

English at Work
Episode 19: The open window
Language for explaining a misunderstanding



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- Narrator:** Hello, it's a chilly start to the day at Tip Top Trading.
- Anna:** Hi Denise!
- Denise:** Good morning Anna.
- Anna:** Brrr... it's so cold in here.
- Denise:** The window was left open overnight.
- Anna:** My papers have been blown everywhere.
- Denise:** Mine too! Tom was the last one here last night – it must've been him who left the window open.
- Anna:** Brrr.... Right then, to work! Oh, there's a note from Paul, it must've fallen off my desk: 'I would like your ideas on our stock management system for our new laser-curve fruit range, so we know we can keep up with demand. Please write me a couple of pages of suggestions and leave it on my desk. I'll be back this afternoon.' Wow! I have to come up with ideas for a stock management system! Gosh, where do I begin?!
- Tom:** Good morning.
- Anna:** Morning!
- Tom:** Hey, my certificate for Plastic Pear Salesman of the Year is on the floor!
- Anna:** Right... stock management systems... stock-up on your laser-curved lemons ... My first idea is to calculate the total....
- Later...*
- Narrator:** Well, Anna has finished her report and left it on Paul's desk, but things aren't that simple. Er, Anna, there's going to be a problem.
- Anna:** Oh? A problem, bbbbut...
- Narrator:** Let me teach you some phrases you might need to explain that there's been a mistake:
- I think there's been a misunderstanding.*

Or:
There's been a bit of a mix-up.

Anna: But what misunderstanding? What mix-up?

Narrator: You could also use:
Let me explain what happened...

Anna: But-

Paul: Ah, good afternoon everyone.

All: Hello.

Paul: Tom, this is an excellent piece of work!

Tom: Sorry?

Paul: These are by far the best ideas you've ever had.

Tom: I don't understand.

Paul: Our stock management system!

Tom: Can I see? ... Oh, that's not mine.

Paul: Eh?

Anna: I think there's been a misunderstanding. I did it.

Paul+Tom: You?

Anna: I got your note Paul, here.

Paul: No, no, that note was for Tom.

Anna: Oh, then there's been a bit of a mix up.

Tom: Did you take that note from my desk?

Anna: No, no!

Tom: I suppose you threw my pear salesman certificate on the floor at the same time too!

Anna: I didn't! Let me explain. The wind must have blown the note for Tom under my desk.

Denise: Tom left the window open overnight. Our papers were blown all over the place.

Paul: I see, well, golly gosh. In that case, well done, Anna! Excellent work, even though you weren't meant to do it. And Tom, your ideas are still welcome of course. Thanks.

Anna: Sorry Tom.

Tom: What? Oh, I'm not bothered. I've still got some great ideas in my head anyway.

Narrator: Yeah, right! Let's leave Tom to get on with his 'great ideas' and listen again those phrases Anna used to explain the misunderstanding:

I think there's been a misunderstanding.

There's been a bit of a mix-up.

Let me explain what happened.

Well, the mix-up gave Anna a chance to shine – Paul certainly seemed impressed with her work. Maybe it will bring her new opportunities. Until next time, bye!

- **Listening Challenge**

Tom found one of his certificates on the floor. What was it for?

Answer: Plastic Pear Salesman of the Year