*
  - a. Although I understand your point, I see the situation differently.
  - b. Although I understand your point, but I see the situation differently.
  - c. I understand although your point, I see the situation differently.
  - d. Even though I understand your point, but I see the situation differently.
3. *Which sentence correctly uses even though?*
  - a. Even though the plan is expensive, but I think it is worth considering.
  - b. I even though understand the concern, I support the plan.
  - c. Even though but we disagree, I understand her concern.
  - d. Even though I disagree with her decision, I understand why she made it.
4. *A colleague proposes an idea that would require more work. You like the idea but are concerned about the workload.*
  - a. Although it's a creative idea, but it will create extra work.
  - b. I like the idea, but I'm concerned about how much extra work it will create.
  - c. Even though I like the idea, but we don't have time for it.
  - d. But I like the idea, although I'm concerned.
5. *Which sentence is NOT grammatically correct?*
  - a. Although we disagree, I respect her opinion.
  - b. We disagree, but I respect her opinion.
  - c. Although we disagree, but I respect her opinion.
  - d. Even though we disagree, I respect her opinion.
6. *Your friend feels guilty about something that you do not believe was her fault. Which response best combines empathy with a different perspective?*
  - a. You shouldn't feel guilty because it wasn't your fault.
  - b. Although you feel guilty, you're wrong.
  - c. I disagree with you because none of this was your fault.
  - d. I can understand why you feel guilty, but I don't think this was your fault.

7. Choose the best way to complete the sentence: *Even though I can understand why Elena is frustrated, \_\_\_\_\_.*

- a. I'm not sure I agree with her conclusion
- b. but I'm not sure I agree with her conclusion
- c. although her conclusion may be wrong
- d. but although I disagree with her conclusion

8. Which response most clearly communicates "*I understand your perspective, but I don't share it*"?

- a. You're entitled to your opinion.
- b. I can see why you think that, but I look at it differently.
- c. I understand, so I agree with you.
- d. Even though you disagree with me, you're mistaken.

### Section B – Say It With Understanding

Rewrite each pair as one sentence using the word in parentheses. Do not change the basic meaning.

9. I understand why Maya is upset. I don't think Carlos meant to embarrass her.

(but) \_\_\_\_\_

10. I understand Peter's point of view. I don't completely agree with him.

(although) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Janette has a very small budget. Lara Jean believes a few small changes could make the event feel special.

(even though) \_\_\_\_\_

12. I disagree with my friend. I understand why the situation worries her.

(although) \_\_\_\_\_

13. The two women have very different opinions. They still respect each other.

(even though) \_\_\_\_\_

14. I understand why you reached that conclusion. I think we need more information.

(but) \_\_\_\_\_

## RECYCLE: GRAMMAR FROM SESSIONS 1–3

### Section C – Choose the Language That Fits the Meaning

15. *Your neighbor normally lives in Houston, but her house is being renovated and she is temporarily living with her daughter in Dallas. You want to ask about the temporary arrangement.*
- Where does your neighbor live?
  - Where is your neighbor staying while her house is being renovated?
  - Where your neighbor is staying while her house is renovated?
  - Where does your neighbor staying right now?
16. You are speaking to a receptionist you do not know. You want to ask when the office closes.
- What time does this place close?
  - When you close today?
  - What time are you closing every day?
  - Could you tell me what time the office closes today?
17. Your friend says, “Nadia didn’t invite me because she’s angry with me.” There could be several explanations. Which response best matches the evidence?
- There might be another explanation.
  - She definitely isn’t angry with you.
  - Nadia forgot to invite you.
  - You shouldn’t think that.
18. Which question correctly asks about a person’s usual routine?
- What are you usually doing after dinner?
  - What you usually do after dinner?
  - What do you usually do after dinner?
  - What does you usually do after dinner?
19. You want to ask politely where someone’s daughter is currently staying.
- Could you tell me where is your daughter staying?
  - Do you know where does your daughter stay?
  - Where could you tell me your daughter is staying?
  - Could you tell me where your daughter is staying?
20. A friend asks whether she should confront her neighbor immediately about a problem. You think waiting might be wiser, but you don’t want to sound forceful.
- You must wait until tomorrow.
  - You might want to wait until you know a little more.
  - Wait until tomorrow.
  - You shouldn’t confront people.

21. Which sentence describes a temporary situation happening around the present?
- a. My sister works at a hospital.
  - b. My parents live in Brazil.
  - c. My sister is working from home this week.
  - d. My husband drives to work every morning.
22. You want to know why Rosa left the meeting, but you are asking another person politely.
- a. Do you happen to know why Rosa left the meeting?
  - b. Do you happen to know why did Rosa leave the meeting?
  - c. Do you happen to know why Rosa did leave the meeting?
  - d. Do you happen to know why was Rosa leaving the meeting?

## SESSION 4: PRACTICE QUESTIONS

### VOCABULARY

#### Section D — Session 4 Vocabulary: Use the Expression in a New Context

Choose from the expressions below. Each expression is used once. Change pronouns or verb forms when necessary.

do the trick • put something behind you • sweet-talk • be on a roll • get someone off your back  
• look up to someone • burned out • make do • set the record straight • laugh something off •  
figure things out • get it together

23. After months of working evenings and weekends without a real break, Priya felt completely \_\_\_\_\_ and decided she needed some time off.
24. We don't have enough matching chairs for twenty guests, so we'll have to \_\_\_\_\_ with the ones we can borrow from the neighbors.
25. My high-school science teacher had such a positive influence on me that I really \_\_\_\_\_ her. She made me want to become a teacher myself.
26. The newspaper reported that our organization had canceled the event. We haven't canceled anything, so the director called the reporter to \_\_\_\_\_.
27. I don't know yet whether I should accept the job. Give me a few days to \_\_\_\_\_.
28. After three successful presentations and two new clients this week, our team is really \_\_\_\_\_.
29. My parents kept asking when I was going to finish the application, so I finally submitted it just to \_\_\_\_\_.
30. After making the same mistake several times, Daniel finally \_\_\_\_\_ and started keeping a careful calendar.
31. I was embarrassed when I called my new neighbor by the wrong name, but she \_\_\_\_\_ and said, "Don't worry—I do that all the time."
32. The argument happened months ago. We've apologized to each other, and I think it's time to \_\_\_\_\_.
33. Marcus forgot to make a reservation, but he managed to \_\_\_\_\_ the hostess into finding us a table.
34. The drawer keeps sticking. Try rubbing a little candle wax along the edge. That might \_\_\_\_\_.

## Section E – Meaning and Use: New + Recycled Vocabulary

Choose the best answer.

35. If someone says, “I need a little time to figure things out,” what do they probably mean?
- a. They need someone else to make the decision.
  - b. They have forgotten what happened.
  - c. They want to avoid the situation permanently.
  - d. They need time to understand the situation or decide what to do.
36. A woman has been under enormous pressure at work for months and says she is burned out. She most likely means:
- a. she has been fired.
  - b. she feels deeply exhausted from prolonged stress.
  - c. she is temporarily bored with one assignment.
  - d. she has finished all her work.
37. If you set the record straight, you:
- a. correct inaccurate information or a false impression.
  - b. avoid talking about something controversial.
  - c. admit that someone else’s version is correct.
  - d. write down exactly what someone said.
38. During a presentation, Nina accidentally says the wrong client’s name. She smiles, makes a quick joke, corrects herself, and continues. She laughs it off. This means she:
- a. refuses to admit that she made a mistake.
  - b. becomes so embarrassed that she leaves.
  - c. treats the mistake as if it is not very serious.
  - d. laughs because she intentionally made the mistake.
39. Which situation best illustrates having someone’s back?
- a. You agree with everything your friend says, even when you know she is wrong.
  - b. You support your coworker when she is being unfairly criticized.
  - c. You avoid becoming involved when a friend needs help.
  - d. You tell someone privately that you admire her.
40. If you bite your tongue during a conversation, you:
- a. say something more politely than you planned.
  - b. forget what you were going to say.
  - c. change the subject because you are bored.
  - d. stop yourself from saying something you want to say.

41. If something suddenly dawns on you, you:
- deliberately investigate it until you find an answer.
  - pretend that you already knew it.
  - suddenly realize or understand it.
  - stop thinking about it.
42. Your flight is canceled, there are no hotel rooms nearby, and you decide to sleep in the airport without getting upset about the change. You are:
- rolling with it.
  - putting on a brave face.
  - playing hard to get.
  - setting the record straight.

### Section F – Vocabulary Retrieval: Sessions 1–3

Choose from the expressions below. Each expression is used once. Change pronouns or verb forms when necessary.

**get to the bottom of something • butter someone up • bite your tongue • put on a brave face • be up front with someone • case closed • think straight • weasel your way out of something • hold a grudge • at the crack of dawn • have someone's back • roll with it**

43. We have to leave for the airport at 5:00 a.m., so everyone will be awake \_\_\_\_\_.
44. When I saw the repair bill, I was so shocked and angry that I couldn't \_\_\_\_\_ for a few minutes.
45. If you're unhappy with the arrangement, please \_\_\_\_\_ me instead of pretending everything is fine.
46. I know you promised to help with the fundraiser, so don't try to \_\_\_\_\_ by saying you're suddenly too busy.
47. We still don't know why the computer system keeps shutting down. The technician promised to \_\_\_\_\_ before installing anything new.
48. The hotel lost our reservation, but they found us another room nearby. We decided to \_\_\_\_\_ and enjoy the weekend.
49. I wanted to tell him exactly what I thought of his rude comment, but there were children at the table, so I decided to \_\_\_\_\_.
50. Elena kept complimenting her brother's cooking, his new haircut, and even his shoes. Ten minutes later, she asked if she could borrow his car. She was clearly trying to \_\_\_\_\_.

51. Sofia was very nervous about the interview, but she \_\_\_\_\_ in front of her children because she didn't want them to worry.
52. I know yesterday's meeting was difficult, but I want you to know that I \_\_\_\_\_.  
If anyone unfairly blames you, I'll speak up.
53. Rosa apologized sincerely two years ago, but her sister still brings up the mistake whenever they argue. She clearly still \_\_\_\_\_.
54. "We've discussed this three times, and my decision isn't changing. \_\_\_\_\_."

## SESSION 4: PRACTICE QUESTIONS—ANSWERS

### GRAMMAR – WITH ANSWERS

#### Section A – Concession and Contrast

1. c
2. a
3. d
4. b
5. c
6. d
7. a
8. b

#### Section B – Sample Answers

9. I understand why Maya is upset, but I don't think Carlos meant to embarrass her.
10. Although I understand Peter's point of view, I don't completely agree with him.
11. Even though Janette has a very small budget, Lara Jean believes a few small changes could make the event feel special.
12. Although I disagree with my friend, I understand why the situation worries her.
13. Even though the two women have very different opinions, they still respect each other.
14. I understand why you reached that conclusion, but I think we need more information.

#### Section C – Recycled Grammar

15. b
16. d
17. a
18. c
19. d
20. b
21. c
22. a

#### Section D – Session 4 Vocabulary

23. burned out
24. make do
25. looked up to
26. set the record straight
27. figure things out
28. on a roll

- 29. get them off my back
- 30. got it together
- 31. laughed it off
- 32. put it behind us
- 33. sweet-talk
- 34. do the trick

### **Section E – Meaning and Use**

- 35. d
- 36. b
- 37. a
- 38. c
- 39. b
- 40. d
- 41. c
- 42. a

### **Section F – Recycled Vocabulary**

- 43. at the crack of dawn
- 44. think straight
- 45. be up front with
- 46. weasel your way out of it
- 47. get to the bottom of it
- 48. roll with it
- 49. bite my tongue
- 50. butter him up
- 51. put on a brave face
- 52. have your back
- 53. hold a grudge
- 54. Case closed