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# Business Language

Faculty of Business and Economics

## Chapter 3 – Section 1

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BRANCH

# Chapter-3



# Meetings in English

## Meetings in English



Whether you are holding a meeting or attending a meeting, it is important that you understand key English phrases and expressions related to meetings. A successful meeting has no surprises. With proper preparation and careful organization, a meeting can run smoothly. The most typical complaint about meetings is that they run too long.

Meetings that run longer than necessary can be very costly to a company or business. As the famous business expression says: *Time is money*. Setting goals and time limits, keeping to the agenda, and knowing how to refocus, are key components of an effective meeting. This may sound simple in your own native language, but it is a little trickier when you or the participants do not speak fluent English. These pages will help you hold or attend a meeting with success. Review the vocabulary, read through the lessons, and then check your understanding.

### Scenario

The following pages will be based on the meeting of a fictional company called *Paris Tours*. The owner of the small tour company is Pierre. He has ten employees, including four supervisors, Kana and Thomas (guides), Nolan (driver), and Jane (receptionist). These four supervisors will be called to a meeting to discuss the upcoming tourist season. Follow through the pages to watch how Pierre prepares for and holds the meeting, and how his staff participate.

- Vocabulary
- Vocabulary Quiz
- Preparing for a Meeting
- Opening a Meeting
- Following the Agenda
- Closing a Meeting
- Self-Assessment Test

## Vocabulary

<b>Word</b> <i>Part of speech</i>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example Sentence</b>
<b>absent</b> <i>adj</i>	not present	The vice president is <b>absent</b> due to unforeseen circumstances.
<b>accomplish</b> <i>verb</i>	succeed in doing	We have a lot to <b>accomplish</b> today, so let's begin.
<b>address</b> <i>verb</i>	deal with; speak on	I hope we do not have to <b>address</b> this matter again in the future.
<b>adjourn</b> <i>verb</i>	close a meeting	If there are no further comments, we will <b>adjourn</b> the meeting here.
<b>agenda</b> <i>noun</i>	list of objectives to cover in a meeting	Please forward the <b>agenda</b> to anyone who is speaking at the meeting.
<b>AGM</b> <i>noun(abbr.)</i>	Annual (yearly) General Meeting	We always vote for a new chairperson at the <b>AGM</b> .
<b>allocate</b> <i>verb</i>	assign roles/tasks to certain people	I forgot to <b>allocate</b> someone to bring refreshments.
<b>AOB</b> <i>noun(abbr.)</i>	Any Other Business (unspecified item on agenda)	The last item on the agenda is <b>AOB</b> .
<b>apologies</b> <i>noun</i>	item on agenda announcing people who are absent; apologies for absence	Everyone is present today, so we can skip the <b>apologies</b> .
<b>ballot</b> <i>noun</i>	a type of vote, usually in writing and usually secret	Please fold your <b>ballot</b> in half before you place it in the box.

<b>board of directors</b> <i>noun</i>	group of elected members of an organization/company who meet to make decisions	The <b>board of directors</b> meets once a month to discuss the budget.
<b>boardroom</b> <i>noun</i>	a large meeting room, often has one long table and many chairs	The <b>boardroom</b> is reserved for a managers' meeting, so we'll have to meet in the lounge.
<b>brainstorm</b> <i>verb</i>	thinking to gather ideas	Let's take a few minutes and <b>brainstorm</b> some ways that we can cut costs.
<b>casting vote</b> <i>noun</i>	deciding vote (usually by the chairman) when the votes are otherwise equal	The role of treasurer was decided based on the chairman's <b>casting vote</b> .
<b>chairperson/chair</b> <i>noun</i>	the person who leads or presides at a meeting	As <b>chair</b> , it is my pleasure to introduce to you, Mr. Allan Davis.
<b>clarification/verification</b> <i>noun</i>	explanation/proof that something is true/understood	Before we address this matter, I'll need some <b>clarification</b> as to who was involved.
<b>closing remarks</b> <i>noun</i>	last thoughts spoken in a meeting (i.e. reminders, thank yous)	I just have a few <b>closing remarks</b> and then you will all be free to go.
<b>collaborate</b> <i>verb</i>	work together as a pair/group	The board fell apart because the members had difficulty <b>collaborating</b> .
<b>commence</b> <i>verb</i>	begin	We will <b>commence</b> as soon as the last person signs the attendance sheet.
<b>comment</b> <i>verb or noun</i>	express one's opinions or thoughts	If you have a <b>comment</b> , please raise your hand rather than speak out.

<b>conference</b> <i>noun</i>	formal meeting for discussion, esp. a regular one held by an organisation	Before the <b>conference</b> there will be a private meeting for board members only.
<b>conference call</b> <i>noun</i>	telephone meeting between three or more people in different locations	Please make sure I have no interruptions while I'm on the <b>conference call</b> .
<b>confidential</b> <i>adjective</i>	private; not to be shared	Any financial information shared during this meeting should be kept <b>confidential</b> .
<b>consensus</b> <i>noun</i>	general agreement	If we cannot come to a <b>consensus</b> by the end of the meeting we will put it to a vote.
<b>deadline</b> <i>noun</i>	due date for completion	The <b>deadline</b> for buying tickets to the conference is May 25th.
<b>designate</b> <i>verb</i>	assign	If no one volunteers to take the minutes I will be forced to <b>designate</b> someone.
<b>formality</b> <i>noun</i>	a procedure (often unnecessary) that has to be followed due to a rule	Everyone knows who is going to be the next vice president, so this vote is really just a <b>formality</b> .
<b>grievance</b> <i>noun</i>	complaint	The first item on the agenda relates to a <b>grievance</b> reported by the interns.
<b>guest speaker</b> <i>noun</i>	person who joins the group in order to share information or deliver a speech	I am delighted to welcome our <b>guest speaker</b> Holly, who is going to be offering some sales pitch tips.
<b>implement</b> <i>verb</i>	make something happen; follow through	It's not a question of whether or not we're going to use this

		idea, it's whether or not we know how to <b>implement</b> it.
<b>mandatory</b> <i>adjective</i>	required	It is <b>mandatory</b> that all supervisors attend Friday's meeting.
<b>minutes</b> <i>noun</i>	a written record of everything said at a meeting	Before we begin with today's meeting, let's quickly review the <b>minutes</b> from last month.
<b>motion</b> <i>noun</i>	a suggestion put to a vote	The <b>motion</b> to extend store hours has been passed.
<b>objectives</b> <i>noun</i>	goals to accomplish	I'm pleased that we were able to cover all of the <b>objectives</b> today within the designated time.
<b>opening remarks</b> <i>noun</i>	chairperson or leader's first words at a meeting (i.e. welcome, introductions)	As I mentioned in my <b>opening remarks</b> , we have to clear this room before the end of the hour.
<b>overhead projector</b> <i>noun</i>	machine with a special light that projects a document onto a screen or wall so that all can see	I'm going to put a pie chart on the <b>overhead projector</b> so that everyone can visualize how our profits have declined.
<b>participant</b> <i>noun</i>	person who attends and joins in on an event	Can I have a show of hands of all of those who were <b>participants</b> in last year's conference?
<b>proxy vote</b> <i>noun</i>	a vote cast by one person for or in place of another	There must have been one <b>proxy vote</b> because I count twelve ballots but only eleven attendees.
<b>punctual</b> <i>adjective</i>	on time (not late)	Firstly, I want to thank you all for being <b>punctual</b> despite this early meeting.

<b>recommend</b> <i>verb</i>	suggest	I <b>recommend</b> that you sit closer to the front if you have trouble hearing.
<b>show of hands</b> <i>noun</i>	raised hands to express an opinion in a vote	From the <b>show of hands</b> it appears that everyone is in favour of taking a short break.
<b>strategy</b> <i>noun</i>	plan to make something work	We need to come up with a <b>strategy</b> that will allow us to have meetings less frequently.
<b>unanimous</b> <i>adj</i>	in complete agreement; united in opinion	The vote was <b>unanimous</b> to cut work hours on Fridays.
<b>vote</b> <i>verb or noun</i>	to express (the expression of) an opinion in a group by voice or hand etc	We need to <b>vote</b> for a new vice chairperson now that Jerry is retiring.
<b>wrap up</b> <i>verb</i>	finish	Let's <b>wrap up</b> here so that we can get back to our desks.

## Preparing for a Meeting

### Calling a Meeting

There are a number of ways that you may call or be called to a meeting. Some meetings are announced by e-mail, and others are posted on bulletin boards. If a meeting is announced at the end of another meeting, it is important to issue a reminder. A reminder can also come in the form of an e-mail or notice. Verbal announcements or reminders should always be backed up by documented ones. The date, location, time, length, and purpose of the meeting should be included. It is also important to indicate exactly who is expected to attend, and who is not. If you are planning on allocating someone to take on a certain role, make personal contact with that person to inform them of his or her duty.

Sample E-mail:

To: jane@paristours.com

cc: kana@paristours.com; thomas@paristours.com;  
nolan@paristours.com

From: pierre@paristours.com

Subject: Meeting

Hi Everyone,

We will be having a meeting next Friday from 2:00  
PM-4:00 PM in Room 3.

All supervisors are expected to attend. The purpose  
of the meeting is to

discuss the upcoming tourist season. As you  
probably have heard, this

could be our busiest season to date. There are  
already twenty bus tours

booked from Japan, and fifteen walking tours booked  
from North America.

We are also expecting Korean and Australian tours  
in late summer. Please

make arrangements to have other staff members cover  
your duties during

the meeting.

Thank you,

Pierre

Sample Notice:

**MEETING**

LOCATION: Room 3

DATE: Friday, May 5th

TIME: 2:00 PM-4:00 P.M.

FOR: Supervisors only

SUBJECT: Tourist Season

ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY