



Meeting Skills

Meetings are an integral part of work life. It's where important issues are discussed, the senior decision-makers are in attendance and you need to put yourself across positively. However, because non-native English speakers might feel self-conscious about their English, they often remain quiet even though they are subject matter experts and undoubtedly have great ideas to offer. Here is a check-list to help non-native speakers present their ideas clearly.

Checklist: Hosting a Meeting	
Skill	Suggested language
<p>Introducing yourself and participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks for coming and welcome • My name's and I've been working as for the past years • It's great to see you (all again) • I'm looking forward to our time together • This is an excellent opportunity for us to share our ideas and concerns • Do you all know each other? • I'm going to ask you to say a few words by way of introduction... • This is to enable you to (get to know your colleagues a little better) • Please join me in welcoming I don't think you've met • So, now we all know who we are
<p>Outlining the agenda and organisation of the meeting (sequencing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We've got a lot to go through • I'll go over the outline • I suggest that we.... • So, let's get going. We need to start by.... • First, we are going to Then, we will Finally, you will
<p>Stating aims and purpose Stating expected outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're here today to • Our aim is to ... I've called this meeting in order to ... By the end of this meeting, I'd like to have ... • So by the end of we will be in a position to So that we can
<p>Checking understanding and inviting questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is that clear? Are there any questions? • Is there anything anyone would like to add or comment on? • Is there anything you want to raise? • Is there anything anyone would like to add or comment on?

Checklist: Presenting Information

Skill	Suggested language
Reassure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OK, this is to let you know how things stand at the moment. • We're on schedule/budget
Introduction facts / problem / issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, this meeting/call is to bring you up to date on developments concerning • First of all, I need to highlight a problem we're facing • We may go behind schedule/over budget • What we're finding is that • The budget will/won't stretch to which means that • We're unlikely to
Give reasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're in this situation because • Looking at the situation realisticallythis means either or • As you are well aware
Offer a solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First of all • Given this situation, we could • Let me outline an alternative which means • What we could do is instead of
Build an argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evidence seems to be saying • (Research) suggests that • I think it will be good to and besides • Taking into account what you have just said • That's true to a certain extent, however • I'm willing to concede that • One area of concern seems
Invite responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now is your opportunity to ask questions • I'm open to any suggestions from you • How will this impact on? • Supposing we did • What are your feelings on this? • Do you agree with? • Are we all in agreement on this?

Checklist: Problem Solving

Skill	Suggested language
Making suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What if?• How about?
Building on suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I understand what you're saying• I'd go along with that• Have you thought about?• Maybe / perhaps we could?• Picking up on• One idea might be to
Responding to suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That's a real possibility. Can you expand on that?• Picking up on that point• I really like that idea• Perhaps we should rule that one out• I don't think that's very realistic• I can't see that one working
Summing up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As I said before• Either we or

Checklist: Reaching a Consensus

Skill	Suggested language
Putting my point of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One ..seems to be • We need to
Developing my argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evidence seems to be saying • What's more
Defending my point of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As I mentioned before • I can't accept that • I still think • Aside from • I'm sorry but I can't agree with you on that
Making concessions / listening to different viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand what you're saying • I'm not so sure about ... • I'd have to (dis)agree with (a person/point) about • It's true that • I guess that's true to a certain extent • I'm willing to concede that
Reaching agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's your reaction? • Either we or • Are we all in agreement on? • Does that seem reasonable?
Moving from item to item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that covers the first item Shall we leave that item? If nobody has anything else to add • Let's move onto the next item The next item on the agenda is Now we come to the question of

Checklist: Summarising and Closing

Skill	Suggested language
Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can we leave it there, because time is running out• I'd like to bring the meeting to a close• The next step is to decide where we go from here• This seems a suitable point at which to bring the meeting to a close
Summarising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I'll recap / sum up / go over what's been decided• Does that cover the main points?
Organising follow-up: allocating tasks, setting deadlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We need to decide (who's going to do what / where we go from here)• Can / could I ask you to?
Thanking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I'd like to thank you for all your contributions• I've really enjoyed the opportunity to

Meeting Vocabulary

Word part of speech	Meaning	Example sentence
absent <i>adjective</i>	not present	The vice president is absent due to unforeseen circumstances.
accomplish <i>verb</i>	succeed in doing	We have a lot to accomplish today, so let's begin.
address <i>verb</i>	deal with; speak on	I hope we do not have to address this matter again in the future.
adjourn <i>verb</i>	close a meeting	If there are no further comments, we will adjourn the meeting here.
agenda <i>noun</i>	list of objectives to cover in a meeting	Please forward the agenda to anyone who is speaking at the meeting.
AGM <i>noun(abbr.)</i>	Annual (yearly) General Meeting	We always vote for a new chairperson at the AGM .
allocate <i>verb</i>	assign roles/tasks to certain people	I forgot to allocate someone to bring refreshments.
AOB <i>noun(abbr.)</i>	Any Other Business (unspecified item on agenda)	The last item on the agenda is AOB .
apologies <i>noun</i>	item on agenda announcing people who are absent; apologies for absence	Everyone is present today, so we can skip the apologies .
ballot <i>noun</i>	a type of vote, usually in writing and usually secret	Please fold your ballot in half before you place it in the box.
board of directors <i>noun</i>	group of elected members of an organization/company who meet to make decisions	The board of directors meets once a month to discuss the budget.
boardroom <i>noun</i>	a large meeting room, often has one long table and many chairs	The boardroom is reserved for a managers' meeting, so we'll have to meet in the lounge.

Meeting Vocabulary

Word part of speech	Meaning	Example sentence
brainstorm <i>verb</i>	thinking to gather ideas	Let's take a few minutes and brainstorm some ways that we can cut costs.
casting vote <i>noun</i>	deciding vote (usually by the chairman) when the votes are otherwise equal	The role of treasurer was decided based on the chairman's casting vote .
chairperson/ chair <i>noun</i>	the person who leads or presides at a meeting	As chair , it is my pleasure to introduce to you, Mr. Allan Davis.
clarification/ verification <i>noun</i>	explanation/proof that something is true/understood	Before we address this matter, I'll need some clarification as to who was involved.
closing remarks <i>noun</i>	last thoughts spoken in a meeting (i.e. reminders, thank yous)	I just have a few closing remarks and then you will all be free to go.
collaborate <i>verb</i>	work together as a pair/group	The board fell apart because the members had difficulty collaborating .
commence <i>verb</i>	begin	We will commence as soon as the last person signs the attendance sheet.
comment <i>verb or noun</i>	express one's opinions or thoughts	If you have a comment , please raise your hand rather than speak out.
conference <i>noun</i>	formal meeting for discussion, esp. a regular one held by an organisation	Before the conference there will be a private meeting for board members only.
conference call <i>noun</i>	telephone meeting between three or more people in different locations	Please make sure I have no interruptions while I'm on the conference call .
confidential <i>adjective</i>	private; not to be shared	Any financial information shared during this meeting should be kept confidential .

Meeting Vocabulary

Word part of speech	Meaning	Example sentence
consensus <i>noun</i>	general agreement	If we cannot come to a consensus by the end of the meeting we will put it to a vote.
deadline <i>noun</i>	due date for completion	The deadline for buying tickets to the conference is May 25th.
designate <i>verb</i>	assign	If no one volunteers to take the minutes I will be forced to designate someone.
formality <i>noun</i>	a procedure (often unnecessary) that has to be followed due to a rule	Everyone knows who is going to be the next vice president, so this vote is really just a formality .
grievance <i>noun</i>	complaint	The first item on the agenda relates to a grievance reported by the interns.
guest speaker <i>noun</i>	person who joins the group in order to share information or deliver a speech	I am delighted to welcome our guest speaker Holly, who is going to be offering some sales pitch tips.
implement <i>verb</i>	make something happen; follow through	It's not a question of whether or not we're going to use this idea, it's whether or not we know how to implement it.
mandatory <i>adjective</i>	required	It is mandatory that all supervisors attend Friday's meeting.
minutes <i>noun</i>	a written record of everything said at a meeting	Before we begin with today's meeting, let's quickly review the minutes from last month.
motion <i>noun</i>	a suggestion put to a vote	The motion to extend store hours has been passed.
objectives <i>noun</i>	goals to accomplish	I'm pleased that we were able to cover all of the objectives today within the designated time.

Meeting Vocabulary

Word part of speech	Meaning	Example sentence
opening remarks <i>noun</i>	chairperson or leader's first words at a meeting (i.e. welcome, introductions)	As I mentioned in my opening remarks, we have to clear this room before the end of the hour.
overhead projector <i>noun</i>	machine with a special light that projects a document onto a screen or wall so that all can see	I'm going to put a pie chart on the overhead projector so that everyone can visualize how our profits have declined.
participant <i>noun</i>	person who attends and joins in on an event	Can I have a show of hands of all of those who were participants in last year's conference?
proxy vote <i>noun</i>	a vote cast by one person for or in place of another	There must have been one proxy vote because I count twelve ballots but only eleven attendees.
punctual <i>adjective</i>	on time (not late)	Firstly, I want to thank you all for being punctual despite this early meeting.
recommend <i>verb</i>	suggest	I recommend that you sit closer to the front if you have trouble hearing.
show of hands <i>noun</i>	raised hands to express an opinion in a vote	From the show of hands it appears that everyone is in favour of taking a short break.
strategy <i>noun</i>	plan to make something work	We need to come up with a strategy that will allow us to have meetings less frequently.
unanimous <i>adjective</i>	in complete agreement; united in opinion	The vote was unanimous to cut work hours on Fridays.
vote <i>verb or noun</i>	to express (the expression of) an opinion in a group by voice or hand etc	We need to vote for a new vice chairperson now that Jerry is retiring.
wrap up <i>verb</i>	finish	Let's wrap up here so that we can get back to our desks.

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