



**APEX ENGLISH · A2 BUSINESS**

# **Unit A2-10B**

## **What I would like to do next**

Plans & next steps — from wish-list to roadmap

# What I would like to do next

Plans & next steps — from wish-list to roadmap · A2+ · 55-65 min · Business English



*"'I'd like to' is a wish. 'I'm going to' is a plan. The most useful career conversations are the ones that turn the first into the second."*

— Rule of the honest one-to-one

## Objectives

- Talk about medium-term career wishes precisely — separating 'I'd like to' (aspiration) from 'I'm going to' (committed plan).
- Use 'would like to', 'I'd rather', 'I'm hoping to', 'I'm considering' with the correct register for a boss vs a peer vs a recruiter.
- Make a polite request or proposal without over-hedging ('would it be possible to...?', 'I'd appreciate it if...').
- Turn a vague career wish into a 12-month plan with two concrete first steps.

## Class Book

### Warm-up · Wish-to-plan reflex

Solo · about you · 4 min

*Think through these three questions in your head. We'll use your answers throughout the lesson.*

**Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class**

- 
- In the next twelve months at work, what would you LIKE to do that you're NOT currently doing?
- 
- Which of your career wishes have you kept re-saying for three years without actually starting on? What's the first concrete step you'd need to take?
- 
- 'I'd rather' vs 'I'd like to' — which one do you actually mean when you say each of them at work?
- 

## Lead-in · Real career-conversation scenarios

Scenarios · pick the best move · 8 min

---

*Four real career moments. For each, pick the strongest professional move — then check what makes the strongest option strong.*

**Follow-up:** Notice the pattern: the strongest replies name the WISH out loud AND propose a concrete next step. That's the exact move we're rehearsing today.

---

## Reading · Diego's twelve-month plan and the conversation that made it real

10 min

---

Diego is twenty-four. He's been an intern at a mid-sized consultancy in Lisbon for nine months — long enough to know he'd like to stay, and long enough to know he needs to say so out loud. His annual conversation is on Friday. He's been rehearsing it in his head for three weeks.

On paper, his wishes are simple. In the next six months, he'd like to move from intern to junior consultant on a full contract. In the next two years, he'd like a rotation through the Madrid office — not for the salary, for the exposure. In the next five years, he'd like to be leading small client projects of his own. It looks tidy on the notebook page. It is much less tidy in his head.

What he learned from a friend who works in HR is that the phrase 'I'd like to' is not, on its own, a career plan. It's a wish. What matters in the actual conversation is what comes after: 'I'd like to move to Madrid — and I'm hoping to have the client-relationship skills ready by the end of Q3. What would need to be true for me to be considered for that rotation?' The wish stays the same. The frame turns it into something his manager can actually help him build.

The other thing his friend told him — and this was harder to hear — is that his manager cannot read his mind. Three years of quietly hoping to be offered the Madrid rotation is three years of nobody upstairs knowing he wants it. If he doesn't say the sentence out loud on Friday, the sentence will not be said. The rotation will go to whoever DID say it out loud, in a room, in a conversation, on a date.

**Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class**

---

---

So on Friday, Diego is going to say the sentence. He's not going to demand anything. He's not going to apologise for having ambition. He's simply going to say: 'In the next twelve months, I'd like to be a junior consultant with a full contract, and I'd like to start the conversation about a Madrid rotation for the year after that. What would need to be true for that path to happen — and what would you need from me to help make it real?' And then, crucially, he's going to stop talking, and let his manager answer.

### Comprehension check

1. The central point of paragraph 3 is that 'I'd like to' becomes a career plan only when...

- ☐ A. It is repeated more loudly
- ☐ B. It is followed by a specific timeline and a question the manager can answer
- ☐ C. It is written down in a notebook

2. The 'harder to hear' lesson in paragraph 4 is that...

- ☐ A. Managers do not care about their team's ambitions
- ☐ B. Career wishes not said out loud effectively don't exist for the manager
- ☐ C. Three years is too long to wait

3. What Diego is going to do differently on Friday, compared to his previous check-ins, is...

- ☐ A. Ask for more money
- ☐ B. State a specific twelve-month ambition and ask what would need to be true for it
- ☐ C. Complain about being an intern for too long

4. The final sentence — 'he's going to stop talking, and let his manager answer' — matters because...

- ☐ A. Silence is polite
- ☐ B. Under-hedging his ambition would undo the sentence he just delivered
- ☐ C. Letting the manager reply is what turns a wish into a shared plan

### True, False or Not Given?

*Choose based on the text only.*

1. Diego has already been offered the Madrid rotation.

- ☐ A. True
- ☐ B. False
- ☐ C. Not Given

**Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class**

---

---

---

2. His friend works in Human Resources.

- ☐ A. True
- ☐ B. False
- ☐ C. Not Given

3. Diego is planning to ask for a salary increase on Friday.

- ☐ A. True
- ☐ B. False
- ☐ C. Not Given

### About the text — think and write

Answer briefly. The final item is a discursive task — write it out in full paragraph form.

1. The text says 'the sentence will not be said' if Diego doesn't say it. Why is this counter-intuitive for a young professional?

---

---

---

2. The polite career-wish formula in the text is: 'I'd like to [X]. What would need to be true for [X] to happen, and what would you need from me to help make it real?' Rewrite it for a real career wish YOU'd bring into a one-to-one.

---

---

---

3. **\*\*Discursive task (100–130 words).\*\*** Write the FIRST five minutes of a career conversation you'd like to have — with your manager, a mentor, or a recruiter — in the next six months. In your own words: (a) state one specific twelve-month wish using 'I'd like to' or 'I'm hoping to', (b) attach it to one concrete first step you'd commit to before the next review, (c) ask ONE question the other person can actually answer. Aim for a professional, non-apologetic register. Avoid 'sorry to bother you' and 'no pressure'.

---

---

---

## Vocabulary · Career-wish language

10 min

### Roles

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

---

---

| Term              | Meaning                                                                   |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| aspiration        | a big, long-term wish — where you're aiming                               |
| next step         | the specific move that comes right after this one — not the finish line   |
| sideways move     | a role change at the same seniority — usually to build a new skill        |
| step up           | a move into more responsibility — often with a new title                  |
| career trajectory | the overall direction of a career over years — the shape, not one job     |
| sponsor           | a senior person who actively opens doors for you — stronger than a mentor |

### Smalltalk

| Term                                        | Meaning                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I'm hoping to...                            | softer than 'I'd like to' — used for wishes with some uncertainty |
| I'm considering...                          | you're actively thinking about it, not yet decided                |
| I'd rather (not)...                         | polite preference / polite refusal                                |
| I'd appreciate it if...                     | formal polite request                                             |
| Would it be possible to...?                 | very polite proposal — good for boss-level asks                   |
| It would make a real difference to me if... | makes the ask personal without begging                            |

### Practice

Complete each sentence with **ONE** word or phrase from the lists above.

1. My long-term \_\_\_ is to run a small consultancy of my own by the age of forty.
2. My immediate \_\_\_ is to move from analyst to team lead within the next twelve months.
3. I'm not chasing a promotion — I'm considering a \_\_\_ into product, to build a completely new skill set.
4. In the review I'm going to ask about the \_\_\_ into senior manager next year.
5. Marta was my \_\_\_ at that company — she actively put my name in rooms I wasn't in.
6. \_\_\_ transfer to the Madrid office for the second half of next year?

**Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class**

---



---

7. \_\_\_\_\_ I could shadow one of your client meetings before our next review.

8. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ change functions next year — not decided yet.

## Collocations · verb + noun (career wishes)

Match each verb with the correct noun / phrase.

| Term   | Meaning                |
|--------|------------------------|
| shape  | your career trajectory |
| make   | a sideways move        |
| take   | the next step          |
| raise  | an aspiration          |
| find   | a sponsor              |
| put in | a formal request       |

## Odd one out — register check

One option is far too casual (or wrong) for a professional career conversation.

1. Asking your manager for a training budget — which is professional?

- ☐ A. 'Give me €1,500 for that course.'
- ☐ B. 'Would it be possible to allocate around €1,500 for the [course] this year? I'd cover it in my own time and share the takeaways with the team.'
- ☐ C. 'I really need training — everyone else has done it.'

2. Turning down a project you don't want to lead — which is professional?

- ☐ A. 'Not doing it.'
- ☐ B. 'Thank you for thinking of me. Honestly, I'd rather focus this quarter on [X] — could we look at who else on the team might grow from that project? I'll actively support them.'
- ☐ C. 'Ugh, please no.'

## Grammar · would like · would rather · polite request forms

14 min

### 1. Would like — polite wish or desire

would + like + noun / to + verb. Contracts to 'd like.

- 'I'd like a coffee.' (noun)
- 'I'd like to move to Madrid next year.' (to + verb)

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

- 
- Question: 'Would you like to lead the project?'
  - Negative: 'I wouldn't like to commit to that today.'
  - ⚠ 'I'd like to' ≠ 'I like'. 'I like coffee' is a habit; 'I'd like a coffee' is a specific request.

## 2. Would rather — polite preference between options

would + rather + BASE verb (no 'to').

- 'I'd rather start next quarter.' □ ('I'd rather to start' □)
- Comparing two options: 'I'd rather stay for another year THAN take that external role.'
- Polite refusal: 'I'd rather not commit to that today, if that's OK.'
- With someone else's action: 'I'd rather she took the lead on that.' (past form even though it's about the future — this is normal.)

## 3. Polite request / proposal forms — increasing formality

Direct → very formal:

- 'Can you...?' (peer, informal)
- 'Could you...?' (neutral polite)
- 'Would you mind + -ing?' — 'Would you mind sending me the file?' (very polite)
- 'Would it be possible to...?' — 'Would it be possible to move the meeting to 3?' (proposal register, works with boss)
- 'I'd appreciate it if you could...' (formal, written register)

## 4. Softening + hedging — used carefully, not sprinkled everywhere

Useful hedges: 'I was wondering whether...', 'I'm hoping to...', 'I'm considering...', 'If it's not too much trouble...', 'When you have a moment...'

⚠ Over-hedging kills authority: 'I was just wondering if maybe, if it's not too much trouble, would it possibly be OK if perhaps...' → the listener stops taking you seriously. ONE hedge per sentence, maximum.

**Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class**

---

---

---

## Exercise A — Choose the more natural / more polite option

*Only ONE option is fully natural for A2+/B1 professional register.*

1. In your annual review with your manager: 'I \_\_\_ start managing a small team in the next twelve months.'
  2. Choosing between two projects your boss offers: 'Honestly, I \_\_\_ start with the pricing review before the pop-up.'
  3. Asking a colleague to move a meeting: 'Hi Marta — \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ move our 2pm to 3pm?'
  4. Formal email to a senior stakeholder: '\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ you could share the draft by Wednesday.'
  5. Turning down a project offer without saying 'no': 'I \_\_\_ not commit to that today, if that's OK — could we revisit next week?'
- 

**Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class**

---

---

---

---

## Exercise B — Rewrite in a more professional register

*Rewrite each request or wish for a real professional context. Fix over-hedging OR under-hedging.*

1. 'Give me a promotion this year.'

---

2. 'I was sort of wondering if maybe, if it's not too much trouble, would it possibly be OK if you could perhaps send me the file when you have a moment, no rush at all.'

---

3. 'I don't want to do that project.'

---

4. 'I want €1,500 for a course.'

---

**Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class**

---

---

---

## Exercise C — Would like vs would rather vs will vs going to

Choose the form that best fits the *FUNCTION* in brackets.

1. 'I \_\_\_ move into people management next year.' [current wish, not yet decided or committed]

---
2. 'It's decided — I \_\_\_ move into people management in January.' [signed off, committed]

---
3. 'Between the two roles, I \_\_\_ take the internal one — better long-term shape.' [preference]

---
4. 'Don't worry — I \_\_\_ send you the updated CV tonight.' [promise made just now]

---
5. '\_\_\_ \_\_\_ join us for the client dinner on Thursday?' [polite invitation]

---

**Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class**

---

---

## Exercise D — Discursive: 90-word one-to-one script

Write a short paragraph (about 90 words) that you would **ACTUALLY** say in your next one-to-one — opening a career conversation. Use **AT LEAST** one 'I'd like to', one 'I'd rather' or 'I'm hoping to', one polite request form ('Would it be possible to...?' / 'I'd appreciate it if...'), and one question your manager can answer.

**1.** Start with: 'Ana, thanks for the time today — I'd like to use twenty minutes to talk about the next twelve months.'

### Describe the picture



Look at the picture. In 5–6 sentences, describe what the person is doing **AND** what they are probably going to say in their next career conversation. Use 'would like to', 'would rather' and one polite request form.

Target language: In the picture, the person is... · In the next six months, they'd like to... · In two years' time, they're hoping to... · In a career conversation with their manager, they'd probably say... · They'd rather NOT open with... · Would it be possible to...?

## Listening · A career conversation between a junior consultant and her manager

10 min

A one-to-one conversation between Sara (Voice A, female — junior consultant, two years in) and her line manager Rui (Voice B, male). Sara has come with a specific twelve-month ask. Rui is a good listener who pushes back exactly once. Two voices.

### Before you listen

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

- In a healthy career conversation, in what order do you expect: the wish, the reason, the first step already taken, the ask, the question back to the manager?
- Which of those does an inexperienced professional usually skip — and why does it weaken the whole conversation?

## Gist

1. What is Sara's overall goal in this conversation and how does it end?

2. What is Rui's overall attitude?

## Detail

1. What is the SPECIFIC ambition Sara puts on the table?

2. What does Rui push back on, and what does he propose instead?

3. What are the two concrete first steps Sara and Rui agree on in the meeting?

## Listen and complete

*Complete with the exact words the speakers use.*

1. Sara: 'In the next twelve months I \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ move from senior analyst into a project-lead role...'

2. Rui: 'Honest answer? Q2 is aggressive. I \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ aim for Q3 with two rehearsal steps in the meantime.'

3. Sara: '\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ co-facilitate one internal workshop this quarter so you can see me in the lead seat?'

## Useful career-conversation phrases

*Match each phrase to its function.*

**Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class**

| Term                                       | Meaning                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| I'd like to use this time to talk about... | open the conversation with a clear agenda                   |
| In the next twelve months I'd like to...   | name a specific, dated ambition                             |
| What would need to be true for...?         | convert a wish into a joint plan the manager can help shape |
| I'd appreciate honest feedback on...       | invite the hard version of the answer                       |
| What would you need from me to...?         | make the conversation two-way                               |

## Speaking · Own your next-twelve-months conversation

10 min

Use the language of this unit — *would like to / would rather / polite request forms* — to run these three tasks with a partner.

## Writing · Career-conversation opener message (120–150 words)

12 min (or homework)

Write the message you would **ACTUALLY** send to your manager to book your next career conversation (120–150 words). Structure: (1) a one-sentence frame for the conversation, (2) the specific twelve-month wish, (3) one first step you're already taking or willing to commit to, (4) one polite request or proposal ('Would it be possible to...?'), (5) one question your manager can genuinely answer. Use **AT LEAST** one 'I'd like to', one 'I'd rather' OR 'I'm hoping to', and one formal polite request form. Do **NOT** use: 'sorry to bother you', 'no pressure', 'if that's OK', 'just a quick one'.

---

---

---

---

---

## Workbook

What I would like to do next — Workbook

### 1. Vocabulary in context

Complete each sentence with **ONE** word or phrase from the box. Two items are extra.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

---

---

---

- 
1. My long-term \_\_\_ is to run a small consultancy of my own by the age of forty.
  2. My immediate \_\_\_ is to move from analyst to team lead within the next twelve months.
  3. I'm not chasing a promotion — I'm considering a \_\_\_ into product, to build a completely new skill set.
  4. In the review I'm going to ask about the \_\_\_ into senior manager next year.
  5. Marta was my \_\_\_ at that company — she actively put my name in rooms I wasn't even in.
  6. I'm \_\_\_ change functions next year, but I'm not fully decided yet.
  7. Honestly, I \_\_\_ start with the pricing review before the pop-up — it's higher-leverage.
  8. \_\_\_ transfer to the Madrid office for the second half of next year?
- 

## 2. Would like · would rather · will · going to

---

*Write the correct form for the FUNCTION in brackets.*

1. 'I \_\_\_ (like) move into people management in the next twelve months.' [current wish, not yet decided]
  2. 'It's decided — I \_\_\_ (start) managing a small team in January.' [signed off, committed]
  3. 'Between the two roles, I \_\_\_ (take) the internal one — better long-term shape.' [preference]
  4. 'Don't worry — I \_\_\_ (send) you the updated CV tonight.' [promise made just now]
  5. '\_\_\_ you \_\_\_ (like / join) us for the client dinner on Thursday?' [polite invitation]
  6. 'I \_\_\_ (rather / not) commit to that today, if that's OK.' [polite refusal]
  7. '\_\_\_ share the draft by Wednesday?' [formal written polite ask]
- 

## 3. Career-conversation register

---

*Choose the option that sounds professional in a real one-to-one.*

**Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class**

---

---

**1. Opening a career conversation — which is strongest?**

- ☐ **A.** 'Uh, so, I've been thinking about a few things maybe.'
- ☐ **B.** 'I'd like to use twenty minutes today to talk about the next twelve months.'
- ☐ **C.** 'Where do you see me next year, basically?'

**2. Asking for a training budget — which is strongest?**

- ☐ **A.** 'Can I have €1,500 for a course?'
- ☐ **B.** 'Would it be possible to allocate around €1,500 for [course name] this year? It maps to the [specific skill] we've said is missing on the team, and I'd cover it in my own time.'
- ☐ **C.** 'I really need training — everyone else has done it.'

**3. Turning down a project you don't want to lead — which is professional?**

- ☐ **A.** 'Not doing it.'
- ☐ **B.** 'Thank you for thinking of me. Honestly, I'd rather focus this quarter on [X] — could we look at who else on the team might grow from leading that project? I'll actively support them.'
- ☐ **C.** 'Ugh, please no.'

**4. 'Sorry to bother you but I was just wondering if maybe, if you have a moment, would it possibly be OK if perhaps we could talk about my career sometime.' — what's wrong?**

- ☐ **A.** It's polite and correct.
- ☐ **B.** Over-hedging: six softeners undo each other. Rewrite: 'Could we book twenty minutes in the next two weeks to talk about my next twelve months?'
- ☐ **C.** Too formal.

**5. Converting a wish into a plan — which sentence does that best?**

- ☐ **A.** 'I'd love to lead a team one day.'
- ☐ **B.** 'In the next twelve months I'd like to lead a small team. What would need to be true for that conversation to be realistic at our March review?'
- ☐ **C.** 'People say I'd be good at management.'

## 4. Find and fix the mistake

*Each sentence has ONE grammar or register mistake typical of A2+/B1 professionals. Rewrite it correctly.*

**1. 'I would like coffee.' — offered to you by a colleague.**

---

---

---

**Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class**

---

---

---

2. 'I'd rather to start with the pricing review.'

---

---

---

3. 'I like to move into product management next year.'

---

---

---

4. 'Would you like join us for the client dinner?'

---

---

---

5. 'I was sort of wondering if maybe you could perhaps, if it's not too much trouble, send me the file when you have a moment, no rush at all.'

---

---

---

6. 'I want promotion this year.'

---

---

---

## 5. Reading & discursive response

---

*Read the short case, then answer.*

1. Case: A junior colleague has been quietly hoping to be offered a rotation to the Madrid office for three years. She's never said it out loud to her manager because 'she thought it would be pushy'. She's now watching a peer with less experience get the rotation instead — because the peer named the wish out loud. In 100–130 words, coach her on the exact conversation she should book with her manager THIS week. Use this unit's language (would like to · would rather · Would it be possible to · What would need to be true for...?). Include: (a) the frame, (b) the specific wish with a timeline, (c) one first step she'll commit to, (d) the two-part question back to her manager.

---

---

---

## 6. Listening — 60-second one-to-one prep voicemail

---

A more senior colleague leaves a 60-second voicemail to help a junior professional prepare for her first properly ambitious one-to-one. Listen (or read the transcript) and answer.

1. What is the caller's overall goal in leaving this voicemail?

---

---

---

**Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class**

---

---

---

---

2. What is the SPECIFIC opening sentence the caller tells her to use?

---

---

---

3. What does the caller explicitly tell her NOT to say?

---

---

---

4. Name the ONE closing tip the caller gives.

---

---

---

## 7. Writing — career-conversation opener message (120–150 words)

*Write the message you would ACTUALLY send to your manager to book your next career conversation (120–150 words). Structure: (1) a one-sentence frame for the conversation, (2) the specific twelve-month wish, (3) one first step you're already taking or willing to commit to, (4) one polite request or proposal ('Would it be possible to...?'), (5) one question your manager can genuinely answer. Use AT LEAST one 'I'd like to', one 'I'd rather' OR 'I'm hoping to', and one formal polite request form. Do NOT use: 'sorry to bother you', 'no pressure', 'if that's OK', 'just a quick one'.*

---

---

---

## 8. Case study preview

*Look at this unit's Case Study. Answer briefly.*

1. What is the main career-conversation challenge in the case for Unit 10, and which stakeholder is under the most pressure?

---

---

---

2. If you were coaching that stakeholder, what is the ONE career-wish sentence you would give them to say out loud in their next one-to-one — the equivalent of 'in the next twelve months I'd like to...'?

---

---

---

**Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class**

---

---

---