



1. Politeness

1.1 Meeting for the first time

Can you think of any polite phrases to use when you meet someone for the first time?

Are there any polite phrases to use when you part with someone?

1.2 First names

What's the safest way to call someone you've just met; are first names too informal?

What about titles and names, should titles always be used if there are any?

1.3 Body language

Can your body language be polite or impolite? Can you think of any examples?

How important is eye contact in terms of politeness? What about smiling?

1.4 Requests and refusals 1

What are good phrases and words to use when you want to politely ask someone to do something? What should one avoid saying?

How can you politely refuse, say, an invitation? Can you think of a couple of useful and polite, answers?

1.5 Requests and refusals 2

What phrases can be used to soften a negative message in general?

How can you politely interrupt someone?

How can you politely say, "I don't understand what you just said"?

Is it possible to be overly polite? Can you think of any examples?



2. Short e-mails

2.1 Suitable language

What kind of language is a definite no-no in an official but short e-mail?

Can you think of any mistakes a foreigner might make when it comes to names and titles in an e-mail? Are there any guidelines?

2.2 A negative response

Can you list a few polite phrases that can be used to soften a negative response, for example?

Can you list a few polite phrases that can be used, for instance, when someone will be away from the office until next week and a customer has emailed them?

2.3 Indicating brevity

Can you think of any polite words or phrases to use in an e-mail to make it clear to the reader that the message is going to be very brief?

How would you politely suggest a meeting and a time for it in a short e-mail?

2.4 An informative email

What would you write in a short e-mail informing your fellow workers that you are leaving the company?

What would you write in a short e-mail to a colleague who is leaving the company?

2.5 A congratulation email & An invitation

What would you say in a short e-mail congratulating someone on being promoted?

Someone has invited you to his or her party. What would you write in a short e-mail to say that you're not sure if you can make it but will do your best?

2.6 A gentle reminder & Asking someone to do something

The vice-president is visiting your company next Thursday. What would you write in a short e-mail to all employees to remind them?

Your company's 5-year-party is coming up. What would you write in a short e-mail to an employee to ask her to take care of the catering for the party?

2.7 Checking understanding

What would you write in a short e-mail to check that you've understood something?

2.8 polite emails

How would you politely start an e-mail when it is going to be very short to thank someone for something (for example, a received message)?

How would you politely start an e-mail when it is going to be very short to remind someone of something (for example, an office party)?

How would you politely start an e-mail when it is going to be very short to inform someone of something (for example, a new mobile number)?

2.9 Good and bad news

How would you politely start an e-mail when it is going to be very short to tell someone about something good (for example, new polls)?

How would you politely start an e-mail when it is going to be very short to give someone bad news (for example, someone's sick)?

How would you politely start an e-mail when it is going to be very short to check something?

2.10 Happy and sad events

How would you politely start an e-mail when it is going to be very short to congratulate someone on something good (for example, a good presentation)?

How would you politely start an e-mail when it is going to be very short to commiserate?

How would you politely start an e-mail when it is going to be very short to wish someone a speedy recovery?



3. Meetings

3.1 Face-to-face meetings

Why are face-to-face meetings necessary when you could just e-mail or phone the people?

3.2 Different types of meeting

What different types of meeting can you distinguish?

What is the difference between different types of meetings?

3.3 Opening an informative meeting

What would you say if you opened an informative meeting on a company's structural change (for example, several new offices will be opened in the new EU countries)?

3.4 Opening a brainstorming meeting

What would you say if you opened a brainstorming meeting on, for example, finding solutions to the recent loss in customers?

3.5 Opening a management meeting

What would you say if you opened a management meeting on, for example, the future of an employee of the company (he has not been meeting his set targets lately)?

3.6 Differences in understanding

Do different cultures perceive meetings differently? Can this cause problems?

3.7 Setting a meeting up

How do you set a meeting up? Are there any fixed phrases one could use?

3.8 Calling about a meeting

What would you say if you called a few colleagues of yours and suggested an informal meeting on the new marketing strategies?

What would you write if you mailed your sales team and suggested a formal meeting on the new marketing strategies (someone from the executive level will be attending too)?

3.9 Confirming a meeting

Can you think of any phrases to use when you confirm a meeting?

Does the amount of people at a meeting influence the contents, the nature, or the outcomes of the meeting?

3.10 Preparing for a meeting

Is it necessary to plan or prepare for a meeting? What kinds of actions usually take place?

3.11 Informing about a meeting

What would you say if you wanted to make it clear that people should come to the meeting prepared and with new ideas?

What would you say if you wanted people to come to the meeting "unprepared", the idea of the meeting is to brainstorm together?

3.12 An agenda

What is 'an agenda' and what information does it contain?

3.13 Setting the agenda

Can you think of any phrases to use when setting the agenda by e-mail? How should possible changes to the

agenda be pointed out?

3.14 Rules of a meeting

Can you think of any general rules for the meeting itself?

Can anyone speak at anytime, is there 'a leader' at a meeting?

3.15 Meeting with familiar people

Does it affect the situation if the person holding the meeting knows the participants well?

3.16 Opening up the conversation

How can one open up the conversation? Can you think of any examples of what one might say?

3.17 Making a suggestion

How can one make a suggestion?

How would you phrase your statements to make them more persuasive?

3.18 Opposing something

What can one say if one wants to oppose something someone has suggested?

3.19 Small talk and humour

Is there any small talk at a meeting? What about humour?

3.20 Closing the meeting

How can one close the meeting? Can you think of any examples of what one might say?

3.21 Taking notes

What about taking notes, do all the participants write down what they feel is important?

3.22 The minutes of a meeting

What are 'the minutes' and what should they contain?

3.23 Fixed phrase in the minutes

Can you think of any fixed phrases or terms that are used in 'the minutes of a meeting'?



4. Business letters

4.1 The style of writing

What is the preferable style of writing in today's business letters?

4.2 Sentences and paragraphs

How long should sentences be? What about paragraphs?

4.3 Writing the date

What's the correct way to write the date?

4.4 Addressing the recipient

How should you address the recipient? What if you know/don't know the recipient? What should you write if you don't know if the recipient is a woman or a man?

Should there be a separate opening in a business letter, or can one go straight to the point?

4.5 Starting a letter

Are there any fixed phrases to use in a polite opening? And greeting-wise?

How can you make your message more personal? What is too personal?

4.6 Answering a complaint

How can you politely answer a complaint?

4.7 Ending

What about closing, are there any fixed phrases to use there?

4.8 Referring to an advertisement

What would you write if you were referring to an ad you've seen at a paper?

What would you write if you were attaching a form (that was requested by a client)?

4.9 An opening

What would you write if you were applying to an opening?

What would you write if you were inquiring about openings?

4.10 An invitation

What would you write if you were inviting someone to

visit your company?

What would you write if you were replying to an invitation?

4.11 Confirming a reservation & writing an agenda

What would you write if you were confirming a reservation?

What would you write if you were writing an agenda?

4.12 A cover note & placing an order

What would you write if you were writing a cover note?

What would you write if you were placing an order?

4.13 Writing a complaint

What would you write if you were complaining about damaged goods?



5. Telephoning

5.1 Starting a phone conversation

How would you start a telephone conversation?

What would you say if you were returning a call?

What do you say when a switchboard operator answers?

5.2 Giving your name

How do you give your name at the start of the conversation?

Is there a difference if you know the person on the other end?

How do you leave a voice mail message?

5.3 When someone else answers

What do you say when someone else other than the person you were trying to reach answers the phone?

Do you have to explain the nature of your call to the person answering? How much should you tell?

5.4 An official telephone call

How casual can you be if you're making an official telephone call?

What is too informal?

How much small talk is necessary?

5.5 Giving information on the phone

Do you have any advice on giving information on the phone?

How can you politely make sure that the person on the other end has understood everything they were supposed to?

5.6 Problems in understanding

If you really have problems understanding everything, is there a polite way to ask the person on the other end to send a recapping e-mail or fax, for example?

How do you bring the call to an end if the person you're talking to seems to be in no hurry to end it?

5.7 Answering the phone 1

How do you answer the phone? Can you give a few examples, please? Do you answer your mobile and, say, your work phone differently?

How would you react if the person calling had a foreign name and you missed it?

5.8 Answering the phone 2

What would you say if you are the person the caller is trying to reach?

What do you say if the caller is trying to reach someone else and they are not available or busy with something else?

5.9 "Can I call back?"

What would you say if you were in the middle of something and would like to ring the caller back?

How do you get the caller to say what they are calling about?

What do you say when you are not sure if you heard, say, a date that the caller has given you correctly?

5.10 Too much talk

What can you do if the caller talks a lot and you have trouble picking up the important bits of information?

How can you interrupt the caller politely?

5.11 Silence

How much silence is OK? How can you be an active listener?

5.12 Responding to a complaint & Ending a call

If the caller is complaining about something (for example, a late delivery), what would be the correct way to respond to that?

If you feel someone else could help the caller better, how can you politely transfer the call?

How do you end a call politely? Are there any key

phrases that would be good to use? How do you thank the caller for calling?



6. Presentations

6.1 Nervousness

Most people are a bit nervous when they start their presentation. Does it matter if it shows, and what are good ways to relax?

6.2 Body language

How important is body language in presentations? Is there anything that the speaker should/shouldn't do? How important is the appearance of the speaker?

6.3 Audience's reaction

How much should the speaker pay attention to his audience's reactions?

6.4 Beginning the conversation

How do you begin the presentation? Are there any phrases you could use?

6.5 Outlining the presentation

How would you outline your presentation? Can you give any examples?

6.6 Moving on

How can you move from the overview to the actual contents of your presentation?

How can you tell your audience that you're moving to your next point?

6.7 Linking phrases

Are there any phrases one can use to link different subjects together?

Are there any phrases to use when you refer to common knowledge?

6.8 Summarising

How important is summarising? When should you do that?

What would you say when you want to summarise what you've said?

6.9 Interruptions

If someone interrupts you, how can you politely say that you would like to finish first?

How would you comment or react if someone interrupted you and suggested something?

6.10 Ending the presentation

Are there any phrases to use when you are at the end of your presentation?