

Be the Professional YOU

Business English for Meetings, Emails, Calls & Presentations

Practical English for real workplace communication

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This book is intended for educational purposes. It provides practical examples and guidance for improving English communication in professional settings. The examples are general learning resources and should be adapted to the reader's workplace, role, and communication needs.

Individual learning progress will vary depending on practice, experience, and personal circumstances. This book does not guarantee employment, promotion, business results, or any specific professional outcome.

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How to Use This Book

This book is designed to be a practical learning companion. You can read it from beginning to end or use individual chapters whenever you need help with a specific workplace situation.

For the best learning experience:

1. **Read for understanding.** Notice when and why a particular phrase is used.
2. **Practise aloud.** Repeat useful expressions until they feel more natural.
3. **Personalise the examples.** Adapt sample sentences and dialogues to your own role and workplace.
4. **Complete the activities.** Use the exercises to check your understanding and practise applying what you have learned.
5. **Review regularly.** Return to useful phrases and try using them in real communication.

You do not need to memorise every expression. Choose a few that are relevant to your daily work and practise using them consistently.

Introduction

Do you hesitate before speaking in meetings?

Do you struggle to write professional emails that communicate your ideas clearly?

Do you know what you want to say at work but find it difficult to express yourself confidently in English?

You are not alone.

Many professionals understand English reasonably well but feel less confident when they need to use it in real workplace situations. They may know the vocabulary and grammar, yet hesitate when contributing to a meeting, responding to a colleague, writing an email, or presenting an idea.

The challenge is often not simply knowing English. It is knowing **how to use it naturally, clearly, and appropriately at work.**

That is what this book is designed to help you practise.

What You Will Learn

In this practical guide, you will explore how to:

- **Participate in meetings:** Share opinions, ask questions, agree or disagree politely, clarify information, and summarise discussions.
- **Write professional emails:** Make requests, follow up, apologise, confirm details, and communicate clearly with colleagues and clients.
- **Handle calls and virtual conversations:** Ask for repetition, clarify information, respond professionally, and manage common communication difficulties.
- **Present your ideas:** Introduce a topic, organise key points, explain information, handle questions, and conclude confidently.
- **Communicate appropriately at work:** Choose suitable expressions, maintain a professional tone, and avoid common communication mistakes.
- **Build your skills through practice:** Use examples, exercises, and a structured practice plan to make workplace English part of your routine.

A Practical Guide, Not a Theory Book

This book focuses on **real-world business communication**. You will find practical expressions, workplace examples, sample conversations, and activities that help you understand how English is used in professional settings.

You do not need to memorise every phrase. Start by choosing expressions that are useful for your own work, practise them aloud or in writing, and gradually build your confidence.

You can work through the chapters in order or return to a specific section whenever you need help with a meeting, email, call, or presentation.

Make Practice Part of Your Progress

Confidence develops through use. The more opportunities you create to practise clear and appropriate communication, the more familiar these situations can become.

Use this book as a practical companion to your everyday professional life. Take one phrase, one example, or one communication skill at a time—and put it into practice.

Your goal is not to speak perfect English. It is to communicate your ideas clearly, professionally, and with greater confidence.

Chapter 1: Build a Strong Business English Foundation

Introduction

Have you ever known exactly what you wanted to say in a meeting but struggled to express it in English?

Perhaps you have written an email several times because you were unsure whether it sounded professional. Or maybe you have wanted to ask a colleague for something but worried that your words might sound too direct.

These situations are common among people who use English as an additional language.

Business English is not about using complicated words or speaking in a stiff, overly formal manner. It is about communicating **clearly, politely, and appropriately in professional situations**.

A strong foundation helps you choose the right words, organise your thoughts, and communicate with greater confidence.

In this chapter, you will learn what business English means, how it differs from casual English, and how to make your everyday communication more professional.

1. What Is Business English?

Business English is the form of English used in professional environments. It helps people communicate with colleagues, managers, clients, customers, suppliers, and business partners.

You may use business English when you:

- Participate in meetings and discussions
- Write emails and workplace messages
- Give presentations
- Prepare reports and documents
- Speak with clients or customers
- Request information or provide updates
- Explain problems and suggest solutions
- Negotiate deadlines, responsibilities, or business arrangements

Business English is generally more structured and purpose-driven than casual conversation. It often requires a professional tone, clear organisation, and careful word choice.

However, professional English does not always have to be formal. The language you use with a close colleague may be different from the language you use in a client proposal or a message to senior management.

The key is to choose language that suits the **person, purpose, and situation**.

Example: One Message, Different Situations

Imagine you need a colleague to send you a report.

Casual message to a close colleague:

“Can you send me the report?”

Polite workplace message:

“Could you please send me the report when you have a chance?”

More formal request:

“Could you please share the report by 3 p.m. today? I need it to prepare for tomorrow’s meeting.”

All three messages communicate the same basic request. The difference is in tone, detail, and context.

Notice that the final example is not simply more formal. It also explains the deadline and reason for the request, making it easier for the recipient to respond appropriately.

2. Casual English vs Professional English

Casual English is commonly used with friends, family, and people you know well. Professional English is used when communicating in workplace situations.

The difference is not always about grammar. It often involves tone, vocabulary, clarity, and the relationship between the speakers.

A. Tone: Sounding Polite and Respectful

Tone is the attitude or feeling communicated through your words.

A message can be grammatically correct but still sound demanding, impatient, or unfriendly.

Casual or very direct:

“Can you do this?”

More polite:

“Could you please take care of this?”

Professional and specific:

“Could you please complete this task by Thursday afternoon?”

The professional version communicates the request clearly while maintaining a respectful tone.

Useful expressions for polite requests

- Could you please...?
- Would you mind...?
- Would it be possible to...?
- Could I ask you to...?
- When you have a moment, could you...?

Examples:

“Could you please review the attached document?”

“Would you mind sharing the meeting notes?”

“Would it be possible to reschedule our call for Friday?”

Use these expressions when making requests, especially when you are communicating with clients, managers, or colleagues you do not know well.

B. Vocabulary: Choosing Clear and Appropriate Words

Casual English often includes slang, informal expressions, and shortened forms such as *gonna*, *wanna*, and *gotta*.

These expressions may be natural in relaxed conversation, but they are generally unsuitable for formal reports, professional emails, and business documents.

Compare the following:

Casual or informal	Professional alternative
I wanna discuss this.	I'd like to discuss this.
We gotta finish it today.	We need to complete it today.
Send me the stuff.	Please send me the documents.
The plan is kinda confusing.	The plan is somewhat unclear.
Let's figure it out.	Let's work out a solution.

Professional vocabulary does not mean using the longest or most complicated word available.

For example, “use” is often clearer than “utilise,” and “help” is usually more natural than “facilitate” in everyday workplace communication.

Aim for language that is clear, precise, and appropriate—not unnecessarily complicated.

C. Grammar: Making Your Meaning Clear

Professional communication benefits from complete sentences and clear sentence structure.

In casual conversation, people sometimes use fragments because the context makes the meaning obvious.

Casual:

“Finished the report. Sending it now.”

Professional:

“I have finished the report and am sending it to you now.”

The professional version makes the subject and action clear.

A useful basic sentence structure is:

Subject + Verb + Object

Examples:

- I reviewed the proposal.
- The team completed the project.
- We need additional information.

- The client approved the revised design.

This structure is not the only correct way to form a sentence, but it is a useful starting point for clear workplace communication.

Common grammar improvements

Informal: “I am writing to tell you about the changes.”

More professional: “I am writing to inform you about the changes.”

Unclear: “The report not ready.”

Clear: “The report is not ready yet.”

Unclear: “We discussed about the project.”

Correct: “We discussed the project.”

Unclear: “Please revert back to me.”

Clear: “Please get back to me.”

The goal is not to make every sentence sound formal. It is to make your meaning easy to understand and your communication suitable for the situation.

D. Politeness: Making Requests Without Sounding Demanding

Politeness is important in professional communication because people work with different responsibilities, expectations, and communication styles.

Compare:

Too direct:

“Give me the file.”

Polite:

“Could you please send me the file?”

Polite and specific:

“Could you please send me the latest version of the file by 2 p.m.? I need it for the client meeting.”

The third version is especially useful because it tells the recipient exactly what is needed and when.

However, politeness does not mean making every request excessively indirect. In a busy workplace, clear and respectful communication is often more effective than lengthy wording.

For example:

“Please send me the revised figures by 4 p.m. so I can include them in the report.”

This is direct, professional, and respectful.

3. The Four Principles of Effective Business English

When communicating at work, keep these four principles in mind.

1. Clarity

Make your message easy to understand.

Instead of:

“We need to do something about the issue soon.”

Say:

“We need to review the delivery delay and agree on a revised schedule by tomorrow.”

2. Conciseness

Avoid unnecessary words and repeated information.

Instead of:

“I am writing this email in order to inform you that the meeting has been postponed to a later date.”

Say:

“The meeting has been postponed. I will share the revised date shortly.”

3. Courtesy

Use respectful language, especially when making requests, giving feedback, or disagreeing.

Instead of:

“Your figures are wrong.”

Say:

“I noticed a difference in the figures. Could we review them together?”

4. Context

Choose language based on your audience and purpose.

A quick message to a teammate may be brief and conversational. A proposal to a new client may require a more formal tone and a clearer structure.

Before speaking or writing, ask yourself:

- Who am I communicating with?
- What do I need to communicate?
- What action or response do I need?
- What tone is appropriate for this situation?

These questions can help you make better language choices.

4. Why Business English Matters

Effective business English can help you communicate your ideas, responsibilities, and questions more clearly in the workplace.

It can help you:

- Express your thoughts more confidently in meetings
- Write emails that are easier to understand
- Build professional relationships through clear communication
- Explain problems and suggest solutions
- Participate in conversations with international colleagues and clients
- Present information in a structured way
- Reduce misunderstandings caused by unclear wording

Communication is one part of professional development. Strong English skills do not automatically guarantee a promotion, leadership role, or business result, but they can help you communicate your work and ideas more effectively.

Example: Communicating a Problem Professionally

Imagine that you cannot complete a task by the agreed deadline.

Unclear response:

“I can’t do it. There is a problem.”

Clear and professional response:

“I’m experiencing a delay because I’m waiting for the updated figures. I expect to complete the task by Friday afternoon. I’ll let you know if the timeline changes.”

The professional response explains the issue, provides an expected timeline, and offers a follow-up.

This is an example of how clear communication can help others understand a situation and decide what needs to happen next.

5. Common Business English Mistakes

The following expressions are often heard in workplace communication. The alternatives are generally clearer or more natural in professional contexts.

Common mistake or less suitable expression	Better alternative
Discuss about the issue	Discuss the issue
Revert back to me	Get back to me
Do the needful	Please take the necessary action
I have a doubt	I have a question
Please explain me	Please explain it to me
I am having a meeting	I have a meeting
Kindly do one thing	Could you please...?
Myself Sonika	My name is Sonika. / I’m Sonika.

Some expressions may be common in particular regions or workplaces. The alternatives in this table are suggested for broad, clear communication with an international audience.

Practice: Improve the Sentence

Rewrite each sentence to make it clearer or more appropriate for a professional situation.

1. “Send me the file quickly.”
2. “I have a doubt about the new policy.”

3. "We discussed about the budget."
4. "I wanna talk to you about the project."
5. "The report not ready."
6. "Please revert back with the details."
7. "Give me your feedback."
8. "I can't do this because you didn't send the information."

6. Practical Exercise: Choose the Right Tone

Read each situation and choose the most suitable response.

Situation 1: You need a colleague to review a document.

- A. "Check this now."
- B. "Could you please review this document when you have a chance?"
- C. "You have to check this."

Situation 2: You do not understand a point in a meeting.

- A. "What are you saying?"
- B. "I don't get it."
- C. "Could you please clarify that point?"

Situation 3: You disagree with a colleague's suggestion.

- A. "That's a bad idea."
- B. "I see your point. Could we also consider another approach?"
- C. "No, you are wrong."

Situation 4: You need to explain a delay.

- A. "It's late. I couldn't finish."
- B. "The task is delayed because I'm waiting for the updated figures. I'll share a revised timeline shortly."
- C. "Not my fault."

7. Answer Key and Suggested Responses

Sentence Improvement

1. "Could you please send me the file as soon as possible?"
2. "I have a question about the new policy."
3. "We discussed the budget."
4. "I'd like to discuss the project with you."
5. "The report is not ready yet."

6. “Please get back to me with the details.”
7. “Could you please share your feedback?”
8. “I’m unable to complete this yet because I’m waiting for the information. Could you please send it when you have a chance?”

Other answers may also be correct if they are clear, polite, and appropriate to the situation.

Choose the Right Tone

1. B
2. C
3. B
4. B

8. Chapter Takeaways

A strong business English foundation is built through clear and appropriate communication—not complicated vocabulary.

Remember these key points:

- Business English is used in professional situations such as meetings, emails, calls, and presentations.
- Professional communication should be clear, concise, courteous, and suited to the context.
- Politeness does not require long or complicated sentences.
- Complete sentences and accurate grammar help prevent misunderstandings.
- Choose expressions based on your audience, purpose, and situation.
- Practise useful phrases regularly so you can use them more naturally.

Your Practice Challenge

For the next three working days, choose one expression from this chapter and use it in a real or practice workplace situation.

Day 1: Make a polite request using “Could you please...?”

Day 2: Ask for clarification using “Could you please clarify...?”

Day 3: Explain a task update using a complete sentence that includes the current status and next step.

At the end of the three days, reflect:

- Which expression felt easiest to use?
- Which one required more practice?
- Did the expression help you communicate your message clearly?

Small, consistent practice can help professional English become a more natural part of your working day.

In the next chapter, we will build your business vocabulary and explore how to use useful workplace terms naturally in context.

Chapter 2: Essential Business Vocabulary for Work

Introduction

Using the right vocabulary improves clarity and professionalism. In the workplace, a few well-chosen words can help you explain an idea, discuss a problem, understand a report, or contribute to a meeting more effectively.

Business vocabulary may seem complicated at first, especially when you encounter unfamiliar terms in emails, presentations, or discussions. However, you do not need to memorise every business term. Start with words that are relevant to your role and learn how they are used in complete sentences.

In this chapter, you will explore common business terms and vocabulary used in finance, marketing, and management. You will also practise using these words in workplace contexts.

1. Common Business Terms

1. Business Model

Meaning: A business model explains how a company operates, provides value to customers, and generates revenue.

Example:

“Our business model focuses on subscription services.”

In the workplace:

You may hear this term when colleagues discuss how a company earns money, serves customers, or plans to grow.

Another example:

“Before launching the product, we need to review whether our business model is sustainable.”

2. Value Proposition

Meaning: The main benefit or value a company promises to provide to its customers. It explains why customers might choose its product or service.

Example:

“Our value proposition is fast and affordable service.”

In the workplace:

This term is often used in marketing, sales, and business planning.

Another example:

“Our value proposition is built around convenience, reliability, and customer support.”

3. KPI (Key Performance Indicator)

Meaning: A measurable value used to track progress or evaluate performance against a goal.

Example:

“Customer satisfaction is one of our key KPIs.”

In the workplace:

Teams use KPIs to monitor results and understand whether they are meeting their objectives.

Another example:

“Our main KPI this quarter is to reduce the average customer response time.”

Useful expressions:

- Track a KPI
- Meet a KPI
- Monitor performance
- Review results against targets

4. Profit Margin

Meaning: The percentage of revenue that remains as profit after the relevant costs have been deducted.

Example:

“We are working to improve our profit margin.”

In the workplace:

This term is commonly used when discussing pricing, costs, profitability, and financial performance.

Another example:

“The finance team is reviewing costs to understand why our profit margin has decreased.”

5. Competitive Advantage

Meaning: A feature, capability, or strength that helps a company compete effectively with other businesses.

Example:

“Our competitive advantage is innovation.”

In the workplace:

Companies may discuss their competitive advantage when planning products, marketing strategies, or business growth.

Another example:

“Our strong customer support gives us a competitive advantage in this market.”

2. Sector-Specific Business Vocabulary

Different departments use specialised vocabulary. Learning common terms from finance, marketing, and management can help you understand workplace discussions even if you do not work directly in those fields.

A. Finance Vocabulary

1. Leverage

Meaning: Using borrowed funds or financial resources to increase potential returns. Leverage can also increase financial risk.

Example:

“The company is considering using leverage to finance its expansion.”

Common phrase: Use leverage

2. Liquidity

Meaning: The ability of a person or organisation to access cash or convert assets into cash to meet short-term financial obligations.

Example:

“The finance team is monitoring liquidity to ensure that the company can meet its short-term payments.”

Common phrase: Maintain sufficient liquidity

3. Hedging

Meaning: Using a financial strategy or instrument to reduce exposure to a particular risk, such as changes in currency or commodity prices.

Example:

“The company uses hedging to reduce the risk of currency fluctuations.”

Common phrase: Hedge against risk

B. Marketing Vocabulary

1. Conversion Rate

Meaning: The percentage of people who complete a desired action, such as making a purchase, signing up for a newsletter, or submitting a form.

Example:

“We are testing a new landing page to improve the conversion rate.”

Common phrase: Improve the conversion rate

2. SEO (Search Engine Optimisation)

Meaning: The process of improving a website’s visibility in search engine results.

Example:

“Our marketing team is working on SEO to increase organic website traffic.”

Common phrase: Improve search visibility

3. Customer Journey

Meaning: The stages a customer goes through when discovering, considering, purchasing, and using a product or service.

Example:

“We need to understand the customer journey before redesigning the website.”

Common phrase: Map the customer journey

C. Management Vocabulary

1. Leadership Style

Meaning: The way a person leads, guides, and manages a team.

Example:

“Her leadership style encourages collaboration and open communication.”

Common phrase: Adopt a leadership style

2. Resource Allocation

Meaning: The process of distributing available resources—such as time, money, staff, or equipment—among different tasks or projects.

Example:

“Effective resource allocation will help us complete the project on schedule.”

Common phrase: Review resource allocation

3. SWOT Analysis

Meaning: A planning framework used to identify:

- **Strengths:** Internal advantages or capabilities
- **Weaknesses:** Internal limitations or areas for improvement
- **Opportunities:** External conditions that may support growth
- **Threats:** External conditions that may create challenges

Example:

“We will conduct a SWOT analysis before finalising the new business strategy.”

Common phrase: Conduct a SWOT analysis

3. Using Business Vocabulary Naturally

Knowing a definition is only the first step. To use a business term confidently, learn the words that commonly appear with it and practise using it in a realistic sentence.

For example:

Term: KPI

Instead of memorising only “KPI means Key Performance Indicator,” practise these sentences:

- “We need to define our KPIs for the next quarter.”
- “The team is tracking three key performance indicators.”
- “Our customer satisfaction KPI has improved.”

Similarly, with the term **customer journey**, practise:

- “We need to understand the customer journey.”
- “The marketing team is mapping the customer journey.”
- “The new website is designed to simplify the customer journey.”

A Simple Vocabulary-Building Method

For every new business term:

1. Read the meaning.
2. Notice the example sentence.
3. Identify the situation in which the term is used.
4. Write one sentence related to your own work or interests.
5. Review the term later and try using it without looking at the definition.

This approach helps you learn vocabulary in context rather than as a list of isolated words.

4. Practice Exercise 1: Fill in the Blanks

Choose the correct term from the word bank.

Word Bank: KPI | Hedging | SEO | Business Model | Value Proposition | Liquidity | Conversion Rate | Resource Allocation

1. A _____ helps measure business performance against a specific goal.
2. _____ is a financial strategy used to reduce exposure to certain risks.
3. _____ helps improve a website's visibility in search engine results.
4. A company's _____ explains how it operates and generates revenue.
5. A _____ describes the main benefit a company offers its customers.
6. A company's ability to meet short-term financial obligations is related to its _____.
7. The percentage of website visitors who complete a desired action is the _____.
8. Effective _____ helps ensure that time, money, and staff are assigned appropriately to tasks.

5. Practice Exercise 2: Match the Term to Its Meaning

Match each business term with the correct definition.

Terms

- A. Competitive Advantage
- B. Customer Journey
- C. Profit Margin
- D. Leadership Style
- E. SWOT Analysis

Definitions

1. The stages a customer experiences when discovering, considering, and purchasing a product or service.
2. A framework for identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
3. A feature or capability that helps a company compete effectively.
4. The way a person guides and manages a team.
5. The percentage of revenue remaining as profit after relevant costs.

6. Practice Exercise 3: Use the Terms in Sentences

Complete each sentence using a suitable business term from this chapter.

1. Our marketing team is reviewing the _____ to understand where potential customers leave the website.
2. We need to monitor our _____ to determine whether the project is meeting its target.
3. The company's _____ is based on providing reliable service at an affordable price.
4. The manager is reviewing _____ to ensure that the team has enough time and support to complete the project.
5. Our _____ is the quality of our customer support and the speed of our delivery.

7. Answer Key

Exercise 1: Fill in the Blanks

1. KPI
2. Hedging
3. SEO
4. Business Model
5. Value Proposition
6. Liquidity
7. Conversion Rate
8. Resource Allocation

Exercise 2: Match the Term to Its Meaning

1. B — Customer Journey
2. E — SWOT Analysis
3. A — Competitive Advantage
4. D — Leadership Style
5. C — Profit Margin

Exercise 3: Suggested Answers

1. Customer journey
2. KPI
3. Business model
4. Resource allocation
5. Competitive advantage

Other answers may also be suitable if they fit the meaning of the sentence.

8. Chapter Takeaways

In this chapter, you learned business vocabulary used in general workplace communication and in finance, marketing, and management.

Remember:

- Learn business terms in context rather than memorising definitions alone.
- Pay attention to common word combinations, such as “track a KPI,” “improve the conversion rate,” and “conduct a SWOT analysis.”
- Use examples related to your own work to make vocabulary more meaningful.
- Review new terms regularly and practise using them in complete sentences.
- Choose clear, appropriate vocabulary instead of using complicated words unnecessarily.

Your Practice Challenge

Choose five terms from this chapter.

For each term:

1. Write its meaning in your own words.
2. Create one sentence related to your work or a business you know.
3. Say the sentence aloud.
4. Review the five terms again the next day.

By learning a small number of useful terms at a time and practising them in context, you can gradually build a stronger business English vocabulary.

In the next chapter, we will focus on meetings and learn how to contribute ideas, ask questions, agree or disagree politely, and communicate clearly during workplace discussions.

Chapter 3: Speak Confidently in Meetings

Meetings are a key part of professional life. They give colleagues an opportunity to share ideas, discuss challenges, make decisions, and plan the next steps. The ability to communicate clearly in meetings can significantly impact your career growth.

However, speaking in meetings can feel difficult when you are unsure how to begin, express an opinion, agree or disagree politely, or ask a question. You may understand the discussion but hesitate because you are searching for the right words.

The good news is that you do not need complicated English to participate effectively. Clear, polite, and well-organised sentences can help you communicate your ideas with confidence.

In this chapter, you will learn practical expressions for different stages of a meeting, see how they work in realistic conversations, and practise using them in your own professional situations.

1. Starting a Meeting

The opening of a meeting helps everyone understand its purpose and what will be discussed. If you are leading a meeting, begin with a welcoming sentence and introduce the agenda or objective.

Useful phrases

- “Let’s get started.”
- “The purpose of today’s meeting is...”
- “Before we begin, let’s go over the agenda.”
- “Thank you all for joining.”
- “Let’s begin with a quick overview of today’s topics.”
- “We have three main points to discuss today.”
- “Let’s start with the first item on the agenda.”

Examples

To welcome participants:

“Good morning, everyone. Thank you all for joining.”

To introduce the purpose:

“The purpose of today’s meeting is to review our sales performance and discuss our plans for next month.”

To explain the agenda:

“Before we begin, let’s go over the agenda. First, we’ll review the current results. Then, we’ll discuss the challenges and agree on our next steps.”

Practical tip

If you are leading a meeting, try to explain three things at the beginning:

1. Why the meeting is taking place.
2. What topics will be discussed.
3. What outcome or decision is expected.

You do not need a long introduction. A few clear sentences are usually enough.

2. Giving Your Opinion

Sharing your opinion allows you to contribute ideas and participate actively in a discussion. You can introduce your viewpoint with a simple phrase before explaining your reasoning.

Useful phrases

- “I believe that...”
- “From my perspective...”
- “In my opinion...”
- “I think we should consider...”
- “My suggestion would be to...”
- “One option could be to...”
- “I would recommend...”

Examples

“I believe we should focus more on digital marketing because our target customers are active online.”

“From my perspective, we should complete the customer research before finalising the campaign.”

“My suggestion would be to divide the project into smaller tasks so that we can track progress more easily.”

“One option could be to launch the new feature with a small group of users before making it available to everyone.”

Make your opinion more effective

A useful way to express an opinion is:

Opinion + Reason + Possible next step

For example:

“I believe we should extend the testing period because the team has identified a few issues. We could review the results again on Friday.”

This structure helps you communicate not only what you think, but also why you think it and what could happen next.

3. Agreeing Politely

When you agree with a colleague, you can acknowledge their idea and, when appropriate, explain why you support it.

Useful phrases

- “I completely agree with you.”
- “That’s a great point.”
- “I think that makes sense.”
- “I agree with that approach.”
- “That aligns with what I was thinking.”
- “I’d like to add to that point.”
- “I think we should consider that suggestion.”

Examples

“That’s a great point. Improving the onboarding process could help new employees settle in more quickly.”

“I agree with that approach. It gives us enough time to test the changes before the launch.”

“I’d like to add to that point. We could also collect feedback from the support team.”

Adding to someone else’s idea

You do not always need to repeat that you agree. You can show agreement and contribute something useful.

Colleague: “We should provide customers with a short tutorial.”

You: “I agree. We could also include a quick-start guide in the welcome email.”

This keeps the discussion moving forward.

4. Disagreeing Politely

Disagreement is a normal part of professional discussions. You may have a different opinion, notice a risk, or believe that another option deserves consideration.

The goal is to discuss the idea respectfully rather than criticise the person who suggested it.

Useful phrases

- “I see your point, but...”
- “I respectfully disagree because...”
- “I understand your perspective. However...”
- “I’m not sure that would work because...”
- “Could we also consider another option?”
- “I have a slightly different view.”
- “One concern I have is...”

Examples

“I see your point, but I think we should consider the budget before making a decision.”

“I understand your perspective. However, we may need more time to complete the testing.”

“I have a slightly different view. Instead of launching everything at once, could we introduce the changes in stages?”

“One concern I have is that the proposed timeline may not leave enough time for quality checks.”

A useful disagreement structure

Try this three-step approach:

1. **Acknowledge:** Recognise the other person’s point.
2. **Explain:** State your concern or alternative view.
3. **Suggest:** Offer a possible next step.

For example:

“I understand why you suggested a Friday launch. My concern is that we still have two issues to resolve. Could we review the progress on Thursday before confirming the date?”

This approach keeps the conversation focused on the work and the decision.

5. Asking Questions and Clarifying Information

Asking questions is an important meeting skill. It helps you understand the discussion, identify missing information, and avoid misunderstandings.

You do not need to pretend that you understand something when you do not. A clear, respectful question is often more useful than remaining confused.

Useful phrases

- “Could you elaborate on that?”
- “What exactly do you mean by...?”
- “Can you provide an example?”
- “Do you think this aligns with our goals?”
- “Could you clarify the timeline?”
- “What would be the next step?”
- “Could you explain how this would affect the project?”
- “Just to confirm, are we saying that...?”

Examples

“Could you elaborate on how this change will affect the customer experience?”

“Can you provide an example of what the new process would look like?”

“Could you clarify the timeline? Do we expect to complete the first stage by the end of the month?”

“Just to confirm, are we saying that the design team will share the revised version by Wednesday?”

When you have not understood something

Use a polite clarification phrase:

- “Sorry, could you repeat the last point?”
- “Could you explain that in a little more detail?”
- “I want to make sure I understood correctly. Are you referring to...?”
- “Would you mind sharing that again?”

Asking for clarification is a practical communication skill. It can prevent errors and help everyone leave the meeting with the same understanding.

6. Joining a Discussion and Taking Your Turn

In some meetings, several people may want to speak at the same time. You can use short expressions to enter the discussion without sounding abrupt.

Useful phrases

- “May I add something here?”
- “Could I share a quick thought?”
- “I’d like to build on that point.”
- “Can I come in here?”
- “Before we move on, may I ask a question?”
- “I have one point to add.”

Examples

“May I add something here? We should also consider the support team’s workload.”

“I’d like to build on that point. We could make the process simpler by combining these two steps.”

“Before we move on, may I ask a question about the deadline?”

If you need to interrupt briefly

Sometimes you may need to interrupt to clarify an important detail or correct a misunderstanding. Keep the interruption brief and polite.

For example:

“Sorry to interrupt, but could I clarify one detail?”

“Apologies for jumping in. I just wanted to confirm the date.”

Use these expressions when necessary, and allow the other person to finish when possible.

7. Summarising a Meeting

A meeting summary helps participants remember what was discussed, what decisions were made, and who is responsible for the next steps.

If you are leading the meeting, reserve a little time at the end to review the key points.

Useful phrases

- “To sum up, we’ve decided...”
- “Let’s wrap this up by...”
- “In conclusion, we’ve agreed on...”
- “Before we finish, let’s review the action items.”
- “The next step is...”
- “Could everyone confirm their responsibilities?”
- “Thank you, everyone. I’ll share the meeting notes shortly.”

Examples

“To sum up, we’ve decided to begin the campaign next month.”

“Before we finish, let’s review the action items. Priya will prepare the draft, and Daniel will review the budget.”

“The next step is to collect feedback from the team by Thursday.”

A simple meeting summary

A useful summary can include:

- **Decision:** What has been agreed?
- **Action:** What needs to be done?
- **Owner:** Who will do it?
- **Deadline:** When should it be completed?

For example:

“We’ve agreed to update the product page. Alex will prepare the revised text by Tuesday, and the design team will complete the layout by Friday.”

8. Example Scenario: Discussing a Sales Strategy

The following conversation shows how meeting expressions can be used naturally.

Manager: “Good morning, everyone. Thank you all for joining. The purpose of today’s meeting is to discuss our sales strategy for next quarter.”

Team Member 1: “I think we should focus more on social media marketing.”

Manager: “That’s a great point. Could you elaborate?”

Team Member 1: “Our recent posts have received more engagement. I believe we could reach more potential customers by planning our content more consistently.”

Team Member 2: “I see your point, but I think we should also consider the budget. We may need additional resources to manage the campaign.”

Manager: “That’s a valid concern. What would you suggest?”

Team Member 2: “One option could be to start with a smaller campaign and review the results after one month.”

Team Member 3: “I agree with that approach. We could use the results to decide whether to increase the budget.”

Manager: “That makes sense. Before we move on, does anyone have another suggestion?”

Team Member 1: “Could we also include a short customer survey?”

Manager: “Good idea. To sum up, we’ll prepare a smaller campaign, review the results after one month, and consider adding a customer survey. Let’s confirm the responsibilities before we finish.”

Notice how the participants express opinions, acknowledge concerns, ask questions, and summarise the discussion without using complicated language.

9. Tips for Effective Meetings

Be clear and concise

Share your main point first. Add details only when they help explain your idea.

Instead of giving a long introduction, try:

“My suggestion is to extend the deadline by two days because the testing is not complete.”

Listen actively

Pay attention to what others say. Avoid preparing your response while missing important information.

You can show that you are following the discussion with short phrases such as:

- “I see.”
- “That makes sense.”
- “Understood.”

- “Thank you for explaining.”

Maintain a professional tone

Speak respectfully, even when you disagree. Focus on the idea, the evidence, or the task rather than making personal comments.

Summarise key points

Before the meeting ends, make sure the main decisions and next steps are clear.

Prepare a few phrases in advance

If you know you will need to speak, write down two or three points before the meeting. You can also prepare useful expressions for asking questions or sharing your opinion.

Do not aim for perfect English

Your goal is to communicate your message clearly. A short, understandable sentence is more useful than a complicated sentence that is difficult to deliver.

10. Practice Exercises

Exercise A: Complete the sentences

Choose a suitable phrase from the list below.

Phrases:

- “Could you elaborate on that?”
- “I see your point, but...”
- “To sum up, we’ve decided...”
- “From my perspective...”
- “Thank you all for joining.”

1. _____. The purpose of today’s meeting is to review the project timeline.
2. _____, we should complete the customer research before launching.
3. _____. I think we should also consider the available budget.
4. _____? I’d like to understand how the new process will work.
5. _____ to launch the first phase next month.

Exercise B: Make the sentences more professional

Rewrite each sentence using a polite and clear meeting expression.

1. “Your idea is wrong.”

2. “I don’t understand. Say it again.”
3. “We should do social media.”
4. “What are we doing next?”
5. “I want to say something.”

Exercise C: Practise speaking aloud

Choose one situation and speak for 30–60 seconds.

Situation 1: Your team is discussing a new project deadline. Share your opinion and give one reason.

Situation 2: A colleague suggests an idea that may exceed the budget. Disagree politely and suggest an alternative.

Situation 3: You are leading a meeting. Welcome the participants, introduce the purpose, and explain two agenda items.

Situation 4: A meeting is ending. Summarise one decision, one action item, and its deadline.

Answer Key

Exercise A

1. Thank you all for joining.
2. From my perspective
3. I see your point, but...
4. Could you elaborate on that?
5. To sum up, we’ve decided

Exercise B — Sample answers

1. “I see your point, but I have a different perspective.”
2. “Sorry, could you repeat that, please?”
3. “I believe we should consider using social media.”
4. “Could we confirm the next steps?”
5. “May I add something here?”

Other answers are possible if they are clear, polite, and appropriate for a professional meeting.

11. Chapter Takeaways

- Begin meetings by explaining their purpose and agenda.
- Use simple phrases to introduce your opinions.

- Agree with colleagues respectfully and add useful information when appropriate.
- Disagree by acknowledging the other viewpoint and explaining your concern.
- Ask questions when you need clarification.
- Summarise decisions, responsibilities, and deadlines before the meeting ends.
- Prepare a few useful expressions before important meetings.

12. Three-Day Meeting Practice Challenge

Day 1: Sharing opinions

Choose a work-related topic. Practise giving three opinions using “I believe...,” “From my perspective...,” and “My suggestion would be...”

Day 2: Agreeing and disagreeing

Practise responding to five imaginary suggestions. Use at least two polite agreement phrases and two polite disagreement phrases.

Day 3: Leading a mini-meeting

Record yourself giving a one-minute meeting introduction, asking one question, and summarising the next steps. Listen to the recording and notice whether your message is clear and easy to follow.

Remember, confidence grows through preparation and practice. You do not need to speak the most in a meeting to contribute meaningfully. Focus on sharing clear ideas, listening carefully, and helping the discussion move forward.

In the next chapter, we will explore how to write professional emails with clear, polite, and effective language.

Chapter 4: Write Professional Emails That Get Replies

Emails are one of the most important tools in business communication. They help professionals share information, request assistance, confirm decisions, arrange meetings, and maintain working relationships.

A well-written email does not need complicated vocabulary or lengthy sentences. It should make three things clear:

- **Why are you writing?**
- **What information does the reader need?**
- **What action, if any, should the reader take?**

When your message is clear, polite, and organised, it becomes easier for the recipient to understand and respond.

In this chapter, you will learn a simple email structure, useful phrases for common situations, and practical ways to make your emails more effective.

1. The Basic Structure of a Professional Email

Most professional emails contain a subject line, greeting, body, closing, and your name. The exact wording depends on your relationship with the recipient and the purpose of the message.

1. Subject Line

The subject line tells the reader what the email is about. A clear subject helps the recipient understand the purpose before opening the message.

Examples:

- “Meeting Request: Project Update”
- “Request for Leave: 12–14 October”
- “Updated Proposal for Review”
- “Follow-Up on Invoice #1045”
- “Confirmation of Training Schedule”

Avoid vague subject lines such as “Hello,” “Important,” or “Please read” when you can be more specific.

Tip: Include the topic and, when useful, the action or date.

2. Greeting

Choose a greeting that suits the recipient and the level of formality.

Formal:

- “Dear Mr. Sharma,”
- “Dear Ms. Verma,”
- “Dear Dr. Khan,”
- “Dear Hiring Manager,”

Neutral or familiar professional greeting:

- “Hello John,”
- “Hi Priya,”
- “Good morning, Alex,”

Use a person’s name when you know it. If you are unsure of someone’s preferred title, using their name without a title can help you avoid an incorrect form of address.

3. Body

The body contains the main message. For many workplace emails, a simple structure works well:

1. **Purpose:** Explain why you are writing.
2. **Details:** Provide the information the reader needs.
3. **Action required:** State what you need the reader to do, if anything.

Example:

“I’m writing to request your feedback on the revised proposal. The updated version is attached for your review. Could you please share your comments by Thursday?”

The purpose is clear, the relevant detail is included, and the requested action has a deadline.

4. Closing

A professional closing creates a polite ending.

Common closings:

- “Best regards,”

- “Kind regards,”
- “Sincerely,”
- “Thank you,”

Follow the closing with your name. In a work email, you may also include your job title, department, or contact details if relevant.

Example:

Best regards,
Niya Verma
Project Coordinator

2. Useful Email Phrases

Learning a few reusable expressions can make writing emails faster and easier. Adapt the wording to your situation rather than copying a phrase without checking whether it fits.

Requesting

- “Could you please...”
- “I would appreciate it if you could...”
- “Would you be able to...?”
- “Could you kindly share...?”
- “Please let me know if...”

Examples:

“Could you please send me the updated report?”

“I would appreciate it if you could review the attached document by Friday.”

“Would you be able to confirm your availability for the meeting?”

Apologising

- “I sincerely apologise for...”
- “I’m sorry for the inconvenience caused.”
- “Please accept my apologies for...”
- “Thank you for your patience while I resolve this.”

Examples:

“I sincerely apologise for the delay in sending the report.”

“I’m sorry for the inconvenience caused by the change in schedule.”

“Please accept my apologies for the error in the previous email. I have attached the corrected version.”

A useful apology briefly acknowledges the issue and, when appropriate, explains what you are doing to address it.

Following Up

- “I wanted to follow up on...”
- “Just checking in to see if...”
- “I’m writing to follow up regarding...”
- “Could you please share an update on...?”
- “I would be grateful for an update when convenient.”

Examples:

“I wanted to follow up on the proposal I shared last week.”

“Just checking in to see if you have had a chance to review the document.”

“Could you please share an update on the approval process?”

When following up, mention the earlier message or request so the recipient can quickly understand the context.

Confirming

- “I would like to confirm...”
- “This is to confirm that...”
- “I’m writing to confirm...”
- “Please let me know if my understanding is correct.”
- “As discussed, ...”

Examples:

“I would like to confirm our meeting scheduled for 10 a.m. on Monday.”

“This is to confirm that we have received your application.”

“As discussed, I will send the revised presentation by Wednesday.”

3. Writing Clear Requests

A request email should make it easy for the recipient to understand what you need and when you need it.

Compare these examples:

Less clear:

“Please send the file soon.”

Clearer:

“Could you please send me the revised file by 3 p.m. tomorrow so I can include it in the presentation?”

The second version identifies the file, gives a deadline, and explains why it is needed.

Request email template

Subject: Request for Updated Project Report

Dear Priya,

Could you please share the updated project report by Thursday afternoon? I need to review the latest figures before our Friday meeting.

Thank you for your help.

Best regards,
Niya

4. Following Up Without Sounding Impatient

Following up is common in professional communication. A polite follow-up reminds the recipient about a previous message while maintaining a respectful tone.

Follow-up email template

Subject: Follow-Up: Proposal Review

Hi John,

I wanted to follow up on the proposal I sent on Monday. Have you had a chance to review it?

Please let me know if you need any additional information.

Best regards,
Niya

If the matter is time-sensitive

Subject: Follow-Up: Approval Needed by Thursday

Dear Mr. Sharma,

I'm following up on the approval request below. As we are planning to begin the next stage on Friday, could you please share your decision by Thursday afternoon?

Thank you for your time.

Best regards,
Niya Verma

Keep the tone factual. Avoid messages that sound accusatory, such as "Why haven't you replied?" or "I am still waiting for your response."

5. Apologising and Correcting an Error

If you make a mistake in an email, correct it clearly. A short apology and the accurate information are usually more useful than a long explanation.

Correction email template

Subject: Correction: Updated Meeting Time

Dear Alex,

I apologise for the incorrect meeting time in my previous email. The meeting is scheduled for 2 p.m., not 3 p.m.

Thank you for your understanding.

Best regards,
Niya

If you have attached the wrong file, you can write:

"Please accept my apologies. I attached the incorrect file to my previous email. The correct document is attached here."

Before sending a correction, check that the revised information or attachment is accurate.

6. Sample Email: Meeting Request

Subject: Meeting Request: Project Update

Dear Mr. Sharma,

I hope you are doing well.

I would like to schedule a meeting to discuss the project progress and review the next steps.

Please let me know your availability this week. I would be happy to work around your schedule.

Best regards,
Niya Verma

Why this email works

- The subject line explains the purpose.
- The greeting is professional.
- The first sentence provides a polite opening.
- The body explains what the meeting is about.
- The recipient is given a clear action: share their availability.
- The closing is polite and appropriate.

7. Sample Email: Sharing an Update

Subject: Project Update: Website Content

Hi John,

I wanted to share a quick update on the website content.

The first draft is complete, and I am currently reviewing the final sections. I expect to share the revised version by Wednesday afternoon.

Please let me know if you would like me to include any additional information.

Best regards,
Niya

This email gives the reader the current status, the expected completion date, and an opportunity to request additional information.

8. Sample Email: Confirming an Arrangement

Subject: Confirmation of Training Schedule

Dear Ms. Verma,

I'm writing to confirm the training session scheduled for Tuesday, 15 October, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Please let me know if there are any changes to the schedule.

Kind regards,
Niya

When confirming an arrangement, include the important details such as date, time, location, or meeting link. This reduces the chance of misunderstanding.

9. Do's and Don'ts of Professional Email Writing

Do

- Keep emails short and focused.
- Use polite, direct language.
- Choose a clear subject line.
- Organise information into short paragraphs.
- State the action required and deadline when relevant.
- Check names, dates, figures, and attachments.
- Proofread before sending.
- Reply within a reasonable time when a response is needed.

Don't

- Use slang in formal workplace emails.
- Write entire sentences in ALL CAPS.
- Use vague subject lines when a specific one is possible.
- Include unnecessary details that hide the main point.
- Send a message while angry or frustrated; review the tone first.
- Delay replies unnecessarily when the sender is waiting for important information.
- Assume an attachment has been included without checking.

10. A Quick Checklist Before Sending

Before clicking **Send**, ask yourself:

- Does the subject line describe the email?

- Have I used an appropriate greeting?
- Is the purpose clear in the opening?
- Have I included the necessary details?
- Is the requested action or deadline clear?
- Is the tone polite and professional?
- Have I checked spelling, names, dates, and numbers?
- Have I attached the correct file, if needed?
- Does the email end with an appropriate closing and my name?

A short review can help you catch errors and make your message easier to understand.

11. Practice Exercises

Exercise A: Choose a suitable subject line

Write a clear subject line for each situation.

1. You are asking your manager for a meeting to discuss your project.
2. You are sending a revised report for review.
3. You are reminding a colleague about an unanswered request.
4. You are confirming a training session scheduled for Friday.

Sample answers:

1. "Meeting Request: Project Discussion"
2. "Revised Report for Review"
3. "Follow-Up: Information Request"
4. "Confirmation of Friday's Training Session"

Other clear and specific subject lines are also acceptable.

Exercise B: Complete the email phrases

Choose from the phrases below.

Phrases:

"Could you please..."

"I sincerely apologise for..."

"I wanted to follow up on..."

"This is to confirm that..."

1. _____ the delay in sending the document.
2. _____ our meeting scheduled for 11 a.m. tomorrow.
3. _____ share the updated presentation by Wednesday?
4. _____ the request I sent earlier this week.

Exercise C: Improve the email

Rewrite the following email to make it clearer and more professional.

Original:

Subject: Hi

Hey,
Send me the report fast. I need it.
Thanks.

One possible revision:

Subject: Request for Project Report

Hi Alex,

Could you please send me the updated project report by 3 p.m. today? I need it to prepare for tomorrow's meeting.

Thank you for your help.

Best regards,
Niya

Exercise D: Write your own email

Choose one situation and write a short professional email.

1. Request a meeting with your manager.
2. Follow up on a document you sent last week.
3. Apologise for submitting a report late.
4. Confirm the date and time of a scheduled call.

Try to include a subject line, greeting, clear purpose, relevant details, action required if necessary, and closing.

Answer Key: Exercise B

1. I sincerely apologise for...
2. This is to confirm that...
3. Could you please...
4. I wanted to follow up on...

12. Chapter Takeaways

- A professional email usually includes a subject line, greeting, body, closing, and name.
- Put the purpose of your message near the beginning.
- Use clear and specific subject lines.
- Make requests polite and include deadlines when needed.
- Follow up respectfully by referring to the earlier message.
- Check your tone, spelling, details, and attachments before sending.

13. Three-Day Email Practice Challenge

Day 1: Subject lines and openings

Write five subject lines for common workplace situations. Practise opening each email with a suitable greeting and a clear purpose.

Day 2: Requests and follow-ups

Write one request email and one follow-up email. Make sure each message includes the action required and any relevant deadline.

Day 3: Proofreading practice

Write a short professional email of your choice. Review it using the checklist in this chapter. Read it aloud once to check whether the message sounds clear and natural.

Professional email writing is not about using impressive words. It is about helping the reader understand your message and respond appropriately.

In the next chapter, we will explore English for phone calls and virtual meetings, including how to begin conversations, clarify information, and close calls professionally.

Chapter 5: Handle Calls & Virtual Communication Like a Pro

Clear communication during calls is essential for professionalism. Phone calls and virtual meetings are common ways to speak with colleagues, managers, clients, and customers. Unlike emails, calls require you to understand and respond to information in real time.

You may need to introduce yourself, ask someone to repeat information, explain a problem, respond to a concern, or confirm the next steps. Having a few useful expressions ready can make these situations easier to handle.

You do not need to speak quickly or use complicated vocabulary. Focus on speaking clearly, listening carefully, and confirming important details.

In this chapter, you will learn practical phrases for starting calls, exchanging information, handling difficult situations, ending conversations, and participating in virtual meetings.

1. Starting a Call

The opening of a call helps the other person identify you and understand why you are calling. Speak at a comfortable pace and make your purpose clear.

Useful phrases

- “Good morning, this is [Your Name] from [Company].”
- “Hello, my name is [Your Name]. I’m calling from [Company].”
- “May I speak with [Name]?”
- “I’m calling regarding...”
- “Is this a convenient time to talk?”
- “Thank you for taking my call.”

Examples

Introducing yourself:

“Good morning, this is Niya Verma from Bright Solutions. I’m calling regarding the project proposal.”

Asking for someone:

“Hello, may I speak with Mr. Sharma, please?”

Checking availability:

“Hello, this is Niya from the accounts team. Is this a convenient time to talk?”

If the person is unavailable

You can ask to leave a message or arrange another time.

- “Could you please let them know I called?”
- “May I leave a message?”
- “When would be a convenient time to call back?”
- “Could you ask them to return my call when they are available?”

Example:

“Thank you. Could you please let Mr. Sharma know that I called regarding the invoice? I’ll also send him an email.”

2. Asking for Information

During a call, you may need more details before you can respond or take action. Ask specific questions and give the other person time to answer.

Useful phrases

- “Could you provide more details?”
- “Could you explain that a little further?”
- “May I confirm one detail?”
- “Could you clarify the deadline?”
- “What would you like us to do next?”
- “Could you please repeat the last point?”
- “Let me make sure I understood correctly...”

Examples

“Could you provide more details about the changes requested?”

“May I confirm one detail? Do you need the revised document by Thursday?”

“Sorry, the connection was unclear. Could you please repeat the last point?”

When you need time to check something

It is better to be clear than to guess.

- “Let me check that information for you.”
- “I don’t have that detail in front of me. Could I confirm it and get back to you?”
- “Would you mind holding for a moment while I check?”
- “I’ll verify the information and follow up shortly.”

3. Giving Information Clearly

When explaining something over the phone, organise your message into short points. Avoid speaking too quickly or giving several complicated instructions at once.

Useful phrases

- “Let me explain...”
- “The main point is...”
- “To give you a quick overview...”
- “There are two things to consider.”
- “First..., then...”
- “Let me clarify that.”
- “I’ll explain the next steps.”

Example

“To give you a quick overview, the first stage is complete. We are now reviewing the feedback, and we expect to share the revised version by Friday.”

Confirming that the listener understands

- “Does that make sense?”
- “Would you like me to go over any part again?”
- “Is there anything you would like me to clarify?”
- “Just to confirm, the next step is...”

Use these questions naturally. They are especially helpful when discussing dates, instructions, figures, or responsibilities.

4. Handling Difficult Situations

Calls can sometimes involve delays, misunderstandings, complaints, or unexpected problems. In these situations, remain calm and focus on understanding the issue and identifying a practical next step.

Useful phrases

- “I understand your concern.”
- “Thank you for bringing this to my attention.”
- “I’m sorry for the inconvenience.”
- “Let me look into this.”
- “Let’s find a solution.”
- “I’ll check what options are available.”
- “I’ll update you as soon as I have more information.”

Example: Responding to a delay

Client: “We were expecting the report yesterday. Why haven’t we received it?”

You: “I understand your concern, and I’m sorry for the delay. The team is completing the final review. I’ll confirm the expected delivery time and update you shortly.”

Example: When you do not have an immediate answer

Client: “Can you confirm whether the revised price has been approved?”

You: “I don’t have the final confirmation yet. Let me check with the team and get back to you by 3 p.m.”

A simple approach for difficult calls

1. **Listen:** Allow the other person to explain the issue.
2. **Acknowledge:** Show that you understand their concern.
3. **Clarify:** Ask questions if any details are unclear.
4. **Respond:** Explain what you can do or what needs to be checked.
5. **Confirm:** State the next step and expected follow-up time.

Avoid making promises you cannot guarantee. If you need to check something first, say so clearly.

5. Asking Someone to Repeat or Slow Down

Phone connections may be unclear, and speakers may have different accents or speaking speeds. It is perfectly reasonable to ask for repetition or clarification.

Useful phrases

- “Could you please repeat that?”
- “Would you mind speaking a little more slowly?”
- “I’m sorry, I didn’t catch the last part.”

- “Could you spell that name for me?”
- “Could you please confirm the number?”
- “The connection seems unclear. Could you say that again?”

Example

“Sorry, I didn’t catch the reference number. Could you please repeat it slowly?”

For important details such as names, dates, addresses, amounts, or reference numbers, repeat the information back to confirm it.

Example:

“Just to confirm, the reference number is A-5829. Is that correct?”

6. Ending a Call Professionally

A good closing helps both people understand what has been agreed and what will happen next.

Useful phrases

- “To summarize...”
- “Thank you for your time.”
- “I’ll follow up with an email.”
- “I’ll send the details shortly.”
- “Please let me know if you have any further questions.”
- “It was good speaking with you.”
- “Have a great day.”

Example

“To summarize, I’ll send the revised proposal by Wednesday, and you’ll share your feedback by Friday. Thank you for your time. I’ll follow up with an email.”

Before ending the call, confirm:

- What was discussed?
- What action needs to be taken?
- Who is responsible?
- When is it expected?

This is particularly useful when the call involves several tasks or deadlines.

7. Example Scenario: A Client Call

You: “Good morning, this is Niya Verma from Bright Solutions. May I speak with Mr. Sharma?”

Client: “Speaking.”

You: “Thank you. I’m calling regarding the project update. Is this a convenient time to talk?”

Client: “Yes, please go ahead.”

You: “The first stage is complete, and we are now reviewing the feedback. Could you confirm whether your team has any additional comments?”

Client: “We have a few changes to the design.”

You: “Understood. Could you provide more details about the changes?”

Client: “I’ll send them by email this afternoon.”

You: “Thank you. To summarize, we’ll review your comments once we receive them and then share the revised version. I’ll follow up with an email confirming the next steps.”

Client: “That works.”

You: “Thank you for your time. Have a good day.”

This conversation uses a clear introduction, polite questions, confirmation, and a professional closing.

8. Virtual Meeting Tips

Virtual meetings require many of the same communication skills as in-person meetings, but the technology and online environment introduce a few additional considerations.

Check your internet and microphone

Before joining, check that your internet connection, microphone, speakers, and camera are working. If possible, join a few minutes early to resolve technical issues.

Maintain eye contact

When speaking, look toward the camera from time to time rather than focusing only on your own image. This can help your communication feel more direct.

Speak clearly

Use a comfortable pace and pronounce words clearly. Avoid speaking over others, especially when there is a slight delay in the connection.

Avoid distractions

Choose a reasonably quiet location, silence unnecessary notifications, and close unrelated applications if they may interrupt the meeting.

Use the meeting tools thoughtfully

- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking, especially in a large meeting.
- Use the chat function to share a link or brief detail when appropriate.
- If your audio stops working, use the chat to let participants know.
- Keep your camera position and lighting comfortable if video is required.

Useful virtual meeting phrases

- “Can everyone hear me clearly?”
- “I’m having trouble hearing you. Could you repeat that?”
- “Your audio is breaking up.”
- “I’ll share my screen now.”
- “Could you see the presentation?”
- “I’m sorry, I think there is a slight delay.”
- “I’ll put the link in the chat.”
- “Could we take turns speaking?”

9. Practice Exercises

Exercise A: Complete the call expressions

Choose a suitable phrase from the list.

Phrases:

“May I speak with...”

“Could you provide more details?”

“I understand your concern.”

“To summarize...”

“I’ll follow up with an email.”

1. _____ Mr. Sharma, please?
2. _____ about the requested changes?
3. _____, and I’m sorry for the inconvenience.
4. _____, we’ll review the document and share our feedback by Friday.

5. _____ with the confirmed meeting details.

Exercise B: Make the responses more professional

Rewrite each response using clear and polite language.

1. "What? Say it again."
2. "I don't know. Call later."
3. "That's not our problem."
4. "Wait. I'm checking."
5. "Okay, bye."

Sample answers:

1. "Sorry, I didn't catch that. Could you please repeat it?"
2. "I'll need to confirm that information. Could I get back to you shortly?"
3. "I understand your concern. Let me check how we can assist."
4. "Would you mind holding for a moment while I check?"
5. "Thank you for your time. Have a good day."

Exercise C: Practise a short phone call

Choose one situation and practise both sides of the conversation.

Situation 1: Call a colleague to confirm the time of a meeting.

Situation 2: Call a client to provide a project update and ask for feedback.

Situation 3: Respond to a customer who is concerned about a delayed delivery.

Situation 4: Call someone, discover they are unavailable, and leave a brief message.

Try to include an opening, at least one question, a confirmation, and a professional closing.

Exercise D: Virtual meeting practice

Say these sentences aloud as if you were participating in an online meeting:

1. "Good morning, everyone. Can you hear me clearly?"
2. "I'll share my screen now."
3. "Could you please repeat the last point?"
4. "I'd like to add something to that discussion."
5. "To summarize, I'll send the revised file by tomorrow."

10. Chapter Takeaways

- Begin calls by introducing yourself and stating your purpose.
- Ask clear questions when you need information.
- Speak in short, organised sentences.
- Ask people to repeat or clarify details when necessary.
- Respond to difficult situations calmly and respectfully.
- Confirm decisions and next steps before ending a call.
- Prepare your equipment and minimise distractions before virtual meetings.

11. Three-Day Call and Virtual Communication Challenge

Day 1: Phone call opening and closing

Practise introducing yourself, explaining why you are calling, and ending the conversation. Record a short practice call and listen for clarity.

Day 2: Clarification and difficult situations

Practise asking someone to repeat information, confirming a number or date, and responding to a concern politely.

Day 3: Virtual meeting practice

Record a one-minute mock virtual meeting contribution. Include a greeting, one update, one question, and a summary of the next step.

Remember, effective call communication is not about speaking continuously. It is about listening carefully, expressing information clearly, and making sure both people understand what happens next.

In the next chapter, we will explore how to deliver presentations and explain your ideas confidently in professional settings.

Chapter 6: Deliver Powerful Presentations in English

Presentations are a key professional skill. Whether you are presenting a project to your team, explaining a proposal to a client, reporting results to management, or introducing a new idea, your ability to communicate clearly can influence how your message is understood.

Giving a presentation in English can feel challenging, especially when you are worried about making grammar mistakes, forgetting words, or speaking in front of senior colleagues.

The solution is not to memorise complicated English. A successful presentation depends on a clear structure, simple language, good preparation, and confident delivery.

You should know what you want your audience to understand by the end of your presentation. Then organise your ideas so that the audience can follow them easily.

In this chapter, you will learn useful phrases for introducing a presentation, explaining your main points, moving between topics, giving examples, handling questions, and ending confidently.

1. Structure of a Presentation

A professional presentation usually has three basic parts:

1. **Introduction** — Tell your audience what you are going to discuss.
2. **Main points** — Explain your ideas in a logical order.
3. **Conclusion** — Summarise the key message and explain the next steps, if relevant.

A clear structure makes your presentation easier to follow and also makes it easier for you to speak with confidence.

2. Starting the Presentation

The beginning of a presentation is important because it establishes your purpose and gives the audience a reason to listen.

Useful phrases

- “Good morning, everyone.”
- “Thank you for being here today.”
- “Today I will discuss...”
- “Today I’d like to talk about...”

- “The purpose of this presentation is to...”
- “I’ll begin by discussing...”
- “Then, I’ll move on to...”
- “Finally, I’ll talk about...”

Example

“Good morning, everyone. Thank you for being here today.

Today I’d like to talk about our customer service strategy for the coming year.

I’ll begin by briefly reviewing our current performance. Then, I’ll discuss the main challenges we are facing and some possible solutions. Finally, I’ll explain the next steps.”

This gives the audience a clear idea of what to expect.

A simple opening formula

You can remember this structure:

Greeting → Topic → Purpose → Overview

For example:

“Good morning, everyone. Today I’d like to discuss our new marketing strategy. The purpose of this presentation is to explain our approach and the expected results. I’ll first discuss the current situation, then the proposed strategy, and finally the next steps.”

You do not need to memorise the exact wording. Use the structure and adapt it to your topic.

3. Introducing Your Main Points

Once you have introduced your topic, guide your audience through the presentation.

Useful phrases

- “The first point is...”
- “Let’s begin with...”
- “First, let’s look at...”
- “The next point I’d like to discuss is...”
- “Let’s move on to...”
- “This brings me to my next point.”
- “Finally, let’s look at...”

Example

“Let’s begin with our current sales performance.”

“Now, let’s move on to the main challenges.”

“This brings me to my next point: customer retention.”

These short transition phrases help your audience understand where they are in the presentation.

4. Explaining Information Clearly

When presenting information, avoid putting too many ideas into one sentence. Explain one point at a time.

Useful phrases

- “Let me explain...”
- “Let me give you an example.”
- “In simple terms...”
- “What this means is...”
- “The key point here is...”
- “As you can see...”
- “It is important to note that...”
- “There are two main reasons for this.”

Example

“The number of new customers increased by 15% this quarter. What this means is that our recent marketing campaign is reaching more potential customers.”

Explaining a complicated idea

If the subject is technical or difficult, simplify it.

Instead of saying:

“The implementation of this process will facilitate optimisation across multiple operational functions.”

You could say:

“This process will make several parts of our daily work more efficient.”

Clear language is often more effective than complicated language.

5. Giving Examples

Examples make abstract ideas easier to understand.

Useful phrases

- “Let me give you an example.”
- “For example...”
- “For instance...”
- “To give you an idea...”
- “A good example of this is...”

Example

“One of our main goals is to improve customer retention. For example, we could introduce a follow-up email after every purchase.”

Connecting an example to your main point

After giving an example, explain why it matters.

“For example, we could introduce a follow-up email after every purchase. This would give customers an opportunity to ask questions and could also encourage repeat purchases.”

This helps the audience understand the purpose of the example rather than simply hearing another piece of information.

6. Using Numbers and Data

Presentations often include sales figures, percentages, budgets, charts, or other data.

Do not simply read every number from a slide. Explain what the numbers mean.

Useful phrases

- “As you can see from this chart...”
- “The figures show that...”
- “There has been a significant increase in...”
- “The number has decreased slightly...”
- “This represents an increase of...”
- “The most important figure here is...”
- “The main trend we can see is...”

Example

“As you can see from this chart, online sales increased significantly during the last quarter. The most important point is that mobile sales grew faster than sales through other channels.”

The audience is usually more interested in the meaning of the data than in hearing every number repeated.

7. Moving Between Sections

Smooth transitions make your presentation sound organised and professional.

Useful phrases

- “Now let’s move on to...”
- “Let’s turn our attention to...”
- “This brings us to...”
- “Having looked at..., let’s now consider...”
- “The next area I’d like to discuss is...”
- “Before we move on, let me briefly summarise this point.”

Example

“Now that we have looked at our current performance, let’s turn our attention to the challenges we need to address.”

This connects the previous section to the next one and helps the audience follow your reasoning.

8. Referring to a Presentation Slide

When using slides, explain what the audience should notice instead of simply reading the text.

Useful phrases

- “As you can see on this slide...”
- “If you look at the chart on the right...”
- “This slide shows...”
- “I’d like to draw your attention to...”
- “The key information here is...”

Example

“I’d like to draw your attention to the figures on the right. You can see that customer complaints decreased significantly after we introduced the new support process.”

Keep slides simple enough that the audience can listen to you rather than spending all their time reading.

9. Handling Questions

Questions are a normal part of professional presentations. You do not need to know the answer to every possible question.

The important thing is to respond calmly and professionally.

Useful phrases

- “That’s a great question.”
- “Thank you for asking.”
- “Let me think about that.”
- “That’s an interesting point.”
- “Based on the information we have...”
- “I don’t have that information with me right now.”
- “I’ll get back to you.”
- “Let me check that and follow up with you.”
- “Could you clarify what you mean by...?”

If you know the answer

“That’s a great question. Based on our current figures, we expect the project to be completed by the end of November.”

If you need time to think

“That’s an interesting point. Let me think about that for a moment.”

A short pause is completely acceptable. You do not need to answer immediately.

If you do not know the answer

Do not invent an answer simply because you feel pressured.

A professional response is:

“I don’t have that information with me right now. Let me confirm the figures and get back to you.”

This shows honesty and responsibility.

If the question is unclear

“Could you clarify what you mean by the second part of the question?”

Or:

“If I understand your question correctly, you’re asking about the expected cost. Is that right?”

Clarifying the question gives you a better chance of giving a useful answer.

10. Dealing with Difficult Questions

Some questions may challenge your proposal or point out a weakness.

Try not to become defensive.

Example

Audience member:

“Why should we increase the budget when the current campaign is already performing well?”

Presenter:

“That’s a valid concern. The current campaign is performing well, but the additional budget would allow us to reach a larger target audience. I’d be happy to explain the expected return in more detail.”

The presenter acknowledges the concern before explaining the reasoning.

Useful phrases include:

- “That’s a valid concern.”
- “I understand why you’re asking.”
- “That’s something we need to consider.”
- “There are a few factors involved.”
- “Let me explain the reasoning behind this.”

11. Concluding Your Presentation

A strong conclusion reminds the audience of the main message and makes the ending feel complete.

Useful phrases

- “To conclude...”
- “To summarise...”
- “Let me briefly recap the main points.”

- “The key takeaway is...”
- “In summary...”
- “Our next step is...”
- “Thank you for your time.”
- “I’d be happy to take any questions.”

Example

“To conclude, we have identified three main opportunities for improving customer engagement. We can begin by improving our online support, introducing a follow-up system, and using customer feedback more effectively.

Our next step is to finalise the implementation plan.

Thank you for your time. I’d be happy to take any questions.”

A simple conclusion formula

Summary → Key message → Next step → Thank you

For example:

“To summarise, our sales have improved, but customer retention remains a challenge. Our key priority should be improving the customer experience. The next step is to finalise the new support plan. Thank you for your time.”

12. Example: A Short Professional Presentation

Here is an example of how the phrases in this chapter can work together.

Presenter:

“Good morning, everyone.

Today I’d like to discuss our customer service performance and some possible improvements.

I’ll begin by looking at our current results. Then, I’ll discuss the main challenges and suggest three possible solutions.

Let’s begin with our current performance.

As you can see from this chart, customer satisfaction has improved over the last six months. However, we have also seen an increase in complaints about response times.

The key point here is that customers are generally satisfied with the service they receive, but they expect faster responses.

Let me give you an example. Several customers recently reported waiting more than 24 hours for a response to simple enquiries.

Now let's move on to some possible solutions.

First, we could introduce a faster response system for simple enquiries. Second, we could provide additional training to the support team. Finally, we could create a detailed online FAQ section.

To summarise, customer satisfaction is improving, but response time remains an important issue. Our next step should be to evaluate these three solutions and decide which ones we can implement first.

Thank you for your time. I'd be happy to take any questions."

Notice that the presentation uses short sentences, clear transitions, examples, and a simple conclusion. The language is professional without being unnecessarily complicated.

13. Tips to Build Confidence

Practice regularly

Confidence comes from familiarity. Practise your presentation several times before delivering it.

You do not need to memorise every sentence. Practise the structure and key points so that you can speak naturally.

Know your content

Understand the information you are presenting. If you know your subject well, it becomes easier to explain it in your own words.

Focus on clarity, not perfection

You may make a small grammar mistake while speaking. That does not automatically make your presentation unsuccessful.

Your main goal is to make your message clear.

Instead of worrying about producing perfect English, ask yourself:

"Will my audience understand my main point?"

Speak slowly

When people are nervous, they often speak faster than usual. Slow down and allow yourself time to think.

Short pauses are not a problem. They can actually make your presentation sound more controlled.

Practise your opening and conclusion especially well

The first few sentences can be the most stressful because you are settling into the presentation. The conclusion is also important because it is the final impression you leave.

If you know your opening and conclusion well, you may feel more confident throughout the presentation.

Use notes, but do not read everything

Short notes with keywords can help you remember the sequence of your ideas.

Avoid reading every sentence from your notes or slides. Your audience should feel that you are speaking to them rather than reading a document aloud.

14. Common Presentation Mistakes

Speaking too quickly

Problem: The audience may struggle to follow you.

Better: Slow down and pause between important points.

Putting too much text on slides

Problem: The audience focuses on reading instead of listening.

Better: Use short points and explain the details yourself.

Memorising every sentence

Problem: Forgetting one sentence can make you lose your place.

Better: Remember the main ideas and practise explaining them naturally.

Using complicated vocabulary

Problem: Your message may become harder to understand.

Better: Choose simple, precise words.

Ending suddenly

Problem: The audience may not know what the main message was.

Better: Summarise the key points and clearly signal the end.

15. Practice Exercises

Exercise A: Complete the presentation

Choose suitable phrases from the list.

Phrases:

“Good morning, everyone.”

“Today I’d like to discuss...”

“Let’s move on to...”

“Let me give you an example.”

“To summarise...”

1. _____. Thank you for joining me today.
2. _____ our new employee training programme.
3. _____ the second part of the presentation.
4. _____ of how this process works.
5. _____, we need to improve the training process and monitor the results.

Exercise B: Respond to questions

Write a professional response to each question.

1. “When will the project be completed?”
2. “Why do you think this strategy will work?”
3. “What is the expected cost?”
4. You do not know the answer to the question.
5. You do not understand what the person is asking.

Sample answers:

1. “Based on the current schedule, we expect to complete the project by the end of the month.”
2. “Based on our previous results, we believe this strategy could help us reach more customers.”
3. “The estimated cost is approximately ₹____, although I’ll confirm the final figure.”

4. “I don’t have that information with me right now. Let me confirm it and get back to you.”
5. “Could you clarify what you mean by that?”

Exercise C: Build a presentation outline

Choose a topic and prepare a three-minute presentation.

Possible topics:

- A new product or service
- A project update
- A marketing idea
- A workplace improvement
- A training programme
- A business problem and possible solution

Prepare:

Introduction:

What is your topic? Why are you discussing it?

Main Point 1:

What is the first important idea?

Main Point 2:

What is the second important idea?

Example:

Can you give a real or imaginary example?

Conclusion:

What is the key message and what should happen next?

Exercise D: Practise aloud

Record yourself giving your presentation.

Listen to the recording and ask:

- Am I speaking too quickly?
- Are my sentences clear?
- Do I pause between ideas?
- Do I use transitions?
- Can I identify the main message?

- Does my conclusion sound complete?

Do not focus only on grammar. Listen to the overall clarity and flow.

Answer Key: Exercise A

1. Good morning, everyone.
2. Today I'd like to discuss...
3. Let's move on to...
4. Let me give you an example.
5. To summarise...

16. Chapter Takeaways

- Organise your presentation into an introduction, main points, and conclusion.
- Tell your audience what you will discuss at the beginning.
- Use transition phrases to move smoothly between topics.
- Explain information clearly rather than using complicated vocabulary.
- Give examples to make your ideas easier to understand.
- Stay calm when answering questions.
- If you do not know an answer, say so professionally and offer to follow up.
- Speak slowly and focus on clarity rather than perfection.
- End by summarising your key message and next steps.

17. Three-Day Presentation Practice Challenge

Day 1: Introduction and structure

Choose a workplace topic and prepare a one-minute introduction. Include a greeting, topic, purpose, and overview.

Day 2: Main points and transitions

Prepare two or three main points. Practise moving from one point to another using phrases such as “Let's move on to...” and “This brings me to...”

Day 3: Complete presentation

Give a three-minute presentation and record yourself. Include an introduction, two main points, one example, a conclusion, and at least one answer to an imaginary question.

Remember, a powerful presentation is not necessarily the one with the most impressive vocabulary. It is the one where the audience understands your message, remembers the important points, and knows what to do next.

In the next chapter, we will look at workplace etiquette and professional communication—the language and behaviour that help you build positive relationships at work.

Chapter 7: Master Workplace Communication & Cultural Etiquette

In global workplaces, cultural awareness is essential.

Today, professionals often work with people from different countries, cultures, age groups, and professional backgrounds. You may communicate with an international client in the morning, attend a virtual meeting with colleagues from another country in the afternoon, and write an email to a senior manager in the evening.

Good English is important in these situations, but language alone is not enough. The way you communicate also matters.

A sentence that sounds perfectly normal to you may sound too direct, too informal, or even rude to someone from a different communication culture.

The goal is not to memorise rules for every culture. Instead, develop the habit of observing, listening, adapting, and communicating respectfully.

1. Direct vs. Indirect Communication

People have different communication styles.

Some workplace cultures tend to value direct communication. Others place greater importance on indirect or diplomatic language, particularly when expressing disagreement.

Direct

“I disagree.”

“This plan will not work.”

“You need to change this.”

These sentences are clear, but depending on the situation and relationship, they may sound too strong.

More diplomatic

“I see your point, but I have a different perspective.”

“I’m not sure this approach will work as expected.”

“I think we may need to make a few changes.”

The second style does not necessarily mean that you are less confident. It allows you to communicate your disagreement while maintaining a respectful tone.

Example

Direct:

“Your proposal is too expensive.”

More diplomatic:

“I like the overall idea. However, I’m concerned that the current proposal may be beyond our budget.”

The second version communicates the same concern but creates more room for discussion.

2. Being Polite When Making Requests

The way you make a request can strongly affect how it is received.

Instead of:

“Send me the file.”

Say:

“Could you please send me the file?”

Or:

“Would you be able to send me the file when you have a moment?”

The more polite version is especially useful when speaking to someone you do not know well, a senior colleague, a client, or someone from another culture.

Useful expressions

- “Could you please...?”
- “Would you be able to...?”
- “Would you mind...?”
- “Could I ask you to...?”
- “I’d appreciate it if you could...”
- “When you have a moment, could you...?”

Example

Instead of:

“Give me the report today.”

Try:

“Could you please send me the report by the end of the day?”

If the deadline is important:

“Could you please send me the report by the end of the day? I need it for tomorrow morning’s meeting.”

Notice that the second version is both polite and clear.

3. Being Polite Does Not Mean Being Unclear

Some people become so concerned about sounding polite that their message becomes vague.

For example:

“Whenever you get a chance, perhaps you could possibly send the document.”

This sounds polite but does not clearly communicate when the document is needed.

A better version is:

“Could you please send me the document by Thursday?”

Professional communication should be **polite and clear**.

You can be respectful while still stating exactly what you need.

4. Disagreeing Respectfully

Disagreement is normal at work. You may disagree about a deadline, budget, strategy, design, or approach.

The important thing is to disagree with the **idea**, not attack the **person**.

Useful phrases

- “I see your point, but...”
- “I understand your perspective. However...”

- “I have a slightly different view.”
- “I’m not sure I completely agree.”
- “I think we might need a different approach.”
- “May I suggest something?”
- “Could we also consider another option?”
- “One concern I have is...”

Example

Instead of:

“That’s a bad idea.”

Say:

“I understand the idea. However, I’m concerned about how it might affect the budget.”

Or:

“I see your point. Could we also consider another option?”

These expressions keep the discussion constructive.

5. Giving Feedback Politely

Giving feedback is a common workplace situation. Feedback can be about a presentation, report, project, performance, or idea.

Avoid making personal statements such as:

“You are not good at presentations.”

Focus on the work and offer a useful suggestion.

Better alternatives

“The presentation was informative. I think the main points could be made even clearer with fewer words on the slides.”

Or:

“The report is well organised. One area we could improve is the introduction.”

A useful structure is:

Positive point → Area for improvement → Suggestion

For example:

“The report contains useful information. I think the main conclusion could be clearer. Perhaps we could add a short summary at the beginning.”

This makes feedback easier to receive and act on.

6. Saying “No” Professionally

You will not always be able to accept a request. Saying “no” directly can sometimes sound abrupt.

Instead of:

“No, I can’t do that.”

Try:

“I’m afraid I won’t be able to complete that by Friday.”

Or:

“I’m currently working on two other deadlines. Could we discuss a different timeline?”

Or:

“I understand the urgency. Unfortunately, I won’t be able to take this on today, but I could complete it tomorrow.”

The aim is not to avoid saying no. The aim is to communicate your limitation respectfully and, when possible, offer an alternative.

7. Workplace Small Talk

Small talk may seem unimportant, but it can help build professional relationships.

You may have a short conversation before a meeting, while waiting for a colleague, or when meeting a client for the first time.

Safe professional topics

- Work and projects
- Travel
- Food
- Weather
- Hobbies

- General weekend plans
- Professional events

Useful phrases

- “How has your week been?”
- “How is the project going?”
- “Did you have a good weekend?”
- “Have you worked on a project like this before?”
- “How are things going with your team?”

Keep small talk appropriate to the situation and the relationship.

Avoid asking personal questions unless you know the person well and the context makes them appropriate.

8. Cultural Differences in Communication

Cultural differences can influence many aspects of workplace communication, including:

- How directly people express opinions
- How comfortable people are with disagreement
- How they address senior colleagues
- How they use first names and titles
- How they approach punctuality
- How much small talk they prefer
- How they interpret silence
- How formal emails and conversations are expected to be

There is no single communication style that is correct for every workplace.

For example, one colleague may immediately say:

“I disagree.”

Another may say:

“I’m not sure I see it the same way.”

Neither person necessarily intends to be rude. They may simply have different communication habits.

The best approach

Observe how people communicate and adapt when appropriate.

If a new international client consistently uses formal greetings and titles, you may want to maintain a similar level of formality.

If a colleague introduces themselves by their first name and invites you to use it, you can usually follow their lead.

When you are unsure, starting slightly more formally is generally safer. You can become more relaxed as you understand the workplace culture and relationship better.

9. Be Careful with Humour, Slang, and Idioms

Humour can help people connect, but jokes do not always translate well across cultures.

A joke that seems harmless to you may be misunderstood by someone who does not share the same cultural references.

Slang and idioms can also create confusion for international colleagues.

For example, phrases such as:

“Let’s call it a day.”

“Hit the ground running.”

“Go the extra mile.”

may be familiar to many English speakers, but not everyone will understand them immediately.

In important professional communication, especially with international clients, simple and clear language is often the safest choice.

You can still use natural English without relying heavily on slang or culturally specific humour.

10. Avoid Assumptions

Cultural awareness also means avoiding assumptions about how someone will communicate.

Do not assume that every person from a particular country, age group, or culture communicates in exactly the same way.

Instead:

- Listen to the individual.
- Observe their communication style.

- Ask questions when appropriate.
- Adapt gradually.
- Give people the benefit of the doubt.

If someone communicates differently from you, it does not automatically mean they are rude, unfriendly, or unprofessional.

11. Email and Cultural Etiquette

Cultural differences can also appear in written communication.

Some workplaces prefer formal emails:

“Dear Mr. Sharma,

I would like to request...”

Others may use a more relaxed style:

“Hi John,

Could you please...”

Neither style is automatically better. The appropriate level of formality depends on the organisation, relationship, country, industry, and situation.

When writing to someone for the first time

If you are unsure about the expected level of formality, begin professionally.

For example:

“Dear Ms. Khan,

I’m writing regarding...”

As the relationship develops, you can follow the other person's communication style when appropriate.

12. Common Mistakes

Being too direct

“Give me the report.”

Better:

“Could you please send me the report?”

✗ Using slang in formal situations

“Hey, can you fix this ASAP?”

Better:

“Hi John, could you please look into this as soon as possible?”

✗ Ignoring cultural differences

Assuming everyone will interpret a joke, phrase, gesture, or communication style in the same way can lead to misunderstandings.

Better:

Be observant and respectful. If you are unsure, choose clear and neutral language.

✗ Criticising the person instead of the work

“You clearly don't understand this.”

Better:

“I think we may need to look at this part again.”

✗ Giving an unclear polite response

“Maybe we can possibly look at it sometime.”

Better:

“Could we discuss this on Thursday?”

Politeness should not remove clarity.

13. Better Alternatives for Common Situations

Instead of:

“That's wrong.”

Say:

“I’m not sure that’s correct. Could we check the figures again?”

Instead of:

“I don't like this idea.”

Say:

“I have some concerns about this approach. Could we consider another option?”

Instead of:

“Send it again.”

Say:

“Could you please resend the document? I’m unable to open the previous attachment.”

Instead of:

“You didn't explain it properly.”

Say:

“Could you clarify that point? I want to make sure I understand it correctly.”

Instead of:

“I can't do it.”

Say:

“I’m afraid I won’t be able to complete it within that timeframe. Could we discuss an alternative deadline?”

Instead of:

“Wait.”

Say:

“Could you give me a moment, please?”

14. Key Tip: When in Doubt, Be More Polite

When you are unsure about the appropriate tone, start with a slightly more polite and professional version.

For example:

Instead of:

“Can you send me the file?”

You could say:

“Could you please send me the file?”

Instead of:

“I disagree.”

You could say:

“I see your point, but I have a different perspective.”

Instead of:

“I don't understand.”

You could say:

“Could you clarify that point, please?”

As you become more familiar with the person and workplace, you can adjust your communication style naturally.

Remember:

Polite does not mean weak.

You can be confident, direct, and professional while still showing respect.

15. Practice Exercises

Exercise A: Make the sentences more professional

Rewrite each sentence using polite and professional language.

1. "Send me the presentation."
2. "Your idea won't work."
3. "I don't understand."
4. "Give me more time."
5. "That's not my problem."
6. "You made a mistake."

Sample answers

1. "Could you please send me the presentation?"
2. "I'm not sure this approach will work as expected."
3. "Could you clarify that point, please?"
4. "Could we discuss extending the deadline?"
5. "I understand the issue. Let me see how I can help."
6. "I think there may be an error here. Could we check it together?"

Other answers are possible as long as they are clear, respectful, and appropriate.

Exercise B: Direct or diplomatic?

Identify whether each sentence is **direct** or **diplomatic**.

1. "I disagree with that approach."
2. "I see your point, but I have a different perspective."
3. "Send me the file by 5 p.m."
4. "Could you please send me the file by 5 p.m.?"
5. "This report needs more work."
6. "I think we could improve a few areas of this report."

Then rewrite the direct sentences in a more diplomatic way.

Exercise C: Cultural awareness practice

Imagine that you are communicating with a new international client for the first time.

Write a short email that:

- introduces yourself,
- explains why you are contacting them,
- makes one request,
- uses a professional greeting and closing.

Before sending it, ask yourself:

- Is my language clear?

- Is my tone respectful?
- Have I avoided unnecessary slang?
- Have I made the request specific?
- Would the message be easy for someone from another cultural background to understand?

Exercise D: Role-play

Practise these situations aloud.

Situation 1:

A colleague suggests an idea you do not agree with. Disagree politely and explain your concern.

Situation 2:

A client asks you to complete a task by tomorrow, but you need three days. Explain the situation and suggest an alternative.

Situation 3:

You are meeting an international client for the first time. Introduce yourself and make some professional small talk before discussing the project.

Situation 4:

A colleague misunderstands something you said. Clarify your meaning without becoming defensive.

16. Chapter Takeaways

- Different people and cultures may have different communication styles.
- Professional communication should be both polite and clear.
- Disagree with ideas rather than criticising people.
- Use respectful language when making requests.
- Avoid unnecessary slang, humour, and culturally specific expressions in important communication.
- Do not make assumptions about how someone will communicate based on their culture.
- Observe, listen, and adapt to the situation.
- When you are unsure about the appropriate tone, begin with a more polite and professional approach.

17. Three-Day Workplace Communication Challenge

Day 1: Polite alternatives

Choose five direct sentences you commonly use and rewrite them in a more professional way.

For example:

“Send me the report.”

becomes:

“Could you please send me the report?”

Day 2: Disagreement practice

Think of three workplace opinions you might disagree with. Practise responding using:

- “I see your point, but...”
- “I understand your perspective. However...”
- “Could we also consider...?”

Day 3: Cultural awareness

Imagine that you are communicating with someone from a different professional or cultural background. Write a short email or practise a short conversation. Focus on being clear, respectful, and neutral.

Effective workplace communication is not simply about knowing English. It is about knowing how to use English appropriately with different people and in different situations.

The more you observe, practise, and adapt, the more naturally you will communicate across different professional environments.

In the next chapter, we will bring everything together with a practical plan for improving your Business English through regular practice.

Chapter 8: Practice & Improve Your Business English Daily

Consistency is the key to improvement.

You can read about Business English, learn useful phrases, and understand professional communication—but improvement comes when you actually use what you learn.

You do not need to spend hours studying every day. A short, focused practice session can be much more useful than studying for several hours once a month.

The most effective approach is to make English part of your normal routine.

In this chapter, you will find simple daily activities, a weekly practice plan, and practical ways to continue improving after you finish this book.

1. Daily Practice Ideas

You can improve your Business English by practising four important skills regularly:

- Vocabulary
- Writing
- Speaking
- Listening

Even 15–20 minutes a day can give you useful practice if you stay consistent.

Learn 3 new words

Choose three useful words or expressions related to your work.

Do not simply memorise their meanings. Learn how they are used in a sentence.

For example:

Deadline — the latest time by which something must be completed.

“I need to finish this report before the deadline.”

Feedback — comments or suggestions about something that can help improve it.

“Could you please share your feedback on the proposal?”

Prioritise — to decide which tasks are more important and should be dealt with first.

“We need to prioritise the most urgent tasks.”

A better way to learn vocabulary

For every new word:

1. Learn the meaning.
2. Notice how it is used.
3. Write your own sentence.
4. Try to use it in a real conversation or email.

This makes vocabulary more useful than simply memorising a word list.

2. Write One Professional Email

Writing regularly helps you become more comfortable with professional language.

You do not need to send a real email every day. You can write a practice email based on a workplace situation.

For example:

- Request information.
- Schedule a meeting.
- Follow up on a previous message.
- Confirm an arrangement.
- Give a project update.
- Apologise for a delay.

Try to keep the email short and focused.

After writing it, check:

- Is the purpose clear?
- Is the tone professional?
- Is the requested action clear?
- Have I included important details?
- Have I checked spelling and grammar?

3. Speak for Two Minutes

Speaking practice is particularly important if you understand English but hesitate when you need to speak.

Choose a simple professional topic and speak for two minutes.

You could talk about:

- Your current project
- Your daily responsibilities
- A recent meeting
- A business idea
- A problem at work
- A product or service
- A goal for your team

Do not stop every time you make a small mistake.

The purpose of this exercise is to become comfortable expressing your ideas in English.

A simple speaking structure

Use:

Opening → Main point → Example → Conclusion

For example:

“Today I’d like to talk about one challenge in my current project.

The main challenge is meeting the deadline because we have had some unexpected delays.

For example, the design team received the final information later than expected.

I think we can still complete the project on time if we prioritise the remaining tasks.”

This simple structure can help you speak without searching for every sentence individually.

4. Listen to Business English

Listening regularly helps you become familiar with professional vocabulary, pronunciation, sentence patterns, and different speaking styles.

You can listen to:

- Business podcasts
- Professional interviews
- Presentations
- Workplace conversations
- Industry-related videos
- English news about business

- Training videos

You do not need to understand every word.

Instead, focus on:

- How speakers begin a topic
- How they explain ideas
- Which phrases they repeat
- How they agree or disagree
- How they summarise information

Active listening

Instead of simply playing English content in the background, spend a few minutes actively listening.

Choose a short section and ask:

What was the main point?

Then try to explain it in your own words.

This turns listening into speaking practice as well.

5. Use English in Your Real Work

The best practice is often the English you already need at work.

If you have to write an email, think about how you can make it clearer.

If you have a meeting, prepare two or three phrases you may need.

If you have to give an update, practise it aloud before the meeting.

If you need to make a phone call, prepare your opening and the questions you want to ask.

This approach connects your learning directly to your professional life.

6. Create Your Personal Phrase Bank

Instead of trying to remember everything in this book, create a small collection of phrases that you personally find useful.

Divide your phrase bank into categories such as:

Meetings

- “I’d like to add something here.”
- “I see your point, but...”
- “Could you elaborate on that?”
- “To sum up...”

Emails

- “I’m writing regarding...”
- “Could you please...?”
- “I wanted to follow up on...”
- “I would like to confirm...”

Calls

- “May I speak with...?”
- “Could you please repeat that?”
- “Let me check that for you.”
- “I’ll follow up with an email.”

Presentations

- “Today I’d like to discuss...”
- “Let’s move on to...”
- “Let me give you an example.”
- “To conclude...”

General workplace communication

- “May I suggest something?”
- “I understand your concern.”
- “Could we consider another option?”
- “I’d appreciate it if you could...”

Choose phrases that you are likely to use. Review them regularly and gradually replace memorised phrases with language that feels natural to you.

7. Weekly Practice Plan

You do not have to practise every Business English skill every day.

Use the following weekly plan as a starting point.

Monday: Learn Vocabulary

Learn three new workplace words or expressions.

Write one sentence using each word.

Tuesday: Listen to a Podcast or Video

Listen to 10–15 minutes of business-related English.

Write down three useful expressions you hear.

Wednesday: Write Emails

Write one short professional email.

Practise a request, follow-up, confirmation, or project update.

Thursday: Practise Speaking

Choose a workplace topic and speak for two to three minutes.

Record yourself if possible.

Friday: Join Discussions

Use English actively at work.

Ask a question, share an opinion, or contribute one idea during a meeting or discussion.

If you do not have an English-speaking workplace, practise by recording a response to an imaginary discussion.

Saturday: Practise Pronunciation

Choose five words or phrases that you find difficult to pronounce.

Listen to how they are pronounced and practise saying them several times.

Then use each one in a sentence.

Sunday: Review Your Progress

Spend a few minutes reviewing what you learned during the week.

Ask yourself:

- What new words did I learn?
- Which phrases did I actually use?
- What was difficult?
- What can I improve next week?
- What am I now able to say more easily?

The purpose of the weekly review is not to judge yourself. It is to notice progress and identify what you should practise next.

8. A 15-Minute Daily Routine

If you are busy, use this simple routine.

Minutes 1–3: Vocabulary

Review three words or phrases.

Minutes 4–7: Listening

Listen to a short section of English content.

Minutes 8–12: Speaking

Talk about a professional topic for five minutes.

Minutes 13–15: Review

Write down one useful expression and one thing you want to improve.

You can adjust the timing according to your schedule. The important thing is consistency.

9. Turn Mistakes into Practice

Making mistakes is a normal part of learning.

Instead of simply thinking:

“I made a mistake.”

Ask:

“What can I learn from this mistake?”

For example, suppose you said:

“I discussed about the project.”

You can correct it to:

“I discussed the project.”

Then practise the correct structure in several sentences:

“We discussed the budget.”

“We discussed the problem.”

“We discussed the next steps.”

This makes the correction easier to remember.

Keep a mistake list

Create a small section in your notebook called **My Common Mistakes**.

Whenever you notice a repeated mistake, write:

My mistake:

“I have a doubt.”

Better:

“I have a question.”

My mistake:

“Please revert back.”

Better:

“Please get back to me.”

Review this list once a week.

Your own mistakes are often some of the most useful material for your learning.

10. Build Confidence Gradually

Do not expect yourself to become completely confident overnight.

Start with small challenges.

Level 1

Speak one or two sentences in English during a meeting.

Level 2

Ask a question or share an opinion.

Level 3

Explain an idea for one or two minutes.

Level 4

Lead part of a discussion or meeting.

Level 5

Give a complete presentation or handle an important professional conversation.

Each step prepares you for the next one.

11. Review, Reuse, Repeat

One of the biggest mistakes learners make is learning something once and never using it again.

If you learn a useful phrase today, try to use it several times during the following week.

For example, if you learn:

“I wanted to follow up on...”

Use it when:

- following up on an email,
- asking about a project,
- checking the status of a request,
- or practising a workplace conversation.

Repeated use turns unfamiliar language into language that comes naturally.

12. Measure Your Progress

Improvement is not always obvious from day to day.

You may feel that your English has not changed, even though you are gradually becoming more comfortable.

Keep a simple record of your progress.

At the beginning of each month, record yourself speaking for two minutes about a workplace topic.

At the end of the month, record the same type of exercise again.

Compare the recordings.

Ask:

- Am I speaking more smoothly?
- Am I pausing less?
- Am I using more precise vocabulary?
- Am I organising my ideas better?
- Am I feeling more comfortable?

You can also keep track of practical achievements:

- “I spoke in an English meeting today.”
- “I wrote an email without translating every sentence.”
- “I gave a short presentation.”
- “I handled a phone call confidently.”
- “I asked a question without worrying about making a mistake.”

These small achievements are signs of progress.

13. Your Four-Week Business English Plan

If you want a longer-term structure, use this four-week plan.

Week 1: Build Your Foundation

Focus on:

- Common workplace vocabulary
- Professional phrases
- Basic email structure
- Meeting expressions

Goal: Become familiar with useful workplace language.

Week 2: Improve Speaking

Focus on:

- Giving opinions
- Agreeing and disagreeing

- Asking questions
- Speaking for two to three minutes

Goal: Express your ideas more comfortably.

Week 3: Improve Professional Communication

Focus on:

- Emails
- Phone calls
- Virtual meetings
- Presentations

Goal: Use English in realistic workplace situations.

Week 4: Apply and Review

Focus on:

- Real conversations
- Presentations
- Writing
- Reviewing common mistakes

Goal: Use what you have learned without relying heavily on prepared sentences.

After four weeks, repeat the cycle with more challenging topics and situations.

14. Advice for Long-Term Improvement

Don't aim for perfection

You do not need perfect English to communicate effectively at work.

A clear message with a small grammatical mistake is often more useful than a complicated sentence that you are afraid to say.

Focus on clarity

Ask yourself:

“Can the other person understand my message easily?”

If the answer is yes, your communication is doing its job.

Practise daily

Ten to fifteen minutes every day can become more valuable than occasional long study sessions.

Learn language you actually need

Do not spend all your time memorising words that you are unlikely to use.

Focus on vocabulary, expressions, and situations connected to your work and goals.

Use new language immediately

When you learn a new expression, try to use it as soon as possible.

The sooner you use new language, the easier it becomes to remember.

Be patient with yourself

Progress is gradual.

Some days you will speak confidently. On other days, you may struggle to find the right words.

That does not mean you are going backwards.

Keep practising.

15. Your Personal Business English Action Plan

Before you finish this book, create your own simple action plan.

My goal

What would you most like to improve?

Example:

“I want to speak more confidently in meetings.”

My daily practice

What will you do every day?

Example:

“I will spend 15 minutes practising English.”

My weekly goal

What will you accomplish each week?

Example:

“I will speak at least once in an English meeting.”

My biggest challenge

What do you find difficult?

Example:

“I hesitate when I need to express an opinion.”

My solution

What will you do about it?

Example:

“I will prepare two useful phrases before every important meeting.”

My progress check

When will you review your progress?

Example:

“I will review my progress every Sunday.”

Write your answers somewhere you can see them. A simple plan is easier to follow than a complicated one.

16. Practice Exercises

Exercise A: Create your daily routine

Complete the following:

Today I will learn:

1.

2.

3.

Today I will practise speaking about:

Today I will listen to:

One phrase I want to use today:

Exercise B: Create your phrase bank

Write five phrases that you want to start using regularly.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Now choose one phrase and use it in a sentence.

Exercise C: Identify your common mistakes

Think about three English mistakes you make repeatedly.

My mistake: _____

Better version: _____

Example sentence: _____

Repeat this process for three mistakes.

Exercise D: Your two-minute challenge

Choose one topic:

- My current job
- A project I am working on
- A recent workplace challenge
- A business idea
- A product I would like to improve
- My professional goals

Speak for two minutes without stopping.

Do not restart every time you make a mistake.

When you finish, ask yourself:

- Was my main idea clear?
- Did I organise my thoughts?
- Did I use useful workplace vocabulary?
- Where did I hesitate?
- What will I improve next time?

17. Final Seven-Day Challenge

Now put everything together.

Day 1: Learn five useful workplace expressions.

Day 2: Write a professional email.

Day 3: Speak for three minutes about your work.

Day 4: Practise a short phone conversation.

Day 5: Prepare a two-minute presentation.

Day 6: Practise agreeing and disagreeing politely.

Day 7: Review everything you learned and record yourself speaking again.

Compare your final recording with an earlier recording if you have one.

You may notice that you speak more smoothly, organise your thoughts more easily, or use professional expressions more naturally.

That is progress.

18. Final Takeaways

- Consistency is more important than studying for long hours occasionally.
- Practise vocabulary in sentences rather than memorising isolated words.
- Write and speak about situations you actually experience at work.
- Listen actively and notice how professional speakers communicate.
- Keep a personal phrase bank.
- Learn from your repeated mistakes.
- Review your progress regularly.
- Focus on clarity rather than perfection.
- Use new language repeatedly until it becomes natural.

Most importantly, **use your English.**

Do not wait until you feel completely ready before speaking, writing, asking questions, or participating in meetings.

Confidence does not come first and practice comes later.

Practice comes first. Confidence grows from it.

19. Your Next Step

You now have a collection of practical Business English phrases, examples, communication strategies, and practice activities.

The next step is to make them part of your everyday professional communication.

Choose one skill from this book and start today.

Write one better email.

Speak once in your next meeting.

Ask one question.

Practise one phone call.

Give one short presentation.

Small actions, repeated consistently, can create significant improvement over time.

Keep learning. Keep practising. And most importantly, keep using English.

Final Words

Business English is a skill that improves with practice.

You do not need to know every word or speak perfect English before you can communicate confidently at work. Start with what you have learned in this book and use it in real situations.

Write the email.

Ask the question.

Share your opinion.

Speak in the meeting.

Make the phone call.

Give the presentation.

Every time you use English, you are giving yourself another opportunity to improve.

Stay consistent.

Keep practising.

Keep improving.

Confidence will follow.

About the Author

Sonika Bahadur is an English educator and the creator of Sonika's Academy, where she develops practical learning resources to help English learners communicate more confidently in everyday and professional situations.

Through her English-learning content and digital resources, she focuses on useful expressions, real-life examples, and approachable practice that learners can apply beyond the classroom.

Her work is guided by a simple belief: learning English becomes more meaningful when learners can use it in real conversations and everyday life.

To explore more English-learning resources, visit: **www.sonikabahadur.com**