

# Anglo-Saxon management speak ...

Planning does not come as naturally to Britons as it does to some others. We are perfectly able to express detail if we want to. And indeed in our working lives we have to. There just seems to be a blanket of haziness, a tendency to approximate, which is now part of the language. Perhaps it's because we do not like to think too far ahead, to commit ourselves to something we may not be able to deliver. The French on the other hand are generally much clearer about longer term plans.

This is very obvious in France when you drive past a road-building operation. In the UK, more likely than not, you'll see a gathering of vehicles, workmen, piles of gravel, without getting much of an idea of what they're doing. In France, generally the opposite is true. If a sliproad is under construction, you'll see that in an instant. That's not to say the UK work is significantly worse, just less clear what's going on. Some call this 'pragmatism'.

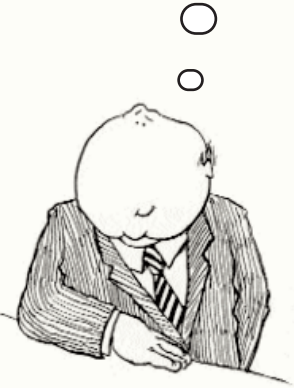
Perhaps the reason for the French being better planners is their practice of studying philosophy at school. Perhaps it's because the British live on a foggy island and cannot see too far ahead.

Where French people say they will propose a solution for a problem, we say we'll sort something out. It's almost as if detail is too sharp a concept, another symptom of our softness at the edges.

We need a solution to this problem



I'll sort something out



Discuss with your teacher how these expressions might be used.

how's it shaping up?  
I'll sort (it) out  
we need to work (it) out  
day-to-day  
for the time being  
see how it goes  
let's see what happens  
I'll deal with this  
can you look after this?  
shall I look into this?

These words are very similar. Discuss their differences:

look after  
manage  
supervise  
be responsible for

French people often use the word **propose** - it is after all a French word which the English borrowed. In English it is usually more idiomatic to say **offer** or **suggest** instead of **propose**. Keep **propose** for that moment when you ask someone to marry you.



What have you noticed about British attitudes to getting things done?

Some people hold the view that the French make plans, but don't stick to them. Is that fair?