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## **Business English: Introduction to Meetings**

***One of the most common requirements of business English is holding meetings in English. The following sections provide useful language and phrases for conducting meetings and making contributions to a meeting.***

***Meetings generally follow a more or less similar structure and can be divided into the following parts:***

### **I - Introductions**

Opening the Meeting   Welcoming and Introducing Participants   Stating the Principal Objectives of a Meeting   Giving Apologies for Someone Who is Absent

### **II - Reviewing Past Business**

Reading the Minutes (notes) of the Last Meeting   Dealing with Recent Developments

### **III - Beginning the Meeting**

Introducing the Agenda   Allocating Roles (secretary, participants)   Agreeing on the Ground Rules for the Meeting (contributions, timing, decision-making, etc.)

### **IV - Discussing Items**

Introducing the First Item on the Agenda   Closing an Item   Next Item   Giving Control to the Next Participant

### **V - Finishing the Meeting**

Summarizing   Finishing Up   Suggesting and Agreeing on Time, Date and Place for the Next Meeting   Thanking Participants for Attending   Closing the Meeting

***The following pages focus on each part of the meeting and the appropriate language for each situation.***

***The following phrases are used to conduct a meeting. These phrases are useful if you are called on to conduct a meeting***

## **Opening**

Good morning/afternoon, everyone. If we are all here, let's get started / start the meeting / start.

## **Welcoming and Introducing**

Please join me in welcoming (name of participant) We're pleased to welcome (name of participant) I'd like to extend a warm welcome to (name of participant) It's a pleasure to welcome (name of participant) I'd like to introduce (name of participant)

## **Stating the Principal Objectives**

We're here today to ... I'd like to make sure that we ... Our main aim today is to ... I've called this meeting in order to ...

## **Giving Apologies for Someone Who is Absent**

I'm afraid.., (name of participant) can't be with us today. She is in... Unfortunately, (name of participant) ... will not be with us to day because he ... I have received apologies for absence from (name of participant), who is in (place).

## **Reading the Minutes (notes) of the Last Meeting**

To begin with I'd like to quickly go through the minutes of our last meeting. First, let's go over the report from the last meeting, which was held on (date) Here are the minutes from our last meeting, which was on (date)

## **Dealing with Recent Developments**

Jack, can you tell us how the XYZ project is progressing? Jack, how is the XYZ project coming along? John, have you completed the report on the new accounting package? Has everyone received a copy of the Tate Foundation report on current marketing trends?

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## **Moving Forward**

So, if there is nothing else we need to discuss, let's move on to today's agenda. Shall we get down to business? Is there Any Other Business? If there are no further developments, I'd like to move on to today's topic.

## **Introducing the Agenda**

Have you all received a copy of the agenda? There are X items on the agenda. First, ... second, ... third, ... lastly, ... Shall we take the points in this order? If you don't mind, I'd like to go in order today. skip item 1 and move on to item 3 I suggest we take item 2 last.

## **Allocating Roles (secretary, participants)**

(name of participant) has agreed to take the minutes. (name of participant), would you mind taking the minutes? (name of participant) has kindly agreed to give us a report on ... (name of participant) will lead point 1, (name of participant) point 2, and (name of participant) point 3. (name of participant), would you mind taking notes today?

## **Agreeing on the Ground Rules for the Meeting (contributions, timing, decision-making, etc.)**

We will first hear a short report on each point first, followed by a discussion of ... I suggest we go round the table first. Let's make sure we finish by ... I'd suggest we ... There will be five minutes for each item. We'll have to keep each item to 15 minutes. Otherwise we'll never get through.

## **Introducing the First Item on the Agenda**

So, let's start with ... I'd suggest we start with... Why don't we start with... So, the first item on the agenda is Pete, would you like to kick off? Shall we start with ... (name of participant), would you like to introduce this item?**Closing an Item**

I think that takes care of the first item. Shall we leave that item? Why don't we move on to... If nobody has anything else to add, lets ...

## **Next Item**

Let's move onto the next item. Now that we've discussed X, let's now ... The next item on today's agenda is... Now we come to the question of.

## **Giving Control to the Next Participant**

I'd like to hand over to (name of participant), who is going to lead the next point. Next, (name of participant) is going to take us through ... Now, I'd like to introduce (name of participant) who is going to ...

## **Summarizing**

Before we close today's meeting, let me just summarize the main points. Let me quickly go over today's main points. To sum up, ..., OK, why don't we quickly summarize what we've done today. In brief, ... Shall I go over the main points?

## **Finishing Up**

Right, it looks as though we've covered the main items. If there are no other comments, I'd like to wrap this meeting up. Let's bring this to a close for today. Is there Any Other Business?

## **Suggesting and Agreeing on Time, Date and Place for the Next Meeting**

Can we set the date for the next meeting, please? So, the next meeting will be on ... (day), the ... (date) of.. . (month) at ... Let's next meet on ... (day), the ... (date) of.. . (month) at ... What about the following Wednesday? How is that?

## **Thanking Participants for Attending**

I'd like to thank Marianne and Jeremy for coming over from London. Thank you all for attending. Thank you for your participation.

## **Closing the Meeting**

The meeting is finished, we'll see each other next ... The meeting is closed...I declare the meeting closed.

***The following phrases are used to participate in a meeting. These phrases are useful for expressing your ideas and giving input to a meeting.***

### **Getting the Chairperson's Attention**

(Mister/Madam) chairman. May I have a word?... If I may, I think...  
Excuse me for interrupting. May I come in here?

### **Giving Opinions**

I'm positive that... I (really) feel that... In my opinion... The way I see things... If you ask me,... I tend to think that...

### **Asking for Opinions**

Are you positive that...  
Do you (really) think that...  
(name of participant) can we get your input?  
How do you feel about...?

### **Commenting**

That's interesting . I never thought about it that way before. Good point! I get your point. I see what you mean.

### **Agreeing**

I totally agree with you. Exactly! That's (exactly) the way I feel. I have to agree with (name of participant).

### **Disagreeing**

Unfortunately, I see it differently.

Up to a point I agree with you, but...  
(I'm afraid) I can't agree

### **Advising and Suggesting**

Let's... We should... Why don't you.... How/What about... I suggest/recommend that...

### **Clarifying**

Let me spell out... Have I made that clear? Do you see what I'm getting at? Let me put this another way... I'd just like to repeat that...

### **Requesting Information**

Please, could you... I'd like you to... Would you mind... I wonder if you could...

### **Asking for Repetition**

I'm afraid I didn't understand that. Could you repeat what you just said? I didn't catch that. Could you repeat that, please? I missed that. Could you say it again, please? Could you run that by me one more time?

### **Asking for Clarification**

I don't quite follow you. What exactly do you mean? I'm afraid I don't quite understand what you are getting at. Could you explain to me how that is going to work? I don't see what you mean. Could we have some more details, please?

### **Asking for Verification**

You did say next week, didn't you? ('did' is stressed) Do you mean that...? Is it true that...?

### **Asking for Spelling**

Could you spell that, please? Would you mind spelling that for me, please?

## **Asking for Contributions**

We haven't heard from you yet, (name of participant). What do you think about this proposal? Would you like to add anything, (name of participant)? Has anyone else got anything to contribute? Are there any more comments?

## **Correcting Information**

Sorry, I think you misunderstood what I said. Sorry, that's not quite right. I'm afraid you don't understand what I'm saying. That's not quite what I had in mind. That's not what I meant.

## **Keeping the Meeting On Target (time, relevance, decisions)**

We're running short of time. Well, that seems to be all the time we have today. Please be brief. I'm afraid we've run out of time. I'm afraid that's outside the scope of this meeting. Let's get back on track, why don't we? That's not really why we're here today. Why don't we return to the main focus of today's meeting. We'll have to leave that to another time. We're beginning to lose sight of the main point. Keep to the point, please. I think we'd better leave that for another meeting. Are we ready to make a decision?

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