

## Sound Practical When Talking About Difficult Times

We all **suffer setbacks**, whether it is something in your life or your career which takes you back in your progress. The important thing is how you **overcome that setback** and recover.

Sometimes, your situation may be more than just a small setback. If you are in a period of difficulty or uncertainty, **in choppy waters**, it can be very difficult to **persevere** if it is difficult to see how you will progress out of the other side.



When the economy is struggling, or in a recession, the **adverse consequences** can be very **detrimental** to the health of a company. Problems and debt can **mount up** to the point at which it could get out of control. Profits and customer numbers could **dry up** or even fall to zero, causing the company to be **in turmoil** as uncertainty starts to rise. can move towards bankruptcy incredibly quickly. In order **to stay afloat**, they might **resort to** borrowing large sums of money just to keep the business running. Governments might see a company's **plight** as potentially dangerous for the country's economy in general, and therefore they might consider it better to save the company. **Bailing out** companies, banks or entire industries can sometimes be a controversial move, but governments lend money from their own budget if they feel that it would be in the interests of the wider economy.

### A) Match the phrases to the definitions

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

|                   |                      |                             |             |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| to persevere with | to stay afloat       | in choppy waters/in turmoil | a setback   |
| detrimental       | adverse consequences | resilient                   | to bail out |
| the plight of     | mounting             | to resort to                | to dry up   |

1. Something which takes you back in your progress: \_\_\_\_\_

*"I have suffered many \_\_\_\_\_ in my career, but I have overcome them to reach where I am today."*

2. To have just enough money to pay your debts and continue operating: \_\_\_\_\_

*"Many companies in the hospitality industry struggled to \_\_\_\_\_ during the Covid 19 pandemic."*

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3. To be in a period of real uncertainty: \_\_\_\_\_  
*"Markets are \_\_\_\_\_ after a major bank collapsed yesterday."*
4. To rescue someone or something from difficulty, especially financial difficulty:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*"The government have refused to \_\_\_\_\_ the major construction company."*
5. The difficult, desperate situation of someone or something: \_\_\_\_\_  
*"Governments are failing to recognise the \_\_\_\_\_ of many homeless people in the country."*
6. Causing damage or harm: \_\_\_\_\_  
*"The current school system is proving to be \_\_\_\_\_ for children's development."*
7. To grow larger or become more intense (especially something negative):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*"As the addiction grew, her debts started \_\_\_\_\_."*  
*"Fear is \_\_\_\_\_ for the economy after another bank collapsed yesterday."*
8. Being able to stand and come back from difficult situations: \_\_\_\_\_  
*"The whole team needs to be \_\_\_\_\_ during these difficult times."*
9. To continue on despite real difficulties and little chance of success: \_\_\_\_\_  
*"The plan hasn't gone well so far, but we need to \_\_\_\_\_ with it."*
10. To decrease and eventually stop: \_\_\_\_\_  
*"Our resources are slowly \_\_\_\_\_, so we need to be very careful."*
11. To do something undesirable in order to solve a very difficult situation:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*"During the Covid 19 crisis, many bars \_\_\_\_\_ delivering drinks to people's homes."*
12. Really negative consequences: \_\_\_\_\_  
*"We are suffering the \_\_\_\_\_ of the government's terrible new policy."*

## B) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? You may need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence.

|                      |                |                  |
|----------------------|----------------|------------------|
| to persevere with    | to stay afloat | in choppy waters |
| adverse consequences | resilient      | to bail out      |
| plight               | mount up       | to resort to     |
|                      |                | to dry up        |

### The Plight of a Popular Café

The charming "Seafront Café" was a cosy, family-owned café much loved by the residents of Brighton, one of Britain's favourite seaside towns. Tourists and locals alike regularly stopped at the café for a relaxing coffee and cake with a view over Brighton's famous pier and sandy beach. However, that all changed when the Covid 19 pandemic suddenly hit.

Of course, we all remember very vividly how the Covid-19 pandemic had extremely \_\_\_\_\_ for many businesses, but small businesses were hit particularly hard. At the beginning of the pandemic, the café's revenues began to \_\_\_\_\_ immediately when the first lockdown hit. People had to stay at home, and there was simply nothing that the café could do about the situation.

At first, the café's owners John and Mary did nothing in the belief that the lockdown would be over in a few weeks. However, fears soon started to \_\_\_\_\_ across the country that this was actually going to be a long-term situation. It was around 2 weeks into the lockdown that the owners knew that they had to \_\_\_\_\_ drastic measures if the café was going to have any chance of \_\_\_\_\_. After exploring various options, John and Mary decided to start delivering their delicious cakes to customers' homes.

They started taking orders online for all of their classic cakes which visitors used to love so much. At first, there was only a steady trickle of orders, and the pressure was starting to take its toll on Mary. She recalls that she spent many nights crying during that period, but the pair had no option other than to \_\_\_\_\_ with the idea.

Thankfully, the British government, as with many other governments around the world, were sympathetic to the \_\_\_\_\_ of small business owners, and decided to \_\_\_\_\_ small businesses with monthly instalments to keep them afloat. John and Mary decided to utilize these instalments to their advantage, by investing in an online advertising campaign to promote their cakes to people in the local area.

Thankfully, things soon turned around for John and Mary. Their \_\_\_\_\_ attitude in the face of adversity soon paid off, as they soon became bombarded with orders for take-away cakes. Evidently the residents of Brighton were starting to miss their mid-afternoon sweet treats!

Of course, the revenue from deliveries wasn't enough to compensate for the thousands of monthly visitors that they were missing out on, and the café remained \_\_\_\_\_ throughout the pandemic. However, the café emerged from the pandemic stronger and more resilient than ever before. The brave decision to adapt to the changing circumstances allowed John and Mary to weather the storm caused by the pandemic. The café now is more popular than ever, and you should make sure to check it out whenever you are in Brighton, if you can find a free seat, that is!

### C) Comprehension Questions

1. According to the author, how clear is our collective memory of the Covid 19 period?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. How successful was John and Mary's plan to deliver cakes at the beginning?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. According to the context, what do you think the phrase 'take its toll' means in the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What happened when John and Mary started to advertise their cakes online, and what conclusion does the author draw about the residents of Brighton?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What do you think the phrase 'weather the storm' means in the final paragraph?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. What problem might you encounter if you visit the café today?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**D) More Uses of Selected Key Words****In choppy waters**

We can also use the phrase 'to sail through choppy waters':

*"I am currently sailing the company through choppy waters at the moment."*

*"The economy is currently sailing through choppy waters."*

**Adverse consequences**

Here are some other collocations with 'adverse':

Adverse consequences / an adverse impact on / adverse market conditions /  
adverse economic conditions / adverse circumstances

*"Due to the current adverse market conditions, we will unfortunately have to make some redundancies."*

Some other useful phrases include 'in the face of adversity' meaning to be in a situation whereby you are forced to confront setbacks or challenges.

*"We have performed very well in the face of adversity."*

**Resilient**

We can also use this as a noun 'resilience':

*"I believe that our resilience during those difficult times has led us to the success that we are enjoying today."*

*"I would like to thank you all for your resilience during those busy times."*

**Bail out**

We can also use bail out as a noun or adjective:

*"The International Monetary Fund has offered the country a bail-out package."*

*"The company has received a \$300m bailout."*

**To resort to**

We can use resort to + noun or resort to + -ing form:

*"We had to resort to laying off 300 staff due to our desperate economic situation."*

*"I resorted to working every evening for a month in order to get ready for the product launch."*

If something is a 'last resort', then it is a final action after everything else has failed.

*"I can assure you that all of your jobs are safe. We would only ever make redundancies as a last resort."*

#### **E) Glossary of words for talking about bad times**

to persevere with  
to stay afloat  
in choppy waters  
in turmoil  
a setback  
detrimental  
adverse consequences  
in the face of adversity  
resilient / resilience

to bail out / a bailout  
the plight of  
mounting  
to resort to  
a last resort  
to dry up  
to take its toll  
to weather the storm