English for Meetings is accompanied by a MultiROM which has a number of features.

Interactive exercises to practise useful phrases, vocabulary, and communication through your computer.

Listening extracts. These are in enhanced audio format that can be played on a conventional CD-player or through the audio player on your computer.

If you have any problems, please check the technical support section of the readme file on the MultiROM.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAGE</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>USEFUL LANGUAGE AND SKILLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5    | Could we meet next week? | Arranging a meeting  
Confirming a meeting by email  
Rescheduling a meeting | Using first names  
Apologizing for changing a meeting time  
Getting emails right  
General meeting vocabulary |
| 14   | Can we make a start now? | Saying hello and making introductions  
Starting a meeting  
Stating the objectives  
Introductions | Making small talk  
Writing formal and informal agendas  
Chairing a meeting |
| 23   | Can I make a point here? | Reporting progress  
Explaining cause and effect  
Interrupting and dealing with interruptions | Interrupting politely  
Asking for clarification  
Giving your opinion  
Video conferencing |
| 32   | I'm not sure I agree | Asking for comments and contributions  
Expressing strong and tentative opinions  
Agreeing and disagreeing | Disagreement and criticism in different cultures  
Diplomatic language  
Making positive suggestions  
Resolving conflicts |
| 40   | It's a deal | Responding to offers  
Buying time  
Taking a vote  
Summarizing the results of a meeting | Reaching agreement  
Talking about possibilities  
Controlling the timing of a meeting  
Intercultural communication |
| 48   | So, I think we're finished for today | Ending a meeting and thanking participants  
Confirming decisions and action points  
Follow-up emails  
Saying goodbye | Talking about plans  
Formal and informal minutes  
Mixing business and pleasure |

### APPENDIX

- 54 Test yourself!
- 56 Partner files
- 62 Answer key
- 67 Transcripts
- 74 A–Z word list
- 77 Useful phrases and vocabulary
About the book

Participating in a meeting is a real challenge for non-native speakers and can cause a certain amount of anxiety. When are you allowed to make a contribution and how do you word it properly? When is the right time to ask questions and what happens if you actually have to run the meeting? And what about writing up the minutes?

*English for Meetings* presents all the speaking skills that you need in order to participate in a meeting with confidence. This compact, but comprehensive course contains the expressions needed in typical everyday business meetings – from informal chats to formal meetings. *English for Meetings* presents the vocabulary and expressions in such a way that you can learn them easily and use them immediately.

*English for Meetings* consists of six units, which present different areas that you might come across in a meeting. Unit 1 deals with how to arrange a meeting and also includes expressions needed when postponing a meeting. Following this, other important topics are presented, for example, the use of small talk at the beginning of a meeting, how a meeting starts, how to express your opinion, and how to interrupt. *English for Meetings* includes useful expressions for people chairing the meeting, as well as for the other participants. You can also find out how to draw up an agenda and write the minutes for both formal and informal meetings.

Every unit begins with a *Starter* – this is a warmer exercise where you can discuss your personal experiences and thoughts on the unit topic. The main section of the unit consists of listening comprehension exercises, authentic materials, and exercises that enable you to practise using the language of the unit. There are speaking activities at various points throughout the units, where you can practise the relevant expressions. At the end of each unit is the *Output*, where you will find reading texts on various related topics, for example, video-conferences. The book ends with a fun *Test yourself!* crossword to recycle and consolidate the vocabulary and expressions you have learnt in the book.

You will find the answers to all exercises in the *Answer* key at the back of the book, along with the *Partner Files*, the *Transcripts* of the listening extracts, and the *A-Z word list*. The *Useful phrases and vocabulary* section includes all the essential phrases, organized thematically; you can use this to prepare for an important meeting quickly and efficiently.

The *MultiROM* contains all the *Listening extracts* from the book. These can be played through the audio player on your computer, or through a conventional CD-player. In order to give yourself extra listening practice, listen to it in your car or copy to your MP3-player. The *Interactive exercises* let you review your learning by doing *Useful phrases*, *Vocabulary*, and *Communication* exercises on your computer; this will be particularly valuable if you are using the book for self-study.
Could we meet next week?

Work with a partner. Match the different types of meeting (a–6) with the definitions (a–f).

1 □ progress
2 □ brainstorming
3 □ shareholder
4 □ kick-off
5 □ team
6 □ board

- a People who work in the same department have this type of meeting regularly.
- b This is a meeting of a company’s most senior managers.
- c If you need new ideas, you have this type of meeting.
- d This is a meeting for a company’s investors.
- e At this type of meeting, you talk about what has been accomplished on a project.
- f This type of meeting is held at the beginning of a project.

Now ask your partner the questions below and make a note of the answers. Then tell the class what you have found out.

- How often do you have meetings in English?
- Which of the meetings above do you attend?
- What other types of meeting do you have?
- Are your meetings with colleagues from your company or with contacts from other companies (customers, suppliers, clients, ...)?

Listen to the two telephone dialogues and complete the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dialogue 1</th>
<th>Dialogue 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>What will the meeting be about?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>When will the meeting take place?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>How long will the meeting last?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Listen again and complete the sentences from the dialogues.

Call 1
1. Could we ______ a time to meet next week?
2. How ______ Monday at nine?
3. Sorry, I can’t ______ it then.
4. How ______ sometime after lunch?
5. Should we ______ for the whole afternoon?
6. Let’s leave the length of the meeting ______ for now.
7. So, I’ll ______ you on Monday at two.

Call 2
8. ______ we could meet and go over the details ______?
9. What time ______ you ______ in mind?
10. Would half past five ______ you?
11. I’m ______ I have another appointment then.
12. Well, I’ll see you ______ Monday ______ 7.30, then.
13. I look ______ to meeting you then.

Which sentences (1–13) can be used:

a. to arrange a meeting?

b. to discuss the length of a meeting?

c. to arrange the time of a meeting?

d. to say that a suggested time for a meeting is not convenient?

e. to confirm the time of a meeting?

Put the words in the right order to make typical sentences for making arrangements.

1. let’s soon meeting a sometime have

   Let’s have a meeting sometime soon.

2. like to you when meet would ?

3. at Thursday how 11:30 about morning?

4. would for next be Tuesday you how ?

5. fine would yes, that be

6. to forward you I look then meeting
4 Work with two partners to arrange a suitable time to meet. First look at the Useful Phrases on this page. Then look at your diary and the instructions in the Partner Files.

USEFUL PHRASES

**Asking for a meeting**
Could we schedule a time to meet next week?
I’d like to schedule a meeting as soon as possible.
Can we meet and go over this together?
Perhaps we could meet and go over the details in person?

**Suggesting a meeting time**
How about Monday at nine?
How about sometime after lunch?
Could we meet next week?
Can I suggest 7:30 on Thursday evening?
Would half past five suit you?

**Saying that you aren’t able to attend**
Sorry, I can’t make it then.
I’m afraid I have another appointment then.
I’m a bit tied up then. How about another time?

**Saying that you can attend**
Sounds good.
Yes, that works for me.
Yes, that would be fine.

**Confirming the day and time**
See you on Monday at seven.
So, I look forward to seeing you on Tuesday at four.

5 Read these two emails confirming meetings. Which email is formal and which is informal?

**Email 1**

To: ian.sweeney@dbd.com
From: mark.peters@dbd.com
Subject: Meeting to discuss contract changes

Attachments: May23_Points_to_Discuss.doc

Hi Ian,

It was nice to speak to you today. Thanks for agreeing to meet with me. Just to confirm the date and time of our meeting: Monday 23 May at 2 p.m. My PA will let you know which meeting room we’ll be using later in the week.

I’m attaching a list of points to discuss. Give me a call if you have any questions before the meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you on Monday.

Regards,

Mark

**Email 2**

To: armitage@fisher grp.co.uk
From: caroline@rainbow-search.co.uk
Subject: Meeting

Dear Mr Armitage

It was a pleasure to speak to you today. I’d like to take this opportunity to thank you for agreeing to meet with me next week.

I would also like to confirm the date and time of our meeting: 7:30 p.m. on Monday, 8 September in Rainbow Executive Search’s offices at 11 Great Russell Street, London WC1.

Should you have any questions in advance of our meeting, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

I very much look forward to meeting you next Monday.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Jones

T: +44 (0)304 4454 3683
F: +44 (0)304 4454 3888
email: caroline@rainbow-search.co.uk
www.rainbow-search.co.uk
We can often say the same thing in either a formal or less formal way. Complete the table with sentences from the emails on the previous page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Informal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It was a pleasure to speak to you today.</td>
<td>It was nice to speak to you today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for agreeing to meet with me...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Just to confirm the date and time of our meeting:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Give me a call if you have any questions before the meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I very much look forward to meeting you...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yours sincerely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GETTING EMAILS RIGHT

Unlike most written business communication in English, email offers the chance of communicating using an informal, friendly style of written English.

You can greet someone in an informal email using phrases like: Hi Martha Hello Paula Dear Jim

Very informal emails can be closed with phrases such as: All the best Cheers

When an email needs to be formal – for instance, when it's to a business contact who you don't know well – then a formal greeting should be used: Dear Mr Simpson

Closing phrases should also be more polite:
Best regards (neutral)
Yours sincerely (very formal)

It's common to add a friendly phrase before the close:
Looking forward to seeing you soon. (informal)
I look forward to our meeting on Monday. (formal)

The first letter of an email after the greeting always has a capital letter:
Hello Robert,
Just to let you know...

6) Write an email confirming the date and time of a meeting using one of the notes below. Think about whether the email should be formal or informal.

Remember!
Send email to David:
confirm meeting (to discuss problems with cleaning contract)
- Wednesday, 21st June
- 10.20 a.m.
- in my office

To do
Email Mrs Franks: confirm meeting
talk about our new service package
- Friday, 12 September
- 3.00 p.m.
- @ their head office in Bristol
7 Caroline Jones is phoning Charles Armitage. Listen to their conversation. Why is she calling him? What do they decide? Then listen again and complete the sentences from the dialogue.

I'm ________ sorry.
I'm ________ I have to ask you if we can ________ our meeting next week. Something has ________ up. Unfortunately I can't get ________ of it.

Do you have another time in ________?

Could we ________ the meeting until Wednesday at the same time? Would that ________ you?

Sorry to ________ you. It couldn't be ________, I'm afraid.

8 Match sentences from exercise 7 with the sentences below that have a similar meaning.

a Would it be possible to put the meeting back and meet on Wednesday at 7.30?

Could we postpone the meeting until Wednesday at the same time?

b It's unavoidable, unfortunately.

c Sorry to have to trouble you.

d I really must apologize.

e Would you like to suggest another time?

f I have to attend to something else.

USING FIRST NAMES

The use of first names in English-speaking business environments is common. Though it is not the practice everywhere, even senior managers are addressed by junior staff using their first names in some offices.

On first meeting someone it's best to address them by their surname:

It's a pleasure to meet you, Ms Carmichael.
Pleased to meet you, Mr Freeman.

After that, the changeover to first names is usually made quite quickly, either later during the first meeting or at the second meeting. If your relationship with your business partner is friendly and relaxed, you can switch to their first name without asking their permission.

You may, however, wish to ask someone's permission before using their first name with phrases like:

Do you mind if I call you Caroline?

This question can be answered with phrases such as:

No, not at all. Please do.

You can invite someone to use your first name with phrases like:

Please, call me Carl.

By the way, it's Paulo.
9 Listen to Mark Peters' dictaphone message and use it to complete the email he writes later to his assistant.

To:      anna.evans@dbd.com
From:    mark.peters@dbd.com
Subject: Arrangements for meeting with sales team

Hi Anna,

I've just arranged a meeting with Ian Sweeney in sales for Monday at 2 p.m. Can you take care of the preparation, please?

Could you _______ a meeting room and _______ Ian and me the room number? Also, can you _______ the agenda to Ian and the consultants? And we'll need AV - can you _______ a data projector and an overhead projector for us? Don't forget to _______ some coffee and biscuits.

Finally, can you _______ the meeting, please? The discussion is important so I'll need you to _______ the minutes.

Thanks for your help.

Best,

Mark

10 Work with a partner and choose one of the 'to do' lists below. Your partner is your executive assistant. Talk about the planned meeting and what you would like your assistant to do. Then switch roles and do the same with the other list.

Meeting to discuss autumn production schedules - Wednesday, 4th August, 3:45 p.m.

Ask Sara to arrange:

Meeting room
Data projector
Tea and biscuits
Minutes

Meeting to plan this year's stand at ARKA trade fair - my office - Monday, 9th Feb 10 a.m.

Get David to arrange:

Overhead projector
Minutes
Coffee and sandwiches
Copies of designer's drawings to Mike Conrad and Sally Major
Find six verbs often used with a meeting to make useful phrases. Look from left to right as well as up and down. Write the verbs into the spaces below. The first example is done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. to hold
2. to
3. to
4. to
5. to
6. to

Match the verbs (a–6) with the phrases (a–f).

a [ ] to hold a meeting at a later time or date than originally planned
b [ ] to have a meeting
c [ ] to organize a meeting
d [ ] to lead a meeting
e [ ] to decide not to hold a meeting and to tell people this
f [ ] to go to a meeting

Now use the verbs (a–6) to complete the sentences.

1. If Peter can't get here by five, couldn't we just ______ our meeting and have it early next week instead?
2. Could you ______ a team meeting for next Wednesday at 4 p.m.? Ask Neil Cross if he can attend and book one of the large meeting rooms.
3. We've decided to ______ the meeting. Instead, could you just email me your comments?
4. I have to ______ a lot of meetings and spend a lot of time talking about work. Unfortunately, I often don't have enough time to actually get on with my work.
5. It's important that the team knows about these changes. Let's ______ a meeting and give everyone the details.
6. I'm going to ______ our meeting this morning so I'll be making sure that we stick to the agenda and that we finish on time.
12 Use the clues to complete the crossword.

Across
4 She's ill so we have to ... the meeting.
6 Could I ... that we meet and go over the details?
7 Would next Tuesday at four ... you?
10 The list of topics in a meeting.

Down
1 We need some new ideas. Let's have a ... meeting.
2 I'll ... the minutes in today's meeting.
3 To change a meeting to a later date.
5 Please ... the agenda to the other team members.
8 Let's call a ... meeting for everyone in the department.
9 To take the leading role in a meeting.

13 Put the words in the right order to make sentences with expressions from this unit.

1 time meet could week a schedule we to next?
2 meet go details person and over perhaps could we in the?
3 meeting then forward to I you look
4 questions call if meeting give a me before any have you the.
5 appointment time I'm have that afraid another at I

QUICK MEETING
You are invited to a brainstorming session to decide on a new single-sentence mission statement for your company. Work alone, then in small groups, in order to arrive at the perfect solution. In the second part of the meeting, decide on a rough design for a poster that will illustrate your mission statement.
If you think that agendas, minutes, and chairpeople in meetings are out, think again. As companies seek to make more effective use of their staff’s time, ‘old-fashioned’ and formal features are making a big comeback in the meeting room, reports Janine Adler.

In the past, companies tried to encourage the creativity of their staff through flexible, informal meeting formats. You know the kind of thing: no agendas, no chairpeople, and people entered and left meetings as it suited them. This trend was probably most popular back in the late 1990s. But when the global slowdown in economic performance came, most companies had to start thinking more about their costs.

‘It was really quite common for meetings to go on for hours and then for everyone to get up and leave without really knowing what had been decided,’ says Aaron Blumfeld, a lecturer in business administration.

‘A company’s staff is one of its major costs, and staff meetings are very expensive for a company. There is now a trend among large companies to reintroduce structure into meetings to make better use of time,’ adds Blumfeld.

Some CEOs see the task of making meetings more efficient as so important that they are taking personal responsibility for making sure that the job gets done.

Lynn Rossmann is CEO of Luxes AG, a subsidiary of Hamilton-Luxes Corp. She spent time looking at ways of making meetings more focused. In the end, she decided that the good old-fashioned meeting format with a chairperson and an agenda was the right one for her company.

‘If you want to hold a meeting at Luxes, you have to have a chairperson and an agenda. It’s not that I like bureaucracy – I’m just getting people to use their time more effectively,’ states Rossmann.

**OVER TO YOU**

- Are the meetings you attend formal or informal?
- What other ways are there to make a meeting more effective?
- The article mentions some possible advantages and disadvantages of formal and informal meetings. What other advantages can you think of? What disadvantages?
Read the list of statements about the chairperson’s role and decide whether you agree or disagree. Then discuss your answers with your partner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A chairperson should:</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. finish the meeting on time, even if a decision hasn’t been reached.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. encourage everyone to contribute to the discussion, even if some participants don’t want to.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. let the most confident people dominate the meeting because they probably have the best ideas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. follow the agenda and not allow the discussion to go in different directions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. stop participants from interrupting each other.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. allow an antagonistic atmosphere to develop because it makes participants think more clearly and creatively.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Colleagues from across Europe are attending a kick-off meeting. Listen to the three dialogues. What is the relationship between the people below?

a. They have never met before.
b. They have met before but probably do not know each other very well.
c. They probably know each other quite well.

1. [ ] Steve and George  4. [ ] Paula and Steve
2. [ ] George and Paula  5. [ ] Andre and Steve
3. [ ] George and Juliet
2. Complete the sentences from the dialogues. Listen again to check your answers. Work with a partner to take turns reading out the completed sentences.

1. Nice to ___________ you again. ___________ are you?
2. ___________, thanks. And you?
3. I'm ___________ _________, thank you.
4. ___________ you _________ my colleague, Juliet Strauss?
5. Hello, I'm George Frank, ___________ to meet you.
6. Pleased to ___________ you ___________.
7. ___________ me _________ my colleague, Andre Jacob.
8. How ___________ do?

3. Now listen to the three dialogues again. Tick ✓ which topics are discussed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>work</th>
<th>sport</th>
<th>religion</th>
<th>cinema</th>
<th>politics</th>
<th>family</th>
<th>holidays</th>
<th>hobbies</th>
<th>weather</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue 1</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue 2</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue 3</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work with your partner to discuss which subjects on the list are not appropriate topics at business meetings. Can you add any other topics that are good to discuss?

**Small Talk**

Small talk is used to break the ice and create a relaxed atmosphere before the real business begins. However, making small talk can be difficult, particularly when you meet people for the first time.

One problem is that small talk can be about many different topics and you probably won’t be sure of all the vocabulary. One solution is to prepare topics that you would like to talk about. If you're going to have a meeting with people from another country, research topics relating to that country. For instance, being prepared to chat with French people about the Côte d'Azur or Danes about Copenhagen will make you feel more relaxed and mean that you can start conversations confidently.

Of course, making small talk is not just about talking – it's also about listening, and the more actively the better. There are a number of commonly used phrases which show other people that you're interested in what they're saying:

- I see.
- Oh, really?
- Interesting.
- That's absolutely fascinating!
4 Match the two parts to make small talk questions.

1 Which hotel a did you fly into?
2 How long b are you staying at?
3 Which airport c my colleague, Yvonne Jamieson?
4 Did you d the first time you've come here for a meeting?
5 Is this e a colleague of Jim Robertson's?
6 Are you f come here by plane?
7 Do you know g have you worked for your company?

How match these answers to the questions.

A Not really. He works in marketing and I'm in customer service.
B No, we came by car.
C Almost fourteen years.
D London Stansted.
E No, I don't think we've met.
F No, it isn't. I was here in June for the kick-off meeting.
G The Carlton International, off Shaftesbury Avenue.

5 Work with a partner to practise making introductions and small talk.

Partner A
- Say hello and introduce yourself.
- Ask about B's journey to the meeting.
- Respond. Ask if this is B's first meeting at the head office.
- Respond.

Partner B
- Say hello and introduce yourself.
- Respond. Ask about A's hotel.
- Respond. Ask how long A has worked for the company.
- Respond.
6 Listen to a chairperson talking at the beginning of a meeting and say whether the sentences below are true [✓] or false [✗]. Correct the false sentences.

1. Nigel is the last person to arrive at the meeting.
   -
2. Tim McCarthy is from the marketing department.
   -
3. Sally Jones will come to the meeting late.
   -
4. The aim of the meeting is to discuss strategies for increasing sales.
   -
5. John Lawson will present an overview of what the competitors are doing.
   -
6. Alison King will present the new sales strategy.
   -

Now listen again and complete the sentences.

a. It's ___________ to see ___________.
   -

b. Before we ___________, can I ___________ Tim McCarthy to you all.
   -

c. Sally Jones has ___________ her ___________.
   -

d. Pierre Kaufmann can't ___________ ___________ either.
   -

e. As I said in the ___________, I emailed last week, we'll be ___________ our strategies for increasing sales.
   -

f. Let's get down to ___________.
   -

7 Put sentences (a–f) from exercise 6 under the correct heading in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welcoming participants</th>
<th>Introducing someone</th>
<th>Reporting apologies</th>
<th>Stating the aims</th>
<th>Starting the meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now add these sentences to the table.

1. We're meeting today to talk about the sales conference next month.
2. I have apologies from Cathy Roberts and Stuart Johnson.
3. I'm glad you could all make it today.
4. This is Edward Lincoln, one of our management consultants.
5. It's great to see everybody.
6. Does everybody know Mario Maleta?
7. Our objective today is to look at the new advertising campaign.
8. Can we get started?
9. Unfortunately, June Wright wasn't able to make it today.
10. So, let's begin.
8 Match the two parts to make sentences for introducing yourself or someone else. Listen to the dialogue to check your answers.

1. Does everyone
   a. for two years.
2. Peter, why don’t you introduce
   b. about yourself.
3. Tell us a bit
   c. as our head of HR.
4. I’ve been with Brent Jones
   d. know Peter Thomson?
5. I was the business development manager for the West
   e. since 2002.
6. Frank joined us two months ago
   f. yourself to everyone.

9 Match the verbs on the left with phrasal verbs on the right that have the same meaning.

1. discuss  a. go back over
2. review  b. think about
3. finalize  c. look at
4. examine  d. talk about
5. consider  e. finish off

Now complete the sentences using the correct form of the phrasal verbs (a–e) above.

1. Right. This morning we’ll be __________ at ways of cutting our costs and also talking __________ next year’s budget.

2. The annual conference is next week, so we’ll be __________ off our final preparations this morning.

3. We need some new ideas about how to increase our sales, so we’ll be __________ about a new marketing strategy this afternoon.

4. OK. There have been three accidents in the factory in the last month. This morning we’ll be __________ back __________ our health and safety guidelines and thinking __________ what we can do to improve our safety record.

5. We’ll also be looking __________ the numbers from accounting and talking __________ ways that we can improve upon them.
10 Use one of the sets of notes to prepare and give the introduction to a meeting. Remember to use phrases to welcome participants and to start the meeting.

A

Notes for meeting

- aim of meeting: review our last advertising campaign
- remember to introduce Margaret Hart
- apologies: Jim Hendry (ill)

B

Important reminders

- objectives of meeting: finalize plans for next year's sales conference
- introduce Harry Finch from our event management agency
- apologies: Jill Cooper (holiday) and Bob Culbert (training course)

11 Match the descriptions with the items on the formal meeting agenda.

a. This is when issues which are not on the agenda can be discussed. It stands for any other business.
b. These are the main points for discussion at the meeting.
c. This is when the notes of the last meeting are checked for accuracy.
d. This is the point in the meeting when the chairperson reports who is not able to attend.
e. This is when any issues relating to the last meeting are discussed.

Agenda

Board meeting –
Wednesday, 13th November

1 Apologies
2 Minutes of the last meeting
3 Matters arising from the minutes

4 Review of IPO action plan
5 Redesign of corporate image
6 Post-IPO investment proposals

7 AOB

Now listen and match the extracts from the meeting (A–E) with the items on the formal agenda.

A   B   C   D   E
Hi everyone,

As you all know, we're having the regional sales meeting next week instead of the week after.

Here are the points we'll be talking about. As usual, I've indicated who will be leading the discussion. If you have any questions, can you let me know what they are before the meeting, please?

Regional sales meeting agenda
February 13th, 9.30
Room 338

* s______° targets for next 9 months (France)
* team m_____³ responsible for k______³ accounts (Michael)
* f______⁶ from marketing (Ralf)
* competitor c______⁸ (Ralf)

Best,
Polly

---

**FORMAL AND INFORMAL AGENDAS**

These days, most agendas for meetings in English-speaking business contexts are informal. The majority are sent as emails and consist of the time, date, and place of the meeting, and an overview of the topics that will be discussed.

The style of writing is brief and note-like, for example:

* Update on construction status
* Discussion of proposed budget

This brief, note-like English is also used in formal agendas. The real difference between formal and informal agendas is that, in the former, each part of the agenda is clearly numbered and other elements are included.

Formal agendas are usually reserved for the most important meetings within a company – for instance, a board meeting or meetings which businesses are required by company law to hold, such as the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
13 The formal agenda in exercise 11 is for a board meeting. Which of the following types of meeting are, in your experience, more likely to have formal or informal agendas?

- brainstorming
- kick-off
- AGM
- shareholder
- team
- progress

14 Work in groups of four to practise the beginning of a meeting. First look at the Useful Phrases on this page. Then look at the instructions in the Partner Files.

| USEFUL PHRASES |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Welcoming participants** | **Asking participants to introduce themselves** | **Introducing yourself** |
| It's nice to see everyone. | Why don't you introduce yourself to everyone. | I'm the business development manager. |
| Thanks for being here today. | Tell us a bit about yourself. | I've been with Ofitech SA since 2002. |
| **Stating objectives** | **Could you tell us all who you are and say something about yourself?** | I've worked for the company for four years. |
| We'll be discussing ... | | I'm based in the Valencia office. |
| Joaquin will be examining ... | | I work at our Bilbao branch. |

15 Put the words in the right order to make sentences with expressions from this unit.

1 my let introduce me colleague
2 you've first this meeting come for is here the a time?
3 Smith know everyone Margaret does Ms?
4 pleasant had I journey you hope a
5 about tell bit yourself a us
6 down business to get let's
7 nice it's meet to you person in
8 be can't Sally us today with

**QUICK MEETING**

Your company has been left $50,000 in the will of a former employee. The will states that the money should be spent 'on improving the lives of present employees'. Call a meeting to discuss how to spend it. Explain the point of the meeting and then try and come to a conclusion.
Read this advice for chairpeople about running meetings effectively. Which piece of advice do you think is the most important?

Five golden rules for chairpeople

- Time is god in meetings. Don’t let a discussion run on unnecessarily. If an issue can’t be resolved in this meeting, cut the discussion off and continue it in a later meeting. But if you and your colleagues have to reach a decision today, be honest and tell them that they’ll have to sit there until the job is done.

- Don’t call meetings outside office hours. You want participants to be enthusiastic about being at your meeting, so never schedule meetings for evenings or weekends.

- Meetings are for business, not socializing. A certain amount of small talk at the beginning and end of a meeting definitely helps to create a friendly atmosphere and build team spirit. But time is money. Make sure that participants get down to business after a few minutes of pleasantries. Also make sure that business is concluded before someone changes the subject to football again.

- Give people enough time to prepare for a meeting. It’s surprising how many chairpeople call meetings at short notice and then complain that the participants haven’t prepared properly. With advance notice, participants will come to your meeting having thought about your agenda, read through the background papers, prepared presentations, and come up with solutions to problems.

- Meetings should be democratic in approach and spirit. The only point in bringing people together for a meeting is to let them discuss an issue. If you want to announce decisions that have been made, don’t do it in a meeting but find another way of communicating it. Your meetings should have a creative and open atmosphere so that your people can make interesting contributions to the discussion.

Over to you

- Do you agree with the advice given here?
- In which order of importance would you put the five golden rules?
- What other pieces of advice can you give to chairpeople?
3 Can I make a point here?

Complete the questionnaire by ticking ☑ either a or b.

1 You want to make a point in a meeting. Do you:
   a [ ] wait until someone else invites you to speak?
   b [ ] make your point immediately?

2 Someone is speaking in a meeting and you want to say something. Do you:
   a [ ] wait until they have finished speaking?
   b [ ] interrupt them with your own point?

3 Someone wants to make a point while you are speaking. Would you:
   a [ ] prefer that they wait until you have finished speaking?
   b [ ] prefer that they interrupt you to make their point?

4 Someone is talking nonsense. Do you:
   a [ ] stop them?
   b [ ] let them go on?

5 There's a long silence in a meeting. Do you:
   a [ ] say something (anything!) to end the silence?
   b [ ] relax and wait for someone else to speak up?

6 Someone is not being clear. Do you:
   a [ ] interrupt and ask them to explain?
   b [ ] let them finish and hope that you will understand them by the end?

7 Nobody wants to listen to you. Do you:
   a [ ] stay calm and continue talking?
   b [ ] get angry and stop talking?

Turn to page 66 to find out your score.

1 Listen to a meeting of the management team at a conference-organizing company, and tick ☑ the correct boxes in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>very good</th>
<th>good</th>
<th>acceptable</th>
<th>poor</th>
<th>very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Overall sales</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[✓]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Telecom sales</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Pharmaceutical sales</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Finance sales</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 IT sales</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 Match the two parts of the sentences. Listen again to check your answers.

1. I think this was due
   a. result of some bad planning on our part.

2. The market is still a bit depressed
   b. of debt and lower share prices.
   because

3. Sales were up here for the reason
   c. being that we made some mistakes in our
   4. I think this was as a
   d. that the telecoms team performed extremely
   5. The IT sector performed poorly, the
   e. to excellent work by our production team.

Now use the words in bold to complete these sentences.

1. As a __________ of some aggressive
   cost-cutting, our pre-tax profits are better
   than expected.

2. The board postponed the IPO __________
   of the current lack of stock market
   confidence.

3. Mr Allman has left his job, the reason
   __________ that we were unhappy with
   his performance.

4. We're looking for a new PR agency for the
   __________ that our current agency has
   run out of interesting ideas.

5. The project failed __________ to a lack of interest among EKIP's senior management.

3 Put the words in the right order to make the sentences which George Finch uses to structure
   what he is saying.

1. the quick here's situation overview of a

2. at first let's telecoms look

3. now pharmaceuticals to let's turn

4. on to I'll finance move the new sector

5. it about now, what?
REPORTING PROGRESS

We use the past simple to talk about developments in finished time frames:

- Our customer base increased in size... – last year. – two years ago. – in June. – between 2004 and 2008.

We use the present perfect to talk about developments in unfinished time frames:

- Our sales have increased... – during the current quarter. – for the last two years. – since last year. – recently.

4 Put the verbs in brackets into the past simple or the present perfect to complete the sentences.

1. Dualsoft’s market share _______________ (decrease) in size in the last quarter of 2004.

2. The number of profit warnings issued by major companies _______________ (go up) in the current quarter.

3. The time we spend on customer acquisition _______________ (go down) this year.

4. The size of Euclidean’s workforce _______________ (increase) two years ago.

5. Pharmaprop’s capital investment spending _______________ (level off) since last year.


8. The number of franchisers in Europe _______________ (rise) steadily between 2004 and 2008.

9. Since 1994, our staff size _______________ (remain stable).

10. In 2004 and 2005, the cost of parts _______________ (fall) significantly.

Now write the verbs from the sentences above under the correct graph.

A

B

C
5 Listen to George Finch’s presentation again and complete the sentences.

1. Overall, our sales performed ______________ in the last quarter.
2. Sales were up here, for the reason that the telecoms team performed ______________.
3. Pharmaceuticals was at the other end of the scale. Sales performed ______________ here.
4. The guys on the finance team performed ________________, as ever.
5. The IT sector performed _________________.

Now write the phrases with performed on the scale. The first one has been done for you.

- performed
- performed
- performed
- performed
- performed

6 Match the two parts to make sentences and questions.

1. Are you saying that we ______________ a point here?
2. Can we come back ______________ about that point?
3. Could I just ______________ promise we’ll come right back to you.
4. Could I make ______________ interrupt you there?
5. Do you think that ______________ should cancel our stand at the trade fair?
6. Hold on a moment, ______________ to make a point here?
7. If I understand correctly, ______________ to your point in a minute?
8. Just a moment, please. I ______________ we should increase our marketing budget?
9. What do you think ______________ please. We’ll come back to you soon.
10. Would you like ______________ you’re saying that we should end the contract.

Which sentences (1–10) can be used...

a. to interrupt someone to make a point? ______________
b. to ask for other people’s opinions? ______________
c. to stop someone from interrupting? ______________
d. to clarify someone’s point? ______________
Listen to five managers at a European construction company meeting to discuss problems with a project. There are several interruptions. How are they different?

Listen again and complete the sentences from the dialogue.

1. _______ on a ________, please, Harry.
2. We'll _______ right ________ to you.
3. ________ I possibly ________ a point here?
4. Can I ________ ________ here, Norman?
5. Sorry to ________ you, but can I make a ________ here?
6. ________, go ________.

**INTERRUPTING POLITELY**

In English-language business environments, interrupting is generally seen as acceptable. However, it's important to make interruptions politely. Making your point loudly over what someone else is saying can be regarded as rude.

You can begin an interruption by saying:

- Sorry to interrupt you or (more formally)
- I apologize for interrupting but ...

This can be followed by a quick question to the speaker to give them the chance to accept or reject the interruption. Use questions such as:

- Could I come in here?
- Could I make a point here?
- Could I just comment on that?

There are also ways to interrupt without words. For example, clearing your throat or coughing helps you to get someone's attention before you interrupt them to make a point or ask a question.
Listen to extracts from two meetings and say whether the following statements are true [✓] or false [✗].

1. Meeting 1 is about outsourcing the logistics and IT departments.
2. Ralph doesn't want to use Buxton Services because he thinks they can handle things in-house better.
3. Jill interrupts because she doesn't hear what Stephen says.
4. Meeting 2 is about a takeover offer.
5. Robert is worried about the shareholders.
6. Sue wants Gordon to explain something.

Now listen again and complete the sentences from the dialogues. Which sentences are used to deal with interruptions and which are used to ask for clarification?

Stephen: Hold on, hold on. Can I make a point here?
Ralph: Sorry, but I haven't understood what I was saying.
Jill: Sorry to interrupt but I'm afraid I don't really follow your point.
Stephen: Could I finish?
Robert: That should...
Gordon: Robert. We've already agreed that we...
Robert: If I could just finish, please.
Sue: Can I say something here? I'm afraid that I don't understand...
Gordon: Just a minute. You'll get a chance to speak soon.
Beth: No, wait, let's hear what Sue...

ASASKING FOR CLARIFICATION

If you don't understand what someone is saying, you can, of course, tell them with a sentence such as:
I'm afraid I don't understand your point here.

You can use the following phrases in bold to begin sentences asking someone to clarify their opinion:

Are you saying that we should have invested in new project management software?
Do you mean that it was a mistake to lower our prices?
Is your point that we need to start production earlier than planned?

It's also possible to seek clarification by using positive statements instead of questions. For example:
If I understand you correctly, you need more time to finish the report.

You can clarify what you were saying with phrases such as:
What I meant to say is...
I was trying to say that...
9 Unscramble the words to make questions that ask for clarification.

a. that/saying/more/are/we/staff/should/you/hire/?
   **Are you saying that we should hire more staff?**

b. another meeting/think that/we should/do you/have/?


c. the training budget/is/that/we/your point/should increase/?


d. upgrade/saying that/are you/our IT system/we should/?


e. his customers/point that/is your/spend more/time with/he should/?


f. you feel/conference next year/we should increase/do/the length/of the/?


Now match the questions above with these statements.

1. **f** The annual conference was not successful because it was too short.

2. **☐** Our computer system is too old and slow.

3. **☐** He spends too much time in the office.

4. **☐** The finance team is too small.

5. **☐** We don’t invest enough money in staff training.

6. **☐** We need more time to talk about this.

*He spends too much time in the office.*
10 Work in groups of four to practise giving opinions, making interruptions, and asking for clarification. Look at the Useful Phrases before going to the Partner Files.

**USEFUL PHRASES**

**Giving your opinion**
- I think...
- We should...
- I'm convinced that we should...
- I tend to think that it's...
- It seems to me that...

**Asking for clarification**
- I'm not sure I understand what you're saying.
- Do you mean that...?
- Are you saying that...?
- If I understand you correctly, you think that...

**Interrupting**
- Sorry, but...
- Sorry to interrupt, but I feel that...
- Could I come in here?
- I'd like to make a point here if I could.
- Can I just say something about that?

**Dealing with interruptions**
- Hold on, please.
- We'll come back to you in a moment.
- Just a second, please. I promise we'll come right back to you.

11 Put the words in the right order to make sentences with expressions from this unit.

1. there could just you I interrupt ?
2. that you what point about think do ?
3. moment come promise back you I in right to a we'll
4. something add you like would to here ?
5. I saying sure you're understand I'm what not
6. upgrade like I correctly like you you understand if would to
7. you saying: the we that increase are should budget ?
8. I'm don't I really afraid follow argument your

**QUICK MEETING**

Your company has decided to appoint an English language teacher. Call a meeting and discuss the requirements for this post. When you have decided on the job description, design an advert to attract good candidates.
Digital meetings: The growth in video conferencing

An increasing number of companies are turning to video conferencing to bring people together for meetings. Experts predict that in the next 10 years, video conferences will replace as much as 20% of business travel. So why has there been such growth in digital meetings?

‘The key driver behind our use of video conferencing is cost,’ says Martin Pile, Director of Corporate Communications with a multinational engineering company. ‘The technology means that we can save on airfares and hotel bills. Our people can meet more frequently at less cost.

‘Video conferences also enable us to bring together people who would never meet if the technology was not there.’

Fiona Clark, a communications consultant who advises companies about digital conferencing solutions, is also enthusiastic. But she sounds a note of caution.

‘Companies have to realize that the technology is not free. Video conferencing systems are getting cheaper and more reliable, but companies which want to use them still have to make some kind of investment. This can be a particular problem for small and medium-sized companies,’ says Fiona.

‘There’s also the problem of people feeling comfortable with video conferencing,’ she adds.

‘Meeting via a video link-up definitely beats discussing issues via email. But users often find the video conference environment difficult at first.’

Fiona often recommends companies that adopt video conferencing to invest in training for the staff who will meet each other digitally.

‘People have to realize that a meeting via video conference is not the same as a face-to-face meeting. People can feel nervous and act in a different way than usual,’ Fiona comments.

‘We provide training where we videotape users and get them to notice their nervous tics on screen. If people play with their hair or put their hands in front of their mouths because they’re nervous, we can draw their attention to this and help them to appear more relaxed,’ she adds.

‘We also advise people to slow down their body language. Hand and body gestures can sometimes seem more aggressive on screen.’

‘And don’t forget that everyone should wear name tags during video conferences,’ says Fiona.

Having a video conference may not be as easy as going into a real meeting, especially at first. But more of our meetings are going to be held via video link-up in the future. It looks like we’re all going to need some of that training.

OVER TO YOU

• According to the article, what are the advantages and disadvantages of video conferencing?
• Can you think of other problems users can have with video conferencing? How could these problems be overcome?
• Have you ever participated in a video conference? If so, what did you like or dislike? If not, would you like to?
I'm not sure I agree

Disagreement is an important part of solving problems. If it leads to conflict, that's great. Conflict is creative and produces solutions.

It's OK to disagree sometimes, but too much disagreement just causes conflict, and conflict keeps you from getting real work done.

Which opinion(s) do you agree with? Discuss your answers with a partner.

1. Three managers at the pan-European consultancy Proflexis are brainstorming questions to ask job candidates in a group interview. Listen and tick the six topics they want to ask questions about.

   - budgets
   - deadlines vs quality
   - flexibility
   - junior and senior members
   - project planning
   - staff
   - team building
   - time management

2. How will the managers ask for the participants' opinions during the interview? Listen again and mark the phrase or word you hear.

   1. Would you like to comment on / respond to that?
   2. Do you think so / agree?
   3. Tell us what you think about / of this.
   4. Does anyone have any opinions on / want to say anything about that?
   5. What do you feel / think about that?
   6. Does anyone want to give us their views / ideas on this?
3 Now look at how the managers express opinions. Listen to the meeting at Proflexis again and complete the sentence beginnings below.

1. ____________, we need to think of some difficult ...
2. ____________, I think we should ask ...
3. And ____________, I think that we haven't asked ...
4. ____________, it's more important to meet a project deadline ...
5. ____________, that's probably all we'll have ...

Listen again and match the completed beginnings (1-5) with the endings (A-E) to make sentences from the dialogue.

A 5. ____________... time to talk about.
B ____________... than to guarantee the quality of the project outcome.
C ____________... questions about project management.
D ____________... about project planning.
E ____________... enough questions about team building in the past.

4 Unscramble the words to make sentences which ask for or express opinions. Can you say which is which?

1. about/our website/you think/what do/redesigning
   What do you think about redesigning our website?

2. her job well/in my mind/that she does/well,/there's really no doubt

3. to finish/we should try/the report/more quickly

4. that I should chair/the annual general meeting/do you think

5. should invest/that we/in a new IT system/it's absolutely clear

6. instead/for you/is it possible/to fly to Manchester

7. a new corporate image/but I think/I could be wrong/that we need

8. feel that/by ship instead/send the goods/we should/do you

   Asking for an opinion: 1 ____________          Expressing an opinion: ____________
5 Sometimes our opinions are stronger – or weaker – than normal. Read the sentences below and decide whether the opinions given are strong, neutral, or tentative. Compare your answers with a partner’s.

1. I could be wrong, but don’t we need to invest more time in this project?  
   strong  neutral  tentative

2. We could send him the minutes of this meeting.  
   strong  neutral  tentative

3. There’s no doubt in my mind that Jess should spend more time on planning.  
   strong  neutral  tentative

4. We might need a bigger team for this project.  
   strong  neutral  tentative

5. We should take a break at half past eleven.  
   strong  neutral  tentative

6. Mike doesn’t spend enough time with his customers.  
   strong  neutral  tentative

7. I do think that John should come to the next meeting.  
   strong  neutral  tentative

8. Is it possible for her to spend less time in meetings?  
   strong  neutral  tentative

9. There can be no doubt that we have a problem here.  
   strong  neutral  tentative

6 Some managers are discussing whether to outsource their company’s facility management. Listen and tick ✓ the appropriate box. What do they think about Craig’s proposal?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agrees strongly</th>
<th>Agrees tentatively</th>
<th>Isn’t sure</th>
<th>Disagrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Helen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 William</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Claire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Oliver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now match the two parts to make sentences from the dialogue. Listen again to check your answers.

1. Absolutely. I think it’s  
   a. up to a point.
2. I can’t go along  
   b. whether or not I agree with Craig’s proposal.
3. I’m afraid I  
   c. can’t agree.
4. I support the idea  
   d. with this, Oliver.
5. I’m not sure  
   e. a fantastic idea.
DISAGREEMENT AND CRITICISM

When expressing disagreement or criticism in English it's normally best to use polite and diplomatic language. This is especially important when talking to native British English speakers, who – instead of saying I disagree! – will often use (and expect to hear) phrases such as:

I'm afraid I can't agree.

Generally, you can expect business contacts from the US to be more direct in their use of language than their British counterparts. Some British people can be a little sensitive about both offering and accepting criticism. This is probably why one of the most frequently used phrases for disagreeing in British English is:

Yes, but ... This really means something like: "(I'm saying) Yes (because I don't want to be impolite) but ... I don't really agree with you at all)."

7 Work with a partner. Read out the opinions and use the phrases you have learned to say whether you agree (strongly or tentatively), disagree, or are not sure.

- The biggest problem for businesses is that there are too many rules and regulations.
- We spend far too much time in meetings and not enough time doing real work.
- It's more important to have a few customers who spend a lot of money than a lot of customers who spend very little money.
- Unemployed people should have to do work for the money they receive.

8 Work with two partners. You are meeting two colleagues from the senior management team of your company to discuss three important policy issues. As you talk about the issues, practise asking for and giving opinions using the phrases you have learned.

**Partner A**

Your topic is whether smoking should be allowed in the company.

Tell your partners what you think about the subject and ask for their opinions.

**Partner B**

Your topic is whether accepting and giving gifts to business partners should be allowed.

Tell your partners what you think about the subject and ask for their opinions.

**Partner C**

Your topic is whether you should allow employees to work from home.

Tell your partners what you think about the subject and ask for their opinions.
Larry Hodgins is telling his team about a product he has recently seen at a conference: Voice over IP. Listen to this extract from the meeting and say whether the sentences are true or false.

1. Larry doesn’t think that they should use their computers to make all their phone calls.
2. He wasn’t very interested in Voice over IP before he went to the presentation.
3. The quality of service for Voice over IP is excellent.
4. The technical demonstrations at the conference were not very impressive.
5. Metroloop said the call didn’t go through because of a firewall.

Listen again and complete the sentences with words from the box. How diplomatic is the criticism in the dialogue?

- below standard
- disappointing
- inadequate
- mediocre
- terrible
- unsatisfactory

1. The current Voice over IP solutions are, frankly, rather ____________________.
2. The technical demonstrations that they gave were ____________________.
3. It all sounds a bit ____________________.
4. One of the demonstrations was actually really ____________________.
5. It was all a little ____________________, I must say.
6. The technology is still pretty ____________________.

**Diplomatic Language to Express Criticism**

Sometimes you may want to express criticism in a strong and direct way:

*Your performance has been terrible/awful.*

But, most of the time, you probably want to express criticism in a less direct and more diplomatic way. For example, you should avoid using negative words such as terrible and awful:

*His performance was awful.*  *His performance was not very good.*

*Her report was terrible.*  *Her report was not really up to standard.*

You can also use words such as somewhat and a bit to soften criticism:

*Your work on the project was somewhat unsatisfactory.*
*Her management of the team is a bit disappointing.*

Expressions such as unsatisfactory, below standard, and inadequate can be softened in this way:

*The quality of service is not really satisfactory.*
*The voice quality is not really up to standard.*
*Your work is not really adequate.*
10 Rewrite these sentences to make the criticism less strong and direct.

1. The quality of your company's customer service is unsatisfactory.
   
   *Sorry, but the quality of your company's customer service is not really satisfactory.*

2. Your management style is terrible.

3. The service we have received from Metroloop is mediocre.

4. The results of your market research are disappointing.

5. Your approach to problem solving is inadequate.

6. Geoff's presentation was below standard.

---

**MAKING POSITIVE SUGGESTIONS**

One way to stop arguments is to make positive suggestions that might solve the problem.

There are a number of phrases we can use to do this:

- **I suggest that we/they ask for another meeting with the supplier.**
- **Let's ask her to start work a week earlier than planned.**

English-speakers often put suggestions in the form of questions:

- **Why don't we contact a few alternative suppliers?**
- **Couldn't we come to the office at the weekend?**
- **What about if you wrote her a letter explaining our position?**

This ensures that the suggestion does not sound like a command or an order and may make it easier for other people to agree to it. To agree, say: *That's a good idea.*

---

11 Work with a partner. Look at the problems and choose which solution you prefer. Suggest the solution using phrases from above.

1. **Problem:** Our current telecoms provider is too expensive.
   **Possible solutions:**
   a. save money in other areas
   b. try to renegotiate the contract
   c. get out of the contract and find another provider.

2. **Problem:** Our call centre operators are rude to customers.
   **Possible solutions:**
   a. provide more training in customer care
   b. replace the existing team with staff who have a more positive attitude
   c. provide customer care via the Internet.
12 Work with three partners to practise exchanging opinions. Look at the Useful Phrases before going to the Partner Files.

**USEFUL PHRASES**

**Asking for opinions**
- Do you agree?
- What do you think about that?
- Would you like to give us your views on this?
- Would you like to comment on that?
- Do you think we should ...?

**Agreeing**
- I think you're right.
- That's right.

**Agreeing strongly**
- Absolutely, I think that's a fantastic idea.
- I agree completely.
- Yes, that's definitely true.

**Agreeing tentatively**
- I think what you're saying is true up to a point.
- I suppose that might be true.
- I guess I see what you mean.

**Disagreeing**
- No, I think you're wrong there.
- I'm afraid I can't agree with you there.
- I don't think that's true.
- Yes, but ...
- I completely disagree.

**Making positive suggestions**
- How about if we ...?
- Couldn't we just ...?
- Why don't we ...?
- What about if you ...?

13 Put the words in the right order to make sentences with expressions from this unit.

1 that about what think you do?
2 good that's very suggestion a yes
3 be sure not honest so that I'm about to
4 to agree point I a up
5 that all afraid don't at with agree I I'm
6 we about visit person if company the how in?

**QUICK MEETING**

You are organizing a barbecue for twenty people. You want to provide hamburgers in warm rolls, baked potatoes, salad, chilled wine, and soft drinks. You want to sit down to eat at 2 p.m. You have the barbecue equipment but nothing else.

Work in pairs to prepare a project management plan. Remember: some tasks can happen simultaneously. What time do you need to start?
Whether we like it or not, conflicts sometimes happen during meetings. Which piece of advice for resolving a conflict do you agree with most?

A. The best way to stop an argument is to get the people who disagree to brainstorm solutions to the problem. This works well because it's a positive approach to the situation. Arguing is so negative and such a waste of time. Brainstorming solutions helps everyone to work as a team again.

B. An effective way to end a conflict is to get the people who disagree to say what the others' positions and opinions are. Most conflicts happen because people don't really understand what the others are thinking. If they have to think hard about this, it takes the heat out of any disagreement, no matter how strong.

C. There's no way that a solution to a disagreement can be found if people are angry and upset. The most important thing that people need to do to stop an argument going further is to cool off. They can do this by taking a short break from the meeting, splashing some water on their faces, and getting some fresh air.

D. An argument should be stopped by getting the people involved to say sorry to each other for letting the situation get out of control. If people said unpleasant things to each other during the argument, they should apologize for having said them. That's the only way that everyone can move on and stop thinking about the conflict.

OVER TO YOU

- What are your strategies for resolving a conflict?
- What was the last conflict you had to deal with? How did you resolve it?
- Do you think apologies are important in business?
Answer these questions yourself. Then discuss your answers with a partner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>You</th>
<th>Your partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How important is consensus in the meetings which you attend?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do the meetings you attend usually end in agreement or disagreement?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What sort of factors generally lead to disagreement?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Is it normally possible to discuss the point causing disagreement until agreement is reached?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>What cultural differences in the way that agreement is reached have you noticed when meeting people from other countries?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Stephanie Heller works for the UK subsidiary of a German company. Listen as she discusses upgrading the company's IT network with a potential supplier and say which statements are true [✓] or false [✗]. Correct the false sentences.**

   1. Stephanie, Isobel, and Andrew have never discussed this topic before. [✓]  
   2. Stephanie would like to order some new PCs. [✗]  
   3. Stephanie might order more than 55 PCs if the price offer is low enough. [✓]  
   4. Isobel and Andrew's company will install the new PCs. [✗]  
   5. Stephanie doesn't want to pay more for after-sales service. [✗]
2 Listen again and say in which order the speakers discuss the following points.

- Specifications
- Price
- After-sales Service
- Delivery Details
- Installation
- Quantity

3 Match the two parts to make sentences from the dialogue, then listen again to check.

1. I want to explore
   a. we'll be able to buy more.
2. I'm sure that we can work
   b. until later.
3. If the price is right,
   c. we'll be able to get them out to you within a week.
4. Let's leave the issue of price
   d. something out for you.
5. Once you've decided what you want,
   e. as soon as we can on that.
6. We'll get back to you
   f. the possibility that you could help us with this.

4 Which sentence means the same as the first: A or B?

1. Unfortunately, I won't be able to take you up on that.
   - A. I'm afraid I can't accept your offer.
   - B. I'm afraid I can't agree with you.

2. Can I get back to you on that?
   - A. Can I disagree with you about that?
   - B. Can I give you an answer to that later?

3. I think we'll go for that proposal.
   - A. We'll probably agree to that proposal.
   - B. We'll probably attack that proposal.

4. I'd like a week to think this over.
   - A. I need a week to consider this.
   - B. I need a week to understand this.

5. I need to run this past my boss.
   - A. I need to make sure my boss doesn't find out about this.
   - B. I need to get my boss's approval for this.

Which of the sentences (1-5) can you use for:

- Accepting?
- Rejecting?
- Buying more time?

   1
Work with a partner to practise the dialogue. Swap roles when you have finished and repeat the exercise. Use the expressions from exercise 4.

**Partner A**

Make your offer: 50 mobile phones for €6,000

Reject the offer: it's too expensive!

Revise your offer: offer a 12% discount.

Reject the revised offer: it's still too expensive.

Revise your offer further: offer an 18% discount.

You find this more interesting; buy some time to think about it.

Offer a full-service after-sales package as well.

Accept the offer.

**Partner B**

---

**WORKING TOGETHER TO REACH AGREEMENT**

It can be frustrating when some participants put off a decision and a meeting ends without agreement.

In an international context, it's important to understand the reasons for this. For instance, in south-east Asian cultures it's the group that's important in decision-making. An individual will seldom agree to something until a consensus has been reached among colleagues.

Other business cultures (such as those of southern Europe) tend to be quite hierarchical. Executives may postpone reaching an agreement until they have discussed the issue with their boss.

So don't push for agreement right away. You may be pushing a potential business partner away. Instead, research before a meeting how the decision-making process works within the business culture you're dealing with.
There are a number of phrases which are often used during a negotiation. Complete the mini-dialogues with phrases from the box.

room for manoeuvre • get back to you • draw up a quotation • a range of possibilities • it's hard to say • that depends on • to follow up on our conversation

A  We don't have a lot of time. Can you deliver the machine parts by next Friday at the latest?
B  ________________\(^1\) how many other orders were working on right now, I'll check and ________________\(^2\) early tomorrow.
C  What sort of after-sales service can you offer us?
D  There are ________________\(^3\). I'll email you details of our different service packages and you can choose which one you want.
E  Can you give me a rough idea of how much this will cost?
F  No, sorry. At the moment ________________\(^4\) how expensive it will be. I'll let you know as soon as I can.
G  Will you have a problem finishing the report by Thursday?
H  Yes, I will. Is there ________________\(^5\) on when I can finish it? Can I give it to you a week later than planned?
I  Thanks for taking the time to talk to me today. Now, what's the next step?
J  Well, I'll ________________\(^6\) and send it to you. Then you can see in detail what we can offer you.
K  Nice to see you again, Sue.
L  Nice to see you too. I wanted to meet you today ________________\(^7\) from last week.

**TALKING ABOUT POSSIBILITIES**

We often show that we are talking about possibilities in a negotiation by using conditional forms.

**Conditional 1** (to show that something is likely to happen)

*If* the price is right, *we'll be able to buy* more.

*If* you *prepare* some different options for me, *I'll compare* the prices and specifications, then make a choice.

**Conditional 2** (to talk about things that are not certain)

*Could* you *deliver* the system quickly *if* we *gave* you the order?

*We would be prepared to pay* more *if* we *received* a good level of service back-up.

Note that in conditional 2, the past simple form of the verb is used in the *if* part of the sentence. *If* you *prepared* some different options for me, I could *compare* the prices and specifications, then make a choice. NOT: *If you would prepare...*
7. Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in brackets.

1. If they ____________ (give) us more time, we would be able to look at our logistics problems in more detail.

2. I'll give you a 13% discount if you ____________ (place) your order today.

3. I would be prepared to place the order if you ____________ (offer) us a better after-sales service deal.

4. If we ____________ (confirm) the job offer today, he'll be able to start work at the beginning of the month.

5. If I ____________ (come) to your team meeting at 10 a.m., would I be able to leave at midday? I have another appointment to get to.

8. Work with a partner to do the following role-play to practise talking about possibilities.

**Sales Manager**
You are a sales manager and you are meeting your boss, the sales director, to request two more members of staff for your team. You have made a note of some of the benefits that can be expected if you get the new staff. Use conditional sentences to explain to the sales director what he/she can expect if your team is increased by two new salespeople.

**Sales Director**
You are a sales director listening to a request from your sales manager for two more salespeople for his/her team. Use conditional sentences to explain the increases in performance you expect if you agree to the increase in staff.

9. Listen to a meeting of the board at Gripex, an American-owned parts manufacturer for the automotive industry, where the directors are making an important strategic decision. Choose the word or phrase which corresponds to what you hear.

1. Christian wants Gripex to ____________ / ____________ production in Germany and to ____________ / ____________ production in Slovakia.

2. Nadine ____________ / supports Christian's idea.

3. Regina ____________ / supports Christian's proposal.

4. They'll meet again on ____________ / ____________ next week.

5. The board's decision will result in ____________ / ____________ people losing their jobs.
10 Listen again. Complete the sentences from the dialogue with words from the box.

abstaining • abstention • against • favour • motion • proposal • propose • put • second • vote • willing

1 I ____________ to the board that we look at shutting down our plant in Germany and moving production to our plant in Slovakia.

2 Is anyone ____________ to second Christian's ____________?

3 I'll ____________ it.

4 Let's ____________ this to a ____________.

5 All those in ____________? ____________?

6 Regina. Are you ____________?

7 Christian's ____________ is carried: 7 votes 'for', none 'against', and one ____________.

11 Look at sentences 1–8 below. Which of the functions in the chart would you use them for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asking for a vote on an issue</th>
<th>Confirming what has been decided</th>
<th>Making sure everyone agrees</th>
<th>Focusing participants on a decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Right. Let's put this to a vote.</td>
<td>We've decided that you'll contact the customer directly.</td>
<td>Does everyone agree with that?</td>
<td>We need to make a decision here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 So, we've decided to advertise the job in The Times and to hold interviews on 30th August.

2 So, does everyone think we should give the contract to Zafod Ltd?

3 All in favour? Those against?

4 Can I assume that everyone is now happy with the decision?

5 Can we have a quick show of hands?

6 Just to confirm, we're going to increase the size of the call centre team and provide more customer service training.

7 Are we ready to make a decision?

8 Let's decide what we want to do now.
12. During a meeting, the chairperson has to be aware of the time. Find sentences that can be used to control the timing of discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>against</th>
<th>for</th>
<th>time.</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>five.</th>
<th></th>
<th>place</th>
<th>pressed</th>
<th>out</th>
<th></th>
<th>running</th>
<th>by</th>
<th>finish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>We're</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>bit</td>
<td>pressed</td>
<td></td>
<td>try</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>finish</td>
<td>of</td>
<td>time.</td>
<td></td>
<td>running</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>finish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Let's</td>
<td>on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>until</td>
<td>without</td>
<td></td>
<td>over</td>
<td></td>
<td>need</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Remember,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>we</td>
<td>don't</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>meet</td>
<td>through</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>again</td>
<td>remember</td>
<td>the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>go</td>
<td>much</td>
<td>time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Work with two partners to practise negotiating an agreement. Look at the Useful Phrases before going to the Partner Files.

**USEFUL PHRASES**

**Rejecting an offer**
- Sorry, but I'm not able to go along with that.
- Unfortunately, I won't be able to take you up on that.
- I'm afraid I can't agree to that.
- I don't think that would be possible.

**Accepting an offer**
- I think we'll go for that.
- That sounds good to me.
- That would be great.

**Asking for time to consider**
- I'd like a couple of days to think this over.
- Can I get back to you on that? I need some time to think it over.

14. Put the words in the right order to make sentences with expressions from this unit.

1. can we'll we on you to get as back that soon
2. discuss we can later that again?
3. you can't with afraid agree I'm there
4. think couple to like of I'd over this a days

**QUICK MEETING**

Your company is under threat from competitors. You have to reduce overheads by 20%. Your present costs are divided as follows:

- Salaries: 40%
- R & D: 5%
- Marketing: 10%
- Travel: 5%
- Administration: 10%
- Facilities: 5%
- Rent: 10%
- Sundry: 5%
- Communications: 10%

Hold a meeting and decide how you can make the necessary economies.
Building intercultural bridges for reaching business agreements

Discussions between companies from different countries often break down because of a lack of cultural understanding. Training in intercultural awareness – as well as languages – is the key to bridging the communication gap, writes Samantha Cole.

More and more companies are increasing their language training budgets to equip staff for global business. But language alone isn’t always enough. According to Neil Calder, communications consultant, language training is only half the story. ‘Companies from different countries can usually deal with language differences by learning foreign languages. But they also need to be able to deal with cultural differences. That’s where intercultural training comes in.’

According to Calder, the differences between northern and southern European countries are well documented. Executives from Germany who want to do business in Italy or Spain need to understand the ground rules. Meetings are rarely used to solve problems and reach agreement in these countries. Instead, meetings are used to spread information about decisions which have already been made.

Similarly, business people need to understand the cultural systems of respect and deference when they meet up with Asian counterparts. For example, senior executives from Japan will only discuss business with people from the same management level. The message for companies here is, don’t send anybody but senior people to meetings with Japanese counterparts.

Calder has turned his attention recently to central and eastern Europe (CEE). So what has he found out?

‘There are as many business cultures in CEE as there are countries, but we can make a few generalizations. For one thing, you can expect to discuss a proposal at a meeting right through to the agreement stage. But, in the end, verbal agreements are not taken seriously in the region: your business partners will want to see something in writing outlining the agreement in the days after the meeting.’

So how does Calder see the future of intercultural awareness in business?

‘Companies are still investing more money in improving foreign language skills. I want to see a situation where investment in intercultural awareness is on the same level as language training. Only then will companies be able to send out well-rounded executives capable of building business bridges in the global environment.’

OVER TO YOU

- In your experience, are there more similarities than differences in the way that people from different cultures behave in meetings?
- What cultural differences have you encountered when doing business with people from abroad?
- What advice about business meetings in your country would you offer to someone from another culture?
So, I think we’re finished for today

Answer the questions, then work with a partner and compare your answers.

Are all the meetings you attend recorded in a set of minutes?

Do you and your colleagues take turns to take the minutes, or does the same person always do the job?

In general, how detailed are the minutes from your meetings?

Who are the minutes distributed to?

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of minutes with your partner.

1 The management team of the Scottish fabric company Tweed Tradition is discussing redesigning the company’s offices. Listen to the end of the meeting and correct the six mistakes in the minutes.

Meeting to discuss redesign/move – 1st March 2 p.m.

Action points:

- Mike to: contact two interior designers for quotations for office redesign
- Sue to: look for interior design software (important)
- Andy to: talk to marketing in Dundee about hiring a facility manager
- Staff to: get quotes from two other builders
- Nick to: plan how to keep office running smoothly during building work
- John to: talk to lawyers

Next meeting: 8th March 2.30 p.m.
2 Complete the sentences with words from the box. Then listen again to check your answers.

- concludes • fix • just • over • participation • through • wrap

1. Let's ________ things up there.
2. I ________ want to go ________ what we've decided this afternoon.
3. Let's ________ a time for our next meeting.
4. That ________ our business for today.
5. Thanks for your active ________ this afternoon.
6. We really got ________ a lot of business.

TAKING MINUTES

Minutes start with the date of the meeting and a short description of what the meeting was about. There should also be a list of who was at the meeting and who was not able to attend:

Meeting to discuss Christmas public relations activities - 1st November

Present: Norman, Uma, Frazer
Apologies: Franco, Connor

Usually, it is best to keep the minutes short and simple:

John to talk to bank

Votes are usually recorded:

The committee decided by 6 votes to 1 to hire a new salesperson. (This means that six people voted for hiring a new salesperson, and one person against.)

3 www.plush-furnishings.com is an online soft furnishings retailer. Listen to a meeting of the cost accounting team and answer the questions below.

1. Is Ken happy with the outcome of the meeting?

2. What are Petra and Alex going to do? Why?

3. Who does Edward have to meet? Why?

4. What does Ken think of Edward?

5. What does Ken have to do next?

6. What are the action points from the meeting?
4 Now listen to a meeting between managers at a call centre and take the minutes. Use the example in exercise 1.

AOB

The last item on more formal agendas is usually AOB (Any Other Business). This describes a part of the meeting which is reserved for the discussion of items which are not identified on the agenda. In a meeting with an agenda, the chairperson often asks at the beginning whether participants want to discuss anything under AOB:

_Does anyone have anything they’d like to bring up under AOB?_

If a subject comes up during a discussion, but is not directly relevant to the discussion, a chairperson might ask that the item be dealt with under AOB:

_Could we deal with that point under AOB?_

This way he/she can make sure that the agenda is followed.

5 Match the two parts to make sentences which can be used to talk about AOB.

1 OK. Is there any other  
2 Let’s talk about  
3 I have an item  
4 Is there anything that anyone would like to bring  
5 Could we talk  
6 over that point under AOB?  
7 up under AOB?  
8 business that we need to discuss?  
9 for AOB.  
10 that when we get to AOB.

6 Listen to three dialogues of people saying goodbye after their meetings and match each dialogue to the correct description.

1 The speakers know each other well.  
2 The speakers work in the same office.  
3 The speakers have never met before today’s meeting.

7 Listen to the dialogues again and complete the sentences.

1 It really was a ___________ to meet you in person at last.
2 The pleasure was all ___________.
3 And thank you for ___________ the time to show me around your plant.
4 Well, Mr Marks, Matthew will show you back down to ___________.
5 I hope that you have a ___________ journey home. Goodbye.
6 Well, thanks for ___________ along this afternoon.
7 It was a ___________ as always, Catherine.
8 Have a safe ___________ back to Birmingham.
8 After a meeting, people often write follow-up emails. Complete the three emails with words from the box.

attached • attending • in contact • greatly • impressed • interesting • know • spending • taking

---

Hi Gary, hi Carl,

Thanks again for ________ our team meeting yesterday – it was really useful to have you there. Attached are the minutes of the meeting.

I spoke to Andre and Sabine after lunch yesterday and they agree that these less formal ‘inter-team’ meetings are a good idea in addition to our existing interdepartmental meetings.

What time are you going for lunch?

Let me ________.

Cheers,

Julie

---

Dear Mrs Cooper,

I am writing to thank you once again for ________ the time to meet me yesterday. It really was most ________ to look around your plant. I was very ________ by your expertise in rapid re-tooling and feel certain that this will guarantee you success with your expansion plans.

It was also fascinating to hear about your plans to enter the Chinese market. We will be proud to offer you any assistance that we can in this venture.

Please note that I have now spoken to our sales engineer Mr Kovak who will be ________ with you in the near future.

I ________ look forward to our next meeting.

Best regards,

Bernard Marks

---

Dear Silvius,

It was good to see you again on Friday. Please find an outline of our discussion ________ to this mail.

Thanks for ________ time looking at our new range of water-resistant fabrics. As promised, I have now sent the samples to you – they should be with you by Wednesday.

I look forward to seeing you in August. Have a nice holiday!

Best wishes,

Roger Coribear
Work with two partners to role-play a meeting. Look at the Useful Phrases before going to the Partner Files.

**USEFUL PHRASES**

**Ending a meeting**
Let's finish here.
I think that's everything.
I think that brings us to an end.

**Confirming decisions and actions**
So, to sum up what we've decided...
Right. I'm going to...
We've decided to...
Terry, you'll...

**Thanking someone for a meeting**
Thank you all for coming in today.
Thank you very much for your time.
Thank you for your hard work. I think we've come up with a lot of good ideas.

**Saying goodbye**
I look forward to seeing you (all) again soon.
I hope you have a safe journey.
Have a safe trip home.

---

**10** Put the words in the right order to make sentences with expressions from this unit.

1. here up things wrap let's
2. again time once you and today thank the for taking come, to us visit
3. safe home that I journey you have a hope
4. get meeting minutes better another 15 so I'd going have in
5. again seeing forward to I soon look you

---

**QUICK MEETING**

You have been asked to look after two foreign visitors for the whole of Sunday in your city. The budget is $400. How would you arrange the day in order to make the best possible impression on them? Plan a full day starting at 9 a.m. and finishing late at night.
Have you ever done business with people from any of the countries in this guide? If so, do you agree with the information given?

**Mixing Business and Pleasure**

Gone are the days when business was only carried out in offices and conference rooms. Now people mix business and pleasure in a range of settings. But what are the rules of business entertaining in an international context? Here’s a brief guide.

**China**

In common with other Asian business cultures, the Chinese are keen on lavish business entertaining. Large evening meals are very much on the agenda here. Expect your host to order enough to feed twelve people for a party of six. The meal will probably also consist of several courses, so it's a good idea to pace yourself and not eat too much early in the meal. That said, good manners require you to leave lots of the food uneaten. Finishing off your food will send the insulting signal that your host has not ordered enough to satisfy your hunger.

It’s not a bad idea to practise eating with chopsticks before making your business trip to China. Your hosts will certainly appreciate your efforts to use them and you should avoid asking for European-style cutlery if at all possible.

**Britain**

Forget breakfast meetings. They’re deeply unpopular, even in forward-looking London. The British prefer to do business over lunch or, on occasion, dinner. The latter meal is, however, usually reserved for pleasure, allowing business contacts an opportunity to get to know each other a little better, so don’t expect to talk shop over your lamb cutlet and trifle.

One after-hours venue where business and pleasure can be mixed is the pub. ‘Going to the pub’ is something of a national pastime, no less so among business people than the population as a whole. If your British business contacts take you to the pub, be prepared to drink the British version of beer. Expect something a little different from the light, refreshing beers you may be used to. British beer – warm and flat – is an important national product. Make sure to try it before moving on to something a little more drinkable.

**Japan**

If you’re doing business here, you can expect to be lavishly entertained after office hours by your host, who will pick up the bill for food and drinks. In the evenings, business is pretty much off the agenda, so don’t expect to put the finishing touches to a deal over sushi. What is firmly on the agenda, however, is drinking – and quite a lot of it. Japanese business people can consume a good deal of sake during an evening’s after-work partying and enjoy toasting one another, if someone offers you a toast, be sure to return the compliment.

Karaoke is an especially popular activity for entertaining business contacts. If you are taken to a karaoke bar, the golden rule is to take part. It’s important to show your hosts that you’re a good sport, even if your singing voice is not exactly your strong point.

**USA**

Breakfast meetings, where business is mixed with smoked salmon and scrambled eggs, have become pretty popular here in recent years. If you’re invited to one, set your alarm clock for an early rise: such meetings often get under way as early as 7 a.m. Expect to discuss a lot of business over your breakfast.

Business people from the US are also keen on after-hours entertaining. It’s not unusual to receive an invitation to have an evening meal with a business host at his or her home. If you receive an invitation like this, remember to turn up punctually. You can also expect a tour of your host’s home before the evening gets underway. Bring flowers or a bottle of wine.

**OVER TO YOU**

- After a meeting is finished, do you prefer to socialize with your business partners over a drink in a pub, or would you rather take them to a cultural event such as the theatre?
- Can you offer advice about socializing with people from other cultures that you have worked with?
- What advice would you offer a visitor to your country about the after-hours business culture?