



ESLfriend.com

# **Business Meeting Course Book**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

**Objective:** To learn the fundamental English expressions used in business meetings.

### Practical

Learn: Fundamentals, Useful expressions, Build a strong foundation

Memorize: Repetition practice and drills

Practice: Practice what you learn in meeting simulations and role plays

### How it works

Set a goal: Business Meetings

Deconstruct: Specific contents - narrow the study focus to sub-skill

Focus: Master the sub-skills, one at a time

This is the most practical and effective Business Meetings English book and it will change how Business English is taught in the classrooms. The contents are organized to focus on core fundamental steps in learning: Learn, Memorize, and Practice. This book will equip the students the basic skills needed for all business meeting situations.

## Table of Contents

Before you begin

Lesson 1: Self-introduction and First Impression

Warm-up activity: Tips for making a good first impression

Key Expressions

Practice

Lesson 2: Small Talk

Warm-up activity: Tips for small talk

Key Expressions

Practice

Lesson 3: Greetings and opening a meeting

Warm-up activity: Common meeting problems

Key Expressions

Practice

Lesson 4: Asking/Giving Suggestions

Warm-up activity: Tips on getting your opinion heard

Key Expressions

Practice

Lesson 5: Evaluating Options

Warm-up activity: Choosing the best option

Key Expressions

Practice

Lesson 6: Closing a meeting

Warm-up activity: Tips on closing a meeting

Key Expressions

Practice

## **Before you begin:**

### **Preventing miscommunication**

Miscommunication in the workplace can cause serious problems in business. It can lead to employee conflict, low morales, and delays. People using English as a second language tend to make a lot of assumptions and ask fewer questions. You must be confident in your speaking ability to ask questions, so you can fully understand the situation.

### **Key Expressions:**

Expressions 1: Asking for clarification

- Could you repeat that?
- Could you say that again?
- I'm sorry, I didn't catch that.
- What do you mean by (statement)?
- Do you mean that (statement)?

\*Be confident in your ability to ask for clarification. Do not try to guess what the other person is saying. If you do not understand what was said, please ask. Memorize the expressions above and use it every time you need clarification.

### **Knowing how to do something and being able to do something is very different.**

Just because I know how to do something doesn't necessarily mean I will be able to do something. For example, I can learn how to play golf by watching instructional videos on Youtube or buying an instructional book on how to hit a golf ball. I can watch the video a hundred times and know every little details on how to hit a golf ball. However, unless I actually go to the golf course or a driving range and practice, I won't be very successful.

Speaking English is no different from learning other skills. First, you must learn the vocabulary, grammar rules, and sentence patterns. Then, you need to practice by speaking out loud what you have learned. Whether you are speaking to a real person or speaking to yourself, it's absolutely necessary for you to practice speaking out loud.

### **Make English learning a lifestyle.**

Learning English is not easy. It requires a lot of time, effort, and dedication. If you really want to improve your English, you must make English learning a daily routine. It may not be easy or even possible to set aside one or two hours to study English every day, but you must. Perhaps you should get in the habit of studying English few minutes throughout the day. Maybe 5 minutes after waking up, 10 minutes during lunch, 5 more minutes during break time at work, and so on. If you continually get in the habit of thinking about English, those few minutes will add up and improve your English speaking ability.

### **Have a specific goal.**

You need to set realistic goals if you want to improve your English. I will assume your final goal is to become a fluent speaker and it is totally possible. However, you will not become a fluent speaker over night. It requires years of hard work and dedication. You should think in short term, when learning English. Break down your final goal into more specific goals and attack that area until you master it. Then, move on to another small specific goal and so on. You will need to master English one section at a time. Over time the collection of the skills you master will result in you becoming a fluent speaker.

### **One step back before going two steps forward.**

Lot of English learners will eventually hit a wall while learning English. You will feel like you are not getting better even though you are studying and practicing regularly. When this happens to you, just be patient and trust the process. You can also try to review the basic sentence patterns you have already mastered to get a better understanding of the English foundation. Doing this will improve your confidence and improve your understanding of English fundamentals. If you master the basics, it will be easier to advance because every difficult and complicated sentence patterns and grammar rules will be built on top of it.

## **Lesson 1: Self-introduction and First Impression**

You need to be clear and confident while introducing yourself. Your introduction length should depend on the circumstances of the introduction, but it shouldn't be too long. You want to focus on creating a positive first impression.

**Objective:** Learn how to make a self introduction and make a good first impression

### **Key Expressions:**

1. Stating your name/position/experience
2. Stating your tasks and responsibilities
3. Making a positive closing statement.

### **Warm-up:**

- Why is first impression important?
- What can you do to make a good first impression?

### **Tips for making a good first impression:**

1. **Smile:** Smiling can make others feel comfortable and make you look friendly and approachable.
2. **Dress for success:** How you dress and look is one of the first things people notice about you. Make sure you are dressed for the occasion and look your professional best.
3. **The proper handshake:** The handshake is accepted internationally as a professional way to greet people. Be sure to make eye contact and have a firm grip.
4. **Make eye contact:** Making eye contact can make you look confident and sincere.
5. **Be prepared:** You need to prepare for the situation. Do a little research of people or a company you are meeting before hand so you will be prepared for what may come.
6. **Be positive:** People tend to gravitate towards positive attitudes. Don't complain or be negative when meeting someone for the first time.
7. **Be aware of your non-verbal components:** Sometimes how you say something is more important than what you say. According to a research, communication is only about 10% verbal and 93% non-verbal. Be aware of your body language and tone of voice.

### **Discussion:**

1. Which of the above tips do you think is the most important and why?
2. Do you use any of the tips above when meeting someone for the first time?
3. What impression do you want to give when meeting someone for the first time?
4. What was the first impression you had of your company? Your boss? Your colleagues?
5. Think about a person who made a great first impression on you? What did this person do or say?

## Key Expressions:

### 1. Stating your name/position/experience

- Hello, I'm/my name is (name) and I'm (position) for (company).
- It's nice to meet you. I'm (name) from (company).
- I've been with (company) for (length of time).
- I've been working as a (position) since (point in time).
- I've been (position) for the past (length of time).

### 2. Stating your tasks and responsibilities

- I'm responsible for (verb + ing) (area of responsibility).
- I'm in charge of (department/project).
- My job is (to do)/(verb + ing) (responsibility).
- I specialize in (products/services).

### 3. Making a positive closing statement.

- It is nice to meet you.
- I'm looking forward to working with you.
- I'm excited to work with you.
- I'm happy/excited to be here.



## Let's Practice:

1. Introduce yourself to the class or your partner by using the expressions we've covered. You may look at the examples below as a guide.

### Examples:

*Hello, my name is Chris Lee from Hyundai Motors. I've been working as a safety test engineer for the past 6 years. I'm responsible for conducting crash tests and recording the test results. It's nice to meet you.*

*Hi, I'm Sandy Jones and I'm a HR representative for ABC Cosmetics. I've been working here for 7 years and my main job is handling employee complaints. I'm happy to be here.*

*It's nice to meet you. I'm Bobby Wilson from Sky Insurance. I've been a sales representative for 3 years. I am looking forward to working with you.*

2. Practice introducing yourself as a character below.

Name: Steven Jones  
Company: New Wave Technology  
Position: Software engineer  
Experience: 5 years

Name: Amanda Lee  
Company: ABC Publisher  
Position: Editor  
Experience: 3 years

Name: Colt Williams  
Company: HK Entertainment  
Position: Marketing director  
Experience: 15 years

Name: Adam Manning  
Company: First Bank  
Position: Loan manager  
Experience: 7 years

Name: Michelle Kim  
Company: Natural Cosmetics  
Position: Accountant  
Experience: 2 years

Name: Michael Walton  
Company: Global Insurance  
Position: Sales representative  
Experience: 4 years

## **Lesson 2: Small Talk**

Small talk is an important part of business. It is a chance for you to build rapport with your colleagues and clients. It can be used before a meeting, cocktail parties, break rooms, and networking events. It's important to know how to small talk effectively to help your career.

**Objective: Learn how to initiate, carry, and end small talk.**

### **Key Expressions:**

1. Initiating small talk
2. Showing interest
3. Ending small talk

### Warm-up:

- What is the purpose of small talk?
- What topics are appropriate for small talk?

### Tips for small talk:

- 1. Initiate the conversation.** Have confidence and initiate the conversation. Doing so will give off an impression that you are confident and interested.
- 2. Be aware of your body language:** 90% of communication is from non-verbal cues. Smile, have an open-stance, and speak in an appropriate tone to put others at ease.
- 3. Ask a question or make a statement** about the current environment, situation, or weather. Do not start with a random statement or a question.
- 4. Be interesting.** Try to be informed about current events and have an interesting story to tell. You should be well-informed about many topics to hold a conversation.
- 5. Focus on the other person and listen carefully.** You should focus on asking questions and be interested in what the other person has to say.
- 8. Discuss safe topics** such as movies, sports, and weather. You may get into more serious or specific topic as the conversation progresses. Also, try to let the other person lead you into the topic they are interested in.
- 9. Choose your words carefully and be thoughtful.** You do not want to say something to offend the other person. Be careful what you say, because it's difficult to take back what you say.
- 10. End the conversation politely or with a plan.** Have an exit strategy before beginning small talk. In case the other person is not interested or the two of you don't have much to discuss. Try to memorize few expressions, like "I have to get back to work, but it was nice talking to you." Or "I need to get back to my office, but I enjoyed talking to you."

### Discussion:

1. Do you think you are good a small talk?
2. How can effective small talk improve your career?
3. How does it feel when a stranger starts a small talk with you?
4. Have you ever initiated small talk with a stranger?
5. Do you prefer to talk or listen during a conversation?

## Key Expressions:

### 1. Initiating small talk

- Hello, I don't think we've met. My name is (name).
- Hi, you are from the (company/department), aren't you?.
- How is (something in the surrounding- could be food/beverages, weather, etc.)?.
- I really like your (item/style, etc)?
- Amazing weather today, isn't it?

### 2. Showing interest

- Really?
- Uh huh...
- That's amazing.
- Oh wow.
- I see.
- That's very interesting.

### 3. Ending small talk

- I have to get back to work, but it was nice talking to you.
- I would love to talk more, but I have a meeting to attend in few minutes.
- It was great meeting you. I hope we can continue our conversation later.
- I need to step away for a bit, but I really enjoyed our conversation.
- It was nice speaking to you. Maybe we can meet up later.

## **Your Turn:**

1. Have a small talk with your partner about the following topics:

- Weather
- Sports
- Hobbies
- Movies
- TV shows
- Books
- Internet
- Food
- Travel
- Other

\* In a group class, students can stand up and talk to a class mate for few minutes and move on to a different class mate.

2. Role play the following situations:

### **Situation 1:**

A new colleague has joined your team. Introduce yourself to the new team member and initiate small talk.

### **Situation 2:**

You arrive early to the conference room for a meeting. There is another person you do not recognize in the conference. Initiate small talk while waiting for the meeting to begin.

### **Situation 3:**

You are in the front lobby of your office building and you run into an old friend you haven't seen in a long time. Initiate small talk.

### **Lesson 3: Greetings and opening a meeting**

Strong opening to a meeting could lead to a more productive meeting. A good start to a meeting sets the tone, introduces the major topics, and provides a preview of the meeting. Do not neglect the opening of a meeting and make sure to set a productive atmosphere.

**Objective:** Learn how to open a meeting effectively

#### **Key Expressions:**

1. Greeting
2. Stating the meeting agenda
3. Outlining the meeting items

**Warm-up:**

- How often do you have meetings at work?
- How often do you lead a meeting?

**Common meeting problems:**

1. Not finishing on time
2. Inability to make decisions
3. Key members absent
4. Dominant participants
5. Silent participants
6. Lack of follow through on tasks
7. Personal attacks/gossips
8. Boring/Low energy

**Discussion:**

1. Which of the above problems are common in your workplace?
2. How can you avoid the problems from above?
3. What percentage of your meetings do you think is productive?
4. What do you think is the biggest reason for a non-productive meeting?
5. Finish the following statement: Meeting is an opportunity to \_\_\_\_\_.

## Key Expressions:

### 1. Greeting

- Hello and thank you all for coming.
- How is everyone doing today?
- Good morning/afternoon. I'd like to begin by thanking everyone for attending today's meeting.

### 2. Stating the meeting agenda

- We are here to discuss/plan/go over/solve/talk about \_\_\_\_\_
- Our meeting agenda for today is \_\_\_\_\_
- I have called this meeting to discuss/plan/go over/solve/talk about \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Outlining the meeting items

- There are \_\_\_\_ items to discuss today.
- We will discuss \_\_\_\_\_ items today.
- First, we will talk about \_\_\_\_\_. Second, we will discuss \_\_\_\_\_. Finally we will finish up by discussing\_\_\_\_\_.



## Your turn!

1. Greet, state the agenda and outline the items by using the expressions you learned. You may look at the example below as a guide.

### Example:

*Hello and thank you all for coming. We are here to plan a new marketing strategy for our new product. There are three items to discuss today. First, I will introduce our new product. Second, we will go over the budget for the project and finally, we will brainstorm some marketing strategy.*

### Meeting 1:

Agenda: To improve communication in the workplace  
Item 1: Current problems  
Item 2: Solve problems

### Meeting 2:

Agenda: To plan for the end of the year office party  
Item 1: Choose a date and location  
Item 2: Assign roles for party planning (reservations, reminders, collect money, etc.)

### Meeting 3:

Agenda: To improve sales  
Item 1: Previous quarter results  
Item 2: Brainstorm options

### Meeting 4:

Agenda: To improve customer service  
Item 1: Common complaints  
Item 2: Steps for handling complaints  
Item 3: How to handle difficult customers

### Meeting 5: Create your own agenda and items

Agenda:  
Item 1:  
Item 2:  
Item 3:

## **Lesson 4: Sharing ideas**

Do you have a great idea that will take your company to the next level? Or perhaps you have a suggestion on improving the workplace atmosphere. If you want to stand out in the workplace, you must be able to give your ideas and opinions effectively. Be an active participant in your workplace by giving thoughtful and assertive opinions.

**Objective:** Learn how to share ideas

### **Key Expressions:**

1. Asking for suggestions/ideas
2. Giving suggestions/ideas
3. Providing reason(s) using conditional statements

### Warm-up Questions:

- Do you have a great idea for a new business or a product?
- Does your company encourage employees to give new ideas or suggestions?

### Tips on getting your opinion heard:

1. **Be a sales person.** Just giving your suggestion is not enough. Make sure to sell your ideas by providing the benefits it will provide
2. **Be humble.** You want to be confident in your ideas and plans, but don't come off as cocky. Do not say your idea is the best and completely dismiss other people's ideas.
3. **Don't take it personally.** If someone disagrees with your suggestion, don't take it personally. Think of it as an opportunity for you to give a better explanation.
4. **Stay positive.** When you are giving new suggestions or ideas, try to use positive words to make your sales pitch.
5. **Be flexible.** Listen to other's opinions and be willing to make a compromise. Be open minded and listen carefully to other suggestions.

### Discussion:

1. If you could change something about your company, what would it be?
2. How do you feel when your opinion or suggestion gets ignored?
3. Think about a person who you think is good at convincing people. What did they do? What tone of voice did they use? How did they make you feel?
4. Think about a person who you think is terrible at convincing people. What did they do? What tone of voice did they use? How did they make you feel?

\* It's a good idea to copy and model your strategy from people who knows what they are doing.

## **Key Expressions:**

### 1. Asking for ideas/suggestions

- Does anyone have a suggestion?
- What do you think we need to do?
- What should we do?

### 2. Giving ideas/suggestions

- I suggest/recommend + (verb + -ing) or (object) or (subject verb object)
- How about/What about + (verb + -ing) or (object) or (subject verb object)
- We need to/have to + (verb)

### 3. Providing reason(s) using conditional statements

- If we do (action), we will (outcome). - realistic situation
- If we did (action), we would/could (outcome). - hypothetical situation

## Your Turn!

1. Write down 5 problems or stressful situation you are faced with at work.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

2. Now, ask your partner for suggestions regarding the problems or stressful situation you are faced with. You may look at the example below as a guide.

**Alex:** *I have too much work these days so I feel very stressed. What do you think I should I do?*

**Bob:** *I understand how you feel. Why don't you speak to your boss to reduce the workload?*

**Alex:** *You make a good point, but I don't think he will be able to reduce the workload because everyone on my team is equally busy.*

**Bob:** *Well, if you can't change your working condition, I suggest you do something to reduce the stress. I recommend meditating during your break time.*

**Alex:** *Yeah, I think that could work. Thanks.*

## **Lesson 5: Evaluating Options and Making a decision**

Do you have a great idea that will take your company to the next level? Or perhaps you have a suggestion on improving the workplace atmosphere. If you want to stand out in the workplace, you must be able to give your ideas and opinions effectively. Be an active participant in your workplace by giving thoughtful and assertive opinions.

**Objective:** Learn how to evaluate options

### **Key Expressions:**

1. Asking for more details
2. Comparing pros and cons
3. Making a decision

### **Warm-up Questions:**

- What do you consider before making a decision?
- When was the last time you made a big decision?

### **Choosing the best option**

1. **Brainstorm options:** First thing you should do is come up with as many options as possible. Be open-minded and listen to all available options.
2. **Evaluate options:** Compare the pros and cons of your options. Evaluate the risk and reward for each options. Also this is a good time to consider the realistic possibility of implementing the option.
3. **Eliminate options:** Eliminate the worst options and make a short list of the best options.
4. **Repeat step 2:** Evaluate the remaining options and choose the best option.
5. **Action:** Make an action plan to implement the option you chose.

### **Discussion:**

1. Do you tend to make more decisions based on facts and figures or based on your instincts?
2. What are the pros and cons of making a quick decision in the workplace?
3. Do you regret any decisions you have made in the past?

## Key Expressions:

### 1. Asking for more details

- Can you tell me more about that?
- Let's discuss that in more details.
- Why don't we explore that option more?

### 2. Comparing pros and cons

- The pro is \_\_\_\_\_, but the con is \_\_\_\_\_.
- It has some good points like \_\_\_\_\_, but it also has some bad points.
- The advantage/disadvantage is \_\_\_\_\_, but it has some flaws/benefits.

\* You could start by stating the cons before stating the pros.

### 3. Making a decision

- Let's go with option A.
- I/We will choose/do/implement option A.
- It would be best to (option/action).



**Your turn:**

**1. Compare the pros and cons of the following situation with your partner.**

- Working a job you dislike for a lot of money
- Drinking during a company outing/workshop
- Flexible time in the workplace
- Investing in stocks
- Multi-tasking at work
- Going on a business trip abroad
- Being too nice to everyone

**2. Discussion:**

1. Would you rather choose a job that pays well or a job that is personally satisfying?
2. Do you prefer working alone or in a team?
3. Which is more important, the destination or the journey?

## **Lesson 6: Closing a meeting**

It's important to close a meeting effectively. Like a good movie that was ruined by a poor ending, you don't want to ruin your meeting by ending the meeting ineffectively. Beginning and ending is what most people remember, so don't neglect a good ending.

**Objective: Learn how to close a meeting**

### **Key Expressions:**

1. Setting up a follow up meeting
2. Summarizing key points
3. Closing statement

### **Warm-up Questions:**

- Do you think it's important to close the meeting effectively? Why?
- What is more important, opening or closing?

### **Tips on closing a meeting:**

1. **Stick to the schedule.** Don't let your meeting drag on and finish on time.
2. **Keep it positive.** You should try to end all meetings with a positive note. Even if the meeting was confrontational, change the mood.
3. **Be nice and sincere.** Don't just say "thank you" because you have to. Say it like you mean it with sincerity.
4. **End it with action.** Make sure to review the key points discussed and the actions that will be taken.

### **Discussion:**

1. Have you ever watched a movie that had a bad ending?
2. How do you feel when someone asks a complicated or an off-topic question towards the end of the meeting?

## **Key Expressions:**

### 1. Setting up a follow up meeting

- Let's have a follow up meeting on (date) at (time).
- We will have our next meeting on (date) at (time).
- Why don't we meet again on (date) at (time)?

### 2. Summarizing key points

- I would like to go over what we discussed today.
- Let's go over some key points we discussed today.
- Before we end the meeting, I want to go over some important issues we covered today.

### 3. Closing statement

- If there are no questions, let's end the meeting.
- Great job everyone. Let's get back to work.
- Thank you for attending today's meeting.

Your Turn: Looking at meeting scenario below and practice closing the meeting using the expressions we have covered.

#### Meeting 1:

Set up a follow up meeting: January 17th, 2:00 PM, Conference room 3

Summarize key points from the meeting:

1. Use social media for pre-launch marketing campaign for the new product
2. Use billboards for pre-launch marketing campaign for the new product
3. Bobby will contact the social media department and explain the marketing strategy
4. Sam will contact the billboard company and get a price quote

#### Meeting 2:

Set up a follow up meeting: Friday, 10:00 AM, Meeting room 1, 5th floor

Summarize key points from the meeting:

1. Johnny will pick up the client from the airport at 4:30 pm and take him to the hotel.
2. Brian will make a reservation at a luxury restaurant for party of 6 at 7:30pm.
3. Sally will research clients interests and preferences and notify the our team at the follow up meeting.

#### Meeting 3:

Set up a follow up meeting: Next Monday, 11:00 AM, Mr. Smith's office

Summarize key points from the meeting:

1. Mr. Jones wants to increase the order but at a 10% discount.
2. Mr. Smith will check with the executives to reduce the cost of the supplies by 10%.