Explaining and answering queries.
(For email or oral practice.)

1) Choose words from list below to fit into each sentence. Only one final solution should be attempted. Note: these sentences are useful for email or oral practice.

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only / way / example / lost / mean / difficult / All / point / bit / clear / Take /
understood / what / For / follow
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a) ( 1. ) you need to know is that the database will load automatically.
b) And not ( 2. ) that, my computer shuts down every time I try.
c) Can you give me an ( 3. )?
d) Do you ( 4. ) me?
e) Do you know what I ( 5. )?
f) ( 6. ) example,
g) Is that ( 7. )? If not please tell me.
h) Look at it this ( 8. ),
i) Sorry, I didn't understand the ( 9. ) about the registration process.
j) Sorry, I'm totally ( 10. ). Could you explain it another way?
k) ( 11. ) the Mozilla Firefox search engine, for example;
l) The ( 12. ) is, however much I try, the programme won't open.
m) The problem is, I find it ( 13. ) to understand the instructions manual.
n) To give you an idea of ( 14. ) I mean,
o) What is it you haven't ( 15. )?

2) Analysis. General questions and activities for discussion and practice.

a) Meanings. Group all the sentences above into the following four categories:
1) Explaining the problem.
2) Helping and giving clarifications.
3) Asking for clarifications.
4) Giving specific examples.

b) Communicative activity: you are going to explain and demonstrate how a particular device functions. Ask your teacher for instructions.
Teacher's notes.
(Time for activity: 40 mins approx. Level: lower intermediate.)

Explaining and answering queries. (Context: email or oral practice.)

Correct answers to question 1.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. All</td>
<td>6. For</td>
<td>11. Take</td>
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<td>2. only</td>
<td>7. clear</td>
<td>12. point</td>
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<td>3. example</td>
<td>8. way</td>
<td>13. difficult</td>
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<td>5. mean</td>
<td>10. lost</td>
<td>15. understood</td>
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Answers to question 2a. Meanings:

1) **Explaining the problem.**
The problem is, I find it difficult to understand the instructions manual. The point is, however much I try, the programme won't open. And not only that, my computer shuts down every time I try.

2) **Helping and giving clarifications.**
Do you follow me? Do you know what I mean? All you need to know is the database is installed automatically. Is that clear? If not please tell me. What is it you haven't understood?

Look at it this way,

3) **Asking for clarifications.**
Sorry, I didn't understand the bit about the registration process. Sorry, I'm totally lost. Could you explain it another way?

4) **Giving specific examples.**
Can you give me an example? For example, To give you an idea of what I mean, Take the Mozilla Firefox search engine, for example; (Also, possibly: Look at it this way.)

Question 2b. If possible, try to suggest an activity for this class the session before or advise your students by email what they need to bring to class. Ask students to bring in a device that requires some explanation to use it properly. Ideas: a photographic camera, a small kitchen appliance, a technological device such as an Mp4, iPad, a certain feature in a high-tech mobile phone etc. Tell students that there should be a certain degree of difficulty to use the device that others will probably not know.

In class, students should get into pairs or threes. One member of the group shows and explains the workings of the device while the other(s) listen and ask questions. The student demonstrating the device should ask the other(s) to pick it up and carry out the function he/she is explaining to see if they have understood properly.

Depending on the devices to be demonstrated, you may want to pre-teach more expressions before the activity begins, eg. push this button, flick the switch, turn this knob etc. Give feedback at the end of the session on how well the expressions were used and other useful phrases they could have used.