

33 ways to say “Let’s Try” in English (USA vs UK, formal vs informal)

- Welcome to the Deep Dive. Today we're going to take a look at something, well, something that seems so simple you probably don't even think about it.
- Right. The phrase, let's try.
- Exactly. Just those three little words. And it turns out, if you're only using that phrase, you're missing out on a huge part of the English language.
- A huge part. I mean, native speakers, we almost never just say, let's try. We have this whole toolbox of other expressions, and which one we pick totally depends on the situation.
- And that's our mission for this Deep Dive, right? To give you that toolbox.
- That's it. We've got 33 real, natural alternatives we're going to walk you through. The goal is to help you navigate any setting work with friends, a technical problem, and just sound, well, more natural, more intentional.
- 33. That's a lot. So before we dive into the list, maybe let's frame it. Why? Why are there so many different ways to say this one thing?
- Yeah, you can really break down the why into maybe four main drivers.
- Sure.
- First, and this is a big one, is just geography. You know, what's common in the USA can sound really out of place in the UK, and vice versa.
- Second is register. Formal versus informal. That's huge.
- Of course. Third, we just we swap out the verb try all the time. We use words like give, have, take, go, see. They all add a slightly different flavor.
- And the fourth.
- And finally, it's just colloquialisms. You know, those unique, colorful phrases that every language has. You don't learn them from a textbook. You just have to hear them.
- So it's not just about words. It's about culture, context, everything. Okay. Start at the beginning. The baseline. What's a one phrase that's always safe?
- That is just let's try. It's the neutral formation. It works anywhere in any context. You know, let's try again later. It's correct. It's just not very nuanced.
- Okay. So what's the first step up from that? The first little bit of nuance?
- I'd say it's let's give it a try. Just adding give and a softens it a little. It makes the attempt sound a bit more concrete. Maybe a little more motivating. Still very gentle. Very universal.
- Or right after that, we hit that first big split you mentioned. The geographical one.
- We do. And this is probably the most important one for you to get right.
- So let's say I'm in the U.S. I'm with friends. It's casual. What's my go-to?

- It's let's give it a shot. Hands down. It's everywhere. The word shot has this feeling of, you know, taking aim, a quick, decisive action. It's got a bit of energy to it.
- Right. Give it a shot. But if I use that in, say, London.
- People will know exactly what you mean, but you will instantly sound American. Which is fine.
- But it's not the local dialect.
- It's not. The U.K. equivalent is let's give it a go.
- Give it a go. It feels a bit softer, doesn't it? Go implies movement, not a target.
- Exactly. It's less about a single decisive moment and more about just starting the motion. So right there you have a choice. Punchy and American or a bit softer and British.
- That's a fantastic distinction. Okay. Let's move on from just general attempts to language that's more about motivation. How we encourage people.
- Yeah. So if you want to really inspire someone who's maybe a bit hesitant, you often drop the word trial together.
- So what do you say instead?
- You just say go for it. It's very informal, very American leaning. It's not about trying. It's about giving them permission to succeed.
- Ah, I see. It's like you're removing the barrier for them.
- Totally. And if they're still not sure and you want to lower the stakes for them, you can frame it as a question.
- Like?
- Why not give it a try? It sort of implies what have you got to lose? You know, you've never baked bread before. Why not give it a try?
- That's good. It minimizes the risk. But what if the outcome is totally unknown? Not just for them, but for everyone. You're not really motivating. You're just observing.
- In that case, you swap the verb again. You use see.
- Ah, let's see how it goes.
- Precisely. Let's see how it goes. It's so useful because you're committing to the action but not to a specific result. Let's change the marketing copy and just see how it goes. You're separating the effort from the outcome.
- Okay, I think we got the casual side covered pretty well.
- Sure.
- Let's do a hard pivot. We're walking out of the cafe and into a boardroom. The language has to change completely.
- Completely. This is where we need to start being much more careful. More diplomatic.
- So where do we start for maximum formality?
- Well, if you really want to be polite, especially in a British or Commonwealth context, you reach for a little word that packs a big punch. Shall.

- Shall we try?
- Yes. Shall we try a different solution? It's brilliant because shall isn't a command. It's an invitation for the other person to agree with you. It's inherently collaborative.
- It's so much more differential than let's try.
- Oh, worlds apart. And if you need to be even more diplomatic, maybe you're suggesting a change because the current plan isn't working.
- You need to be even softer.
- Right. You start adding layers, adverbs, modal verbs. My favorite is perhaps we could try.
- Perhaps we could try. Wow, that is non-confrontational.
- It's incredibly non-confrontational. Perhaps signals uncertainty and could signals possibility, not certainty. It's the perfect way to suggest an idea without forcing it on anyone.
- Okay, so let's get even more specific. We're in a high-level corporate meeting. We're talking strategy, big decisions. The language needs to reflect that weight.
- It does. And the phrasing starts to imply more deliberation. You're not just suggesting a quick test anymore.
- So what's the first level? You introduce the idea of thought, of review. So you say, let's consider trying. Let's consider trying. Yeah, let's manager speak.
- It means this is a real idea, but we need to analyze it. We need to look at the risks, the resources. It's putting the idea on the official agenda.
- And what if the task itself is just really difficult, like technically complex?
- Then you need a verb that acknowledges that difficulty, and that verb is attempt.
- We could attempt to.
- We could attempt to optimize the server. When you use attempt, you're managing expectations. You're signaling up front that success is not a guarantee because the task is hard.
- It's very precise language.
- Very. And then at the very top of the corporate ladder, when you're talking about huge strategic changes, you need the grandest phrase of all.
- Which is?
- Let's explore the possibility of.
- Oh, that's a mouthful.
- It is. And the length of the phrase reflects the size of the commitment. This isn't just trying something. This is launching a strategic review, maybe involving multiple teams, budgets. It's a major undertaking.
- That's fascinating. We've gone from give it a shot, which costs nothing, to explore the possibility of, which sounds like it's going to cost a million dollars.
- The words really do set the price tag of the attempt. Absolutely.

- Okay, new context. Let's move into the world of tech. Software, design, marketing. Here, trying something is usually tied to data, to measurement.
- Yes, the language becomes much more empirical. The most direct, common phrase you'll hear is simply, let's test it.
- Or, let's run a test.
- Exactly. It implies a clear process, a hypothesis, metrics for success. It's the language of quality assurance, of A-B testing.
- But what about the more creative side? Like in design, where you're not running a test with a clear pass-fail, you're just exploring ideas.
- That's where you experiment. You say, let's experiment with.
- Let's experiment with different color schemes.
- Perfect. Experiment is about discovery and iteration, not validation. It's a much more open-ended process.
- And if something is clearly not working, and you need to formally suggest a change of direction
- Then you'd say, let's try a different approach. It's a very professional, blame-free way to signal a pivot.
- Got it. And what about for, say, a new feature that's not permanent yet, a beta version?
- Ah, for that you'd say, let's give this a tryout. The word tryout specifically implies a trial period. We're testing it for a limited time to see if we want to keep it.
- That's super useful. Okay, let's soften things up again. Let's talk about teamwork, collaboration. How do we phrase things to reduce pressure and encourage people to work together?
- This is all about using language that emphasizes shared effort. So instead of a command like, let's fix this, you frame it around your collective ability.
- So you'd say...
- Let's see if we can.
- Let's see if we can fix the layout. Ah, that's so much better. It turns a demand into a shared challenge.
- It does. And if you want to make a suggestion that is super low pressure, one that you're happy for the team to reject, you add one word at the beginning.
- Maybe.
- Maybe. Maybe we could try another font. That little word maybe is like an escape hatch. It tells everyone, this is just an idea, feel free to ignore it.
- And I've noticed that in a lot of team settings the most natural suggestions are actually questions.
- Absolutely. Question forms are king for collaboration because they automatically invite feedback.
- So how about we try?
- Or what if we try? What if we try a darker design? It immediately opens the floor for discussion rather than just telling people what to do.

- Alright, now for my favorite part. The really informal, colloquial slangy stuff.
- Yep.
- This is where those geographical differences get really fun.
- They really do. Let's start with some classic Americanisms. If give it a shot is the standard, a more playful, fun version is, let's give it a whirl.
- A whirl. Like something spinning.
- Exactly. It's for light-hearted things. Trying a new board game, a new recipe, something with no real stakes.
- And what about that other great American one for when something is difficult?
- Let's take a crack at it.
- Take a crack at it. So that implies you're trying to break through a problem.
- That's the image, yeah. You use it for a tough challenge. The code is a mess, but let's take a crack at fixing it. It implies focused effort.
- Wait, so what's the difference between give it a shot and take a crack at it?
- Yeah.
- They both sound like you're trying something.
- It's about the perceived difficulty. A shot is quick, often a single attempt. A crack implies you might be working on it for a while, chipping away at a hard problem.
- That is a subtle but really important difference. Okay, so let's hop over to the UK. What are their versions of whirl and crack?
- Okay, so instead of giving it a whirl, the Brits often give it a bash.
- Let's give it a bash!
- Yeah, it's very informal, often a little self-deprecating, and instead of take a crack at it, a common one is let's have a go at it.
- Have a go! We heard go before.
- We did! It's very versatile. You'll also hear that classic casual invitation, fancy giving it a try.
- I love that. Okay, what about when you're just exploring something, like new software settings, with no real goal in mind?
- If you're being a bit chaotic and unstructured, you can say, let's mess around with the setting.
- Mess around with.
- But if you want that to sound a little more creative and a little less destructive, you just soften it.
- To what?
- Let's play around with the layout. Play has the same exploratory feel as mess, but it sounds a bit more productive.
- Perfect. Let's wrap up the list with a few that are very specific to solving problems and showing high commitment.

- Okay, if you're dealing with a technical failure, a machine is broken, the Wi-Fi is down, there's a special word for that.
- Let's troubleshoot it.
- Exactly. Troubleshoot means you're going to systematically diagnose the problem. It's not a random guess.
- And if a problem needs more than just a quick fix, if it needs real sustained effort
- Then you commit to the process. You say, let's work on it. That's a much stronger promise than just trying. It implies you'll see it through.
- What if the answer isn't known, and you need to think together to find it?
- Then, it's a joint mental effort. You say, let's try to figure it out. That phrase commits both of you to the cognitive labor of solving the puzzle.
- It's a real declaration of partnership.
- It is. It's a very high commitment phrase. And that actually brings us full circle. Remember, give it a shot.
- I do.
- If you want to make that sound a bit more serious, more determined, you just change one word.
- Which is?
- Let's take a shot at it. Changing give to take subtly increases the sense of purpose.
- Wow. The tiny words make all the difference. It's incredible. It really is.
- I mean, we've just gone through dozens of phrases, and they show that just saying, let's try really doesn't capture well, anything. The formality, the geography, the effort.
- So, after all that, what is the single biggest takeaway for our listeners? What should they remember above all else?
- I think it comes down to a two-part test you should run in your head. Who is my audience, and what is my level of commitment?
- Audience and commitment.
- First, audience. Remember those geographical splits? Give it a shot versus give it a go. Using the local version just makes you sound more connected. But more importantly, I think, is commitment. You have to analyze the level of effort and risk you're actually suggesting.
- Right. That's the theme that kept coming up. The perceived effort.
- Exactly. Your choice of words is really a social contract. When you say, perhaps we could try, you're signaling a low-risk, easily abandoned idea. But when you escalate to, let's work on it, or let's try to figure it out, you're signaling a serious, resource-intensive, collaborative promise.
- So the language of trying is actually the language of risk management.
- That's a perfect way to put it. It's a linguistic shortcut for setting expectations. Master these phrases, and you're no longer just making suggestions. You're defining the entire scope of the collaboration.

- You're dictating the tone. What a powerful insight. We really encourage you to start using these today. Swap out a generic let's try for a diplomatic perhaps we could try an email. Or try a fun give it a whirl with a friend. Start using these tools. That's all for this deep dive.