VIDEO LESSON WORKBOOK · INTERMEDIATE (B1–B2)

# A Founder Comes Back

Can You Start Over Without Starting from Scratch? Use this workbook while you watch the video, then try the extra practice. Answers and model answers are at the back.

**Watch the lesson**
englishwithchris.com/lessons/a-founder-comes-back

**1 Watch**
Pause when you see the pause sign and answer out loud.

**2 Write**
Use these pages to note your answers.

**3 Go further**
Do the extra practice and check the answer key.

## A Warm-up ▸ IN THE VIDEO

Answer each question out loud. Then write a short answer.

1. **Is there a hobby or sport you used to love but stopped doing?**

2. **Have you ever visited a place you lived in years ago?**

3. **Do you ever miss the "good old days"? What do you miss?**

## B Vocabulary preview ▸ IN THE VIDEO

Match each word to its meaning. Write the letter.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **lose touch** | ____ | A | important or meaningful enough to notice |
| 2 | **step down** | ____ | B | to begin again in a new way |
| 3 | **significant** | ____ | C | to stop being in contact with someone |
| 4 | **start fresh** | ____ | D | to keep something safe so it doesn't change or disappear |
| 5 | **preserve** | ____ | E | to leave an important job or position |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | **obsolete** | ____ | A | a strong wish to do something, often something unwise |
| 7 | **temptation** | ____ | B | to change something so much that it feels new |
| 8 | **nostalgia** | ____ | C | a situation where you feel safe and relaxed |
| 9 | **reinvent** | ____ | D | no longer used or useful because something better exists |
| 10 | **comfort zone** | ____ | E | a warm but slightly sad feeling when you miss the past |

READING ▸ IN THE VIDEO

# Going Back, Moving Forward

*Can you return without repeating?*

1 Have you ever returned to something you left behind? Maybe it was an old sport, a city you once called home, or a friend you **lost touch** with. It can feel both exciting and a little strange. You remember it well, but things have changed, and so have you.

2 Brian Halligan knows that feeling. In 2005, he and Dharmesh Shah started HubSpot, a company that builds software to help businesses connect with customers. Halligan was CEO for 16 years. Yamini Rangan became CEO in 2021, and that's when the next chapter began.

3 That chapter was a strong one. The company says customer numbers more than doubled under Rangan, reaching over 311,000, and yearly revenue almost tripled. Halligan said she helped HubSpot get to a whole new level. But growth slowed, and in November 2026, Rangan **stepped down**. Halligan returned to lead the company again.

4 He didn't call it a "comeback." He called it a "refounding," and that word is **significant**. A comeback is about going back to the good old days, but a refounding means **starting fresh** on familiar ground. That's what Halligan and Shah want to do. They want to **preserve** what people loved about HubSpot. Shah's three objectives are to make HubSpot easy to buy, easy to use, and easy to love.

5 But going back can be tricky. Some of the things that worked in the past are now **obsolete**. HubSpot spent years working on its screens, and Shah would argue that screens are less important now, with so many people using AI tools to do their work. The real **temptation** is to just go back and do what you've done before. **Nostalgia** can also make the past look better than it actually was.

6 So how do you go back without going backward? That's the real question. The answer may be to **reinvent** rather than simply repeat. Take the bits that still matter and drop the bits that don't. Shah admits some changes will be uncomfortable, but often it's by stepping outside your **comfort zone** that the best new chapters get started.

> **This is a refounding, and I can't wait to start!**
>
> *— Brian Halligan, HubSpot co-founder and CEO*

**For each paragraph**

1. Listen to Chris read.
2. Pause and read it yourself, out loud.
3. Rewind and read along.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

# Comprehension

Choose the best answer. Questions 1, 3 and 5 are in the video. Questions 2 and 4 are extra.

**1** **How long did Brian Halligan lead HubSpot before Yamini Rangan became CEO?**

▸ IN THE VIDEO

(a) 5 years
(b) 11 years
(c) 16 years
(d) 21 years

**2** **In paragraph 4, "starting fresh on familiar ground" means...**

WORKBOOK ONLY

(a) moving somewhere completely new
(b) copying exactly what you did before
(c) giving up and closing down
(d) beginning again in a place you already know

**3** **Why does the writer say going back "can be tricky"?**

▸ IN THE VIDEO

(a) It's easy to repeat old ideas that no longer work
(b) Founders usually fail when they come back
(c) Customers don't like big changes
(d) AI tools make old companies disappear

**4** **Why does the writer start the reading with questions about old sports, cities and friends?**

WORKBOOK ONLY

(a) To show that Halligan likes sports
(b) To explain what HubSpot sells
(c) To connect the story to the reader's own life
(d) To compare Halligan with Rangan

**5** **What is the main message of the reading?**

▸ IN THE VIDEO

(a) Founders should never leave their companies
(b) When you go back, keep what matters and change the rest
(c) AI will soon replace all computer screens
(d) Nostalgia always helps us make good choices

WORKBOOK ONLY

# Vocabulary review

## A Write the word

Which word from the vocabulary preview does each sentence describe?

| # | SENTENCE | WORD |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Trying a dance class for the first time can push you out of this safe, easy place. | |
| 2 | My grandmother feels this when she looks at photos from her wedding day. | |
| 3 | After moving to a new city, Maria wanted to do this and leave her old problems behind. | |
| 4 | Hardly anyone uses a fax machine at home anymore. They're almost completely this. | |
| 5 | We were best friends in school, but after I moved away, we slowly started to do this. | |
| 6 | The last slice of cake in the fridge at midnight is a big one of these. | |

## B Closest meaning

Choose the word or phrase closest in meaning to the underlined word.

**1** My grandmother tried to **preserve** every letter my grandfather wrote to her.

a) throw away  b) keep safe  c) read aloud

**2** Moving abroad was a **significant** change in my life.

a) important  b) small  c) funny

**3** After twenty years, the book club's organizer decided to **step down**.

a) get promoted  b) move house  c) leave the role

**4** The old café had to **reinvent** itself to bring customers back.

a) completely change  b) close for good  c) lower its prices

SPEAKING & WRITING

# Discussion

Answer out loud first. Give a reason and an example. Then write a few notes, and share your favorite answer in the video comments.

1. **Is it better to go back to something you left, or to always move on?** ▸ IN THE VIDEO

2. **Have you ever gone back to an old hobby, place or friendship? How did it feel?** ▸ IN THE VIDEO

3. **Does nostalgia help us, or does it hold us back? Why?**

4. **What's something in your life you'd like to reinvent, not just repeat?**

5. **Shah says change can be uncomfortable but necessary. When did you last leave your comfort zone?**

**Useful language**

**TALKING ABOUT THE PAST**
I used to… · Back then… · When I look back on…

**COMPARING THEN AND NOW**
It isn't the same as… · Things have changed since… · Compared to before…

**GIVING AN OPINION**
I'd say… · It depends on… · I tend to think…

**COMMENT CHALLENGE**

Tell us about **one thing you went back to**: a hobby, a place or a person. In 2–3 sentences, say what you **kept** and what you **changed**.

BONUS PRACTICE

# Go further

## 1 Phrases for going back and starting again

Complete each sentence with a word or phrase from the box. Use each one once.

start from scratch | get back into | the good old days | lose touch | move on | second chance

1. After the fire, they had to rebuild the house and ____.
2. I stopped running after my injury, but I'm slowly trying to ____ it.
3. My grandpa loves telling stories about ____, when he was young.
4. My school friends and I used to text every day, but over time we ____.
5. The breakup was hard, but after a few months she was ready to ____.
6. He failed his driving test, but he got a ____ a month later and passed.

## 2 Writing: Going back to something

Write 120–150 words. Describe something you went back to after a long time: a hobby, a place, a job or a friendship. What did you keep, and what did you change? Use at least four words from today's vocabulary.

## 3 Speaking: record yourself

Rewind to paragraph 6 and record yourself reading it out loud. Then play it back and compare it with the video. Listen for the stress on **reinvent** and **repeat**, and try to match the pause after "That's the real question."

CHECK YOUR WORK

# Answer key

**Vocabulary preview**

1 C · 2 E · 3 A · 4 B · 5 D
6 D · 7 A · 8 E · 9 B · 10 C

**Comprehension**

1 c · 2 d · 3 a · 4 c · 5 b

**Vocabulary review A**

1 comfort zone · 2 nostalgia · 3 start fresh · 4 obsolete · 5 lose touch · 6 temptation

**Vocabulary review B**

1 b · 2 a · 3 c · 4 a

**Phrases for going back and starting again**

1 start from scratch · 2 get back into · 3 the good old days · 4 lost touch · 5 move on · 6 second chance

## Why these answers?

- **Comprehension 1:** Paragraph 2: “Halligan was CEO for 16 years.”
- **Comprehension 2:** Paragraph 4 contrasts a refounding with going back to the good old days.
- **Comprehension 3:** Paragraph 5: some old ideas are obsolete, and it’s tempting to repeat them.
- **Comprehension 4:** Paragraph 1 asks about your own life before the HubSpot story begins.
- **Comprehension 5:** Paragraph 6: reinvent rather than repeat. Keep what matters, drop the rest.

COMPARE YOUR ANSWERS

# Model answers

These are examples, not the only correct answers. Notice the phrases that give reasons and examples.

## Warm-up

**Back on the court**

Yeah, I used to play basketball every weekend in high school. Then I went to college, got busy and just stopped. I still miss it sometimes. A friend keeps asking me to join his Sunday game, so maybe this is the year I finally go back.

**Same street, different me**

Yes, last summer I went back to the town where I grew up. My old high school was still there, but the bakery I loved had closed. It felt strange. Everything looked smaller than I remembered, and I realized I'd changed much more than the town had.

**Not everything was better**

Sometimes. I miss the time when I didn't check my phone every five minutes, and friends just called to say "Hi." But I wouldn't really go back. I think we remember the good parts and forget the boring or stressful ones.

## Discussion

**It depends on why you left**

I think it depends on why you left. If you stopped because life got busy, going back can be great. But if something wasn't working, it's probably better to move on. I went back to an old job once, and so much of it already felt obsolete.

**Back on the guitar**

Yeah, I started playing guitar again last year after almost ten years. At first my fingers hurt and I felt slow. I couldn't play my old songs, so I learned new ones instead. Honestly, it felt like starting fresh, not a return.

**A little is fine**

I think a little nostalgia is nice. Old songs or photos can make me really happy. But too much can hold you back. My uncle always says life was better in the nineties, and he won't try anything new. I don't want to be like that.

**My morning routine**

I'd like to reinvent my mornings. Right now I wake up, check my phone and rush out the door. I don't want to go back to my old routine either, because that was messy too. I want something new: a walk, coffee and no screens for thirty minutes.

**Speaking in public**

Last month I gave a short speech at my friend's wedding. I was so nervous that my hands were shaking. Speaking in front of people is definitely outside my comfort zone. But afterward, people said it was lovely, and I felt really proud.

## Writing: Going back to something

A few years ago, I went back to swimming. I swam a lot as a teenager, but when I started working, I stopped completely. I still remembered feeling strong and calm in the water, so last spring I decided to **start fresh**. At first, **nostalgia** made me expect too much. I wanted to swim like I did at sixteen, and of course I couldn't. My old training plan was also **obsolete**, so I asked a coach for a new one. I wanted to **preserve** the part I loved most, which was swimming early in the morning before the city wakes up. Joining a group class pushed me out of my **comfort zone**, but now it's the best part of my week.