
UNIT 6 MEETINGS

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6.0 OBJECTIVES

Conducting or participating in meetings is an important business skill. In this Unit you will learn

- about formal and informal meetings
- about the process of business meetings
- the role of the chairperson and participants
- how to express your ideas and views
- how to make suggestions,
- how to express agreement and disagreement
- how to write agendas, and follow up memos
- to practice the language of meetings

6.1 WARM UP

Have a look at these pictures which suggest two kinds of meetings. What do you think are the major differences between the two kinds of meetings? Write down at least three possible differences.



Check Your Progress 1

Match your points on the differences in the two kinds of meetings with the one's given below:

- Group meetings are generally more formal than one to one meetings.
- Group meetings are more structured and planned and generally last longer.
- They involve a large number of people and must be chaired by somebody.
- They also follow the procedure of agenda and minutes, which may not be the case with one to one meetings.
- However, one to one meetings are not chance conversations but meetings with a purpose where certain objectives need to be achieved. Hence some kind of planning also needs to be done for such meetings to ensure the desired outcome.
- The language of group meetings is also more formal than one to one meetings.

6.2 READING: A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

The passage that follows tells you how to have meetings that are both effective and fruitful.

Read the following passage and discuss the questions that follow.

How can you make Meetings work for you?

Meetings are central to most organizations for people need to take decisions based on shared information and opinions. How well you present yourself and your ideas, and how well you work with other people is crucial to your career.

Conducting a Meeting

Call a meeting only when it is essential and be very clear about its purpose. Meetings called on a routine basis tend to lose their point. If you are sure you need to call a meeting, circulate a memo several days in advance, specifying the time, place and objectives, issues to be discussed, other participants and preparation expected.

Meetings should be short, not more than an hour. Six is the optimum number of participants for a good working meeting. Larger meetings can be productive as brainstorming sessions for ideas, provided participants can speak freely without feeling they will be judged.

A successful meeting always leads to action. Decisions should take up the bulk of the minutes of the meeting, including the name of the person delegated to each task, and a deadline for its completion. Make sure you circulate the minutes after the meeting and then again before the next one.

Draw out quieter members of the group. Encouragement helps create a relaxed and productive atmosphere.

Attending the Meeting

Even if the meeting is informal, it is always advisable to prepare a few key points in note form to put across or discuss. Don't memorize notes or read them out like a sermon. This inhibits your natural gestures: the eye contact and body language is essential for effective communication. If you cannot answer a question don't be afraid to say you don't know.

Phrase your criticisms and proposals positively. Try to offer solutions rather than to complain.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Answer these questions on the basis of what you read in the passage. Write out your answers in your own words as far as possible. Check your answers with the Answer key.

- i. Why are meetings necessary?

.....

.....

.....

- ii. What should you do when you decide that a meeting is necessary?

.....

.....

.....

- iii. Name five things that should be taken care of by the person who chairs the meeting.

.....

.....

.....

- iv. What should be done once a decision is taken?

- v. Name three things that participants should keep in mind.

2. Here are some terms associated with formal meetings. You were introduced to most of these in the above passage. Complete the sentences that follow by inserting them.

Minutes	arrangements	agenda	conduct	participants
circulate	items	consensus	memo	venue

- i. The chairperson or his/her secretary sends a _____ to invite participants to a meeting.
- ii. The _____ for the meeting is also mentioned in the memo.
- iii. The _____ of the previous meeting are circulated to participants
- iv. The organizer or his/her staff makes all the _____ for the meeting.
- v. The chairperson _____ the meeting.
 _____ take part in the meeting.
- vi. The _____ is discussed _____ by item.
- vii. _____ is arrived at on issues under discussion
- viii. _____ of the meeting are jotted down during the meeting and then sent to all participants and concerned persons.

6.3 SPEAKING: ONE TO ONE MEETINGS

Arranging to Meet

Listen to this conversation where two persons are making an arrangement for a meeting. Pay special attention to the underlined expressions which highlight the language used in such situations. Say them aloud for practice.

- A. How about meeting at The Moti Mahal?
- B. That should be fine. What time?
- A. What about after the conference?
- B. Would you like to meet for dinner?
- A. That would be great. I suggest that I come and pick you up from Pragati Maidan.
- B. Let's say 7 pm.
- A. Good idea. See you at 7 then. Bye.
- B. Bye.

Check Your Progress 3

1. Here are prompts for 5 pairs of suggestions and responses. Write them out and then check your answers with the audio cassette. The tape script is given in the Answer Key.

A How about / meeting / lunch / today?

B Not convenient / tomorrow?

.....
.....

A Would you / go / the electronics exhibition / Saturday?

B Ok / 4 pm.

.....
.....

A Could we / meet / a restaurant / Friday evening?

B Yes / Mc Donald's, C P.

.....
.....

A Would you / watch / the cricket match / on Sunday?

B Yes / great.

.....
.....

A Should we / a movie / this weekend?

B Not possible / next weekend.

.....
.....

2. Write out the following jumbled conversation in the right order. Listen to the audio cassette and check if you got the sequence right. Practice saying it with a friend. The tape script is given in the Answer key.

- i. Mr Bakshi : 6th November, 7 o'clock then..
- ii. Ms Jain : Hello Mr Bakshi, this is Sunidhi Jain from Bhopal. How are you?
- iii. Ms Jain : Fine, thank you. I'm coming over to Delhi in the first week of November for the Trade Fair at Pragati Maidan. Will you be in Delhi at that time?
- iv. Mr Bakshi: Yes sure. In fact we are participating in the Trade Fair this year.
- v. Mr Bakshi : Just a minute, let me check my diary.OK, That should be fine.
- vi. Ms Jain : That's great. I suggest 7 o'clock in the restaurant.
- vii. Mr Bakshi : Gautam Bakshi speaking.
- viii. Ms Jain : Oh good! How about a meeting on 6th evening at The Village?
- ix. Ms Jain: Thanks a lot. See you then.
- x. Mr Bakshi : Yes, looking forward to meeting you. Bye then.
- xi. Ms Jain : Goodbye.
- xii. Mr Bakshi : Ms Jain! It is good to hear from you. I'm fine thanks, how are you?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

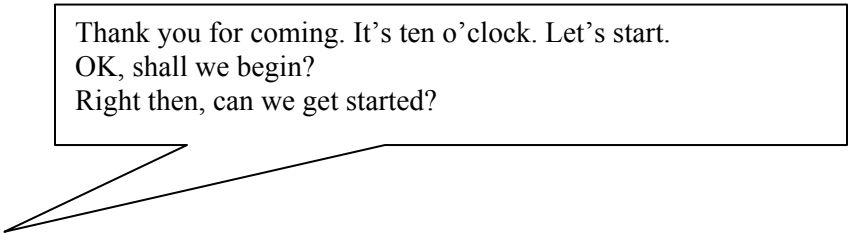
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6.4 LANGUAGE FOCUS: OPENING, MIDDLE AND CLOSE

Here is a commonly used method of opening meetings along with some standard / formulaic language:

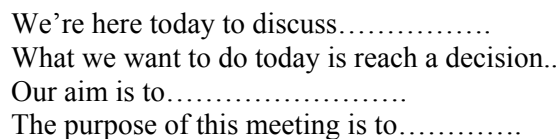
Opening a Meeting : The 4 step method

Step 1 : Open the meeting. Tell everybody that you are going to begin



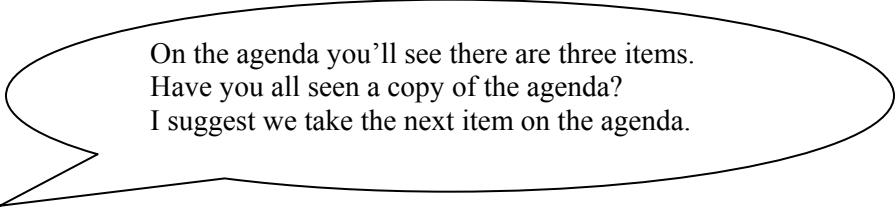
Thank you for coming. It's ten o'clock. Let's start.
OK, shall we begin?
Right then, can we get started?

Step 2 : Explain the objectives. Tell them why you are having the meeting



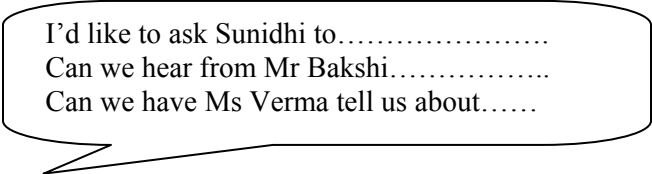
We're here today to discuss.....
What we want to do today is reach a decision..
Our aim is to.....
The purpose of this meeting is to.....

Step 3 : Present the agenda. Tell them in order what you are going to discuss.



On the agenda you'll see there are three items.
Have you all seen a copy of the agenda?
I suggest we take the next item on the agenda.

Step 4 : Get initial contributions. Ask someone to begin the discussion.



I'd like to ask Sunidhi to.....
Can we hear from Mr Bakshi.....
Can we have Ms Verma tell us about.....

Check Your Progress 4

Practice the expressions in the speech balloons by applying them to these situations. Assume the role of the chairperson.

You are meeting to discuss / decide about

- i. a welcome party for a new colleague

.....

- ii. a new product that your company is launching

.....

- iii. an important business visitor

.....

- iv. a trade fair in which your company is participating

.....

Now listen to one possible way of how a chairperson could open the meetings in these situations.
 You may refer to the tape script in the Answer Key.

Middle and close of a meeting

Here is a language checklist which you can use in a meeting:

Stating an opinion

It seems to me..... In my view..... I tend to think..... Its obvious that..... I believe..... Clearly.....

Asking for an opinion

Could we hear from.....
What do you think about.....
What's your view?
Any comments?

Interrupting

Excuse me, may I ask for a
clarification on this.....
If I may interrupt.....
Sorry to interrupt but.....

Handling Interruptions

Yes, go ahead.....
Sorry, please let him finish.....
Can I come to that later, please.....
That's not really relevant at this stage.....

Moving the discussion on

Can we go on to think about.....
Let's move on to the next point.....
Now we come to the question of.....

Closing the Meeting

I think we've covered everything.....
So we've decided.....
I think we can close the meeting now.
That's it then. The next meeting will be.....

Check Your Progress 5

Which of the above expressions would you use in these situations?

- i. Preventing someone from interrupting
.....
- ii. Stating your opinion
.....
- iii. Asking to interrupt
.....
- iv. Closing the meeting
.....
- v. Asking for a clarification
.....
- vi. Inviting someone's opinion
.....
- vii. Asking for comments
.....
- viii. Moving on to the next point on the agenda
.....

Expressing Agreement/Disagreement

During meetings you often express **Agreement** or **Disagreement**. Here is language that could help you do so more appropriately.

Agreement	
<i>STRONG</i>	NEUTRAL
<i>I'm in complete agreement</i>	<i>I agree</i>
<i>I quite agree</i>	<i>You're right there</i>
<i>I couldn't agree more</i>	<i>I think you're right</i>
<i>Yes definitely</i>	<i>Yes and.....</i>
<i>Exactly</i>	<i>That's true....</i>
<i>Precisely</i>	<i>That's right.....</i>

Disagreement	
STRONG	NEUTRAL
<i>I disagree completely.</i>	<i>I don't agree.</i>
<i>That's out of the question.</i>	<i>That's not how I see it.</i>
<i>I wouldn't say that at all.</i>	<i>I wouldn't say that.</i>
<i>Of course not.</i>	<i>I think you are wrong.</i>
<i>That's ridiculous.</i>	<i>I disagree.</i>

Check Your Progress 6

Role Play

Work with a friend or by yourself to complete these short dialogues. Take it in turns to read the first statement and to reply according to the instructions.

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| i. | I think the report is too long. | <i>(disagree strongly).</i> |
| ii. | It's too late to make any changes. | <i>(agree).</i> |
| iii. | I feel we all need to work together. | <i>(agree strongly)</i> |
| iv. | In my opinion, we need to cut down expenses on entertainment. | <i>(disagree)</i> |
| v. | We must wait till next year to start this project. | <i>(disagree, state the opposite opinion)</i> |

Listen to the tape script for model answers.

6.5 STUDY SKILLS: EDITING

Whenever you write a piece of text, it is always important to edit what you read. You may say of course we do that. But what do you think we must be careful about? We must be careful about mistakes of grammar, spelling, punctuation and so on. In the text below we have extrapolated some extra words in the text. Your knowledge of grammaticality should help you spot them.

The text below is about Meetings. There are 9 lines out of which six contain mistakes: an extra word in the line. Find the extra words. Cross them out and write them in the column on the right. Put a tick mark for the lines that have no extra words. The first two lines have been done for you as examples.

Check Your Progress 7

- | | |
|-------|--|
| i. | Let's look at the diary for today. I see we've got a teleconference meeting <u>meeting</u> |
| ii. | this morning. What's happened to good old fashioned meetings, with _____ |
| iii. | everyone in the same room only discussing things. With all the hot-desking _____ |
| iv. | that goes on in offices these days, not to be mention companies outsourcing _____ |
| v. | work out, soon we'll never meet our colleagues at all! I can't imagine though _____ |
| vi. | that we'll be able to do without business lunches, however well e-commerce _____ |
| vii. | takes off. I see we're lunching along with some clients today. That shouldn't _____ |
| viii. | be too bad. The boss may be a tough guy, but he is also a bit of a foodie lover, _____ |
| ix. | so we'll probably go to a nice restaurant. _____ |
2. Find the meanings of these words in the dictionary. Some of these words are new and you might find them more easily on the web. If you still have problems, have a look at the answer key but only after you have been unsuccessful with the other resources.
- | | |
|------|----------------|
| i. | teleconference |
| ii. | hot-desking |
| iii. | outsourcing |

6.6 LISTENING CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

You were taught to **read** and **write** in school. But did you ever have a listening comprehension class? Most of you would say ‘no’. **Listening comprehension** has indeed been a neglected area in English language teaching. Teachers have imagined that we just pick up ‘listening’ in the course of our student life. But don’t you think that you would have been better off if you had been trained? It is never too late! Let us practice the skill of listening. This would help us in our overall proficiency in the language.

Read the questions given below. Listen to the tape carefully and make notes as you read. Listen to it again and complete your notes. Spend some time completing your answers. Do they match with those given at the end of the unit?

Check Your Progress 8

Listen to this recording on Meetings and answer the following questions:

- i. Why does the speaker find meetings bothersome?
.....
.....
.....
- ii. Why is it necessary to look at meetings as a means rather than an end?
.....
.....
.....
- iii. How can a meeting achieve its desired result?
.....
.....
.....
- iv. What do you understand by
- v. *Pet peeves*
- In the driver’s seat*
- To map possible routes*

You may now check your answers by comparing them with sample answers given in the key.

6.7 VOCABULARY

Confidence in a language is often a result of having a large vocabulary. And confidence leads to fluency. In each unit, we have given you several exercises in vocabulary development. Do complete them carefully, and use these words in real life.

Check Your Progress 9

1. Insert suitable words from the box to complete the following text on **Decision Making Meetings**. Check your answers with the Answer key.

Needs	organization	ideas	effective	support
decision	facilitate	participants	team effort	design
		discuss	key issues	

Secrets of Better Decision Making Meetings

While _____ meetings are essential to any _____ and to getting work done, most meetings leave us still looking for a _____ and tired. A good meeting should _____ decision-making, assist people in taking responsibility, energize the _____, and contribute to building _____ within the organization.

Successful meetings are ones where attention is paid to three areas; content, _____ and process. Selection of content is crucial. All too often meetings are called to _____ issues which would be better resolved with a couple of phone calls while at the same time core issues remain unmentioned. The key is to focus meetings around _____.

Secondly, the design of the meeting can hinder or _____ the decision making, problem solving or the informational task at hand. In designing, attention needs to be given to idea generation methods, decision processes, agenda, time frames, problem-solving steps, etc.

Third, and most often ignored, is making sure the individual and group _____ of the participants are met. Are people participating, included, feel that there is room for their _____? Are dysfunctional behaviors openly dealt with, is there positive energy in the group, are people committed to the task at hand and enthused about the way the group is working to complete the task?

2. Here is the beginning of a meeting. Can you complete the text by using suitable words from the box?

<i>improve</i>	<i>comments</i>	<i>begin</i>	<i>agenda discuss</i>
<i>decline</i>	<i>meeting</i>	<i>remarks</i>	<i>clear</i>

Chairperson: 'Right then, I think we should _____ now, it's ten o'clock. We're here today to _____ some of the reasons for the _____ in profits which has affected the company. At the end of the _____ we should have a _____ idea of what measures we should take to _____ the situation. You've all seen the _____. I'd like to ask if anyone has any _____ on it before we start.'

Voices: 'No / its fine / etc.'

Chairperson: Can I ask Ms Anand to start with his _____.

6.8 GRAMMAR : REPORTING VERBS

1. Reporting Verbs

Reporting what was said

When you write minutes of a meeting, it is useful to report the ideas, rather than every sentence. To do this, you need to use a variety of reporting verbs. Here is a list that you might find useful:

C A : *'I think we should raise the budget.'*

CA **suggested** raising the budget.

M B : *'I assure you I will find out more.'*

MB **promised** to find out more.

RJ : *'It might be possible to arrange extra funds.'*

R J **mentioned** the possibility of extra funds.

D M : *'I am not so sure if there will be extra funding.'*

DM **wondered** if there would be extra funding.

Here are some more examples of the use of reporting verbs while writing or speaking about a meeting.

Three issues were **discussed**.

It was **decided** to delay action until the next meeting.

Everyone **agreed** to the proposal.

The issue of salary was **brought up**.

The Sales Manager **reported** on the results of the trade fair.

Five strategies were **recommended**.

SB **explained** the reason for the delay.

Check Your Progress 10

Can you report the following statements? You may invent the names of the speakers. The first one is done for you as an example.

- i. "The report will definitely be in by tomorrow."
Ans: *Mr Singhal assured us that the report would be in by the next day.*
- ii. "What are the sales figures of last week?"
- iii. "You still haven't gathered the feedback from your department. Please do so by the end of the week."
- iv. "The delegation is expected to arrive next week."
- v. "Is it necessary to make the scheme compulsory for all employees?"
- vi. "I don't think the new flexi-timings are acceptable to all our employees."
- vii. "Why don't we ask an advertising agency to design our campaign?"
- viii. "Can someone give me an update on the progress of construction work at our new site?"
- ix. "I am not happy with the people coming late for the meeting."
- x. "Can I see the absentee record of the Sales department?"
- xi. "It is absolutely essential to dispatch the goods this weekend."
- xii. "We have gained two important clients through the Trade Fair."

6.9 WRITING: MEMOS

A very important customer is going to visit your city for a weekend. You need to prepare for his visit. He is visiting your city for the first time. Imagine that a meeting has been held to discuss the issue on the basis of the agenda given below.

AGENDA

1 Hotels

- ❑ Which hotel should you reserve? Why? Who should make the reservation? How can you make sure that his stay is comfortable?

2 Airport

- ❑ Who should meet the visitor at the airport?

3 Lunches and dinners

- ❑ Where should you take your visitor for lunch and dinner? Should you check first to see what kind of food he likes?

4 Entertainment

- ❑ Where should you take him in the evenings?

5 Gift

- ❑ What kind of gift should you buy him? When should you give it to him?

6 Welcome letter

- ❑ What advice would you give him about your city and visit by way of helping him to prepare for his visit.

7 AOB – Any Other Business

The Minutes of the Meeting are also given. We will discuss Minutes in detail in the next Unit.

Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 June 2003 to plan for Mr. Sampath's visit to the city

The Following members were present:

Mr. Dinesh Mehra

Mr. Vikas Puri

Ms. Deepti Sinha

Ms. Harvinder Kaur

Mr. Joseph Stephen

Ms. Salma Sheikh

Ms. Shilpa Gupta

Mr. Sunil Rawat could not attend the meeting as he was on leave.

Mr. Sampath's visit was discussed in detail and the following decisions were taken.

Hotel Reservation: Mr. Vikas Puri will book accommodation for Mr. Sampath at the Park Royal hotel in Nehru Place.

Airport: Vikas will also receive the guest at the airport and bring him over to the hotel personally.

Meals: On 1st July he will have lunch with the MD at 1 pm at Park Royal and on 2nd July the GMs will have lunch with him at the Taj. We will fix up dinner for the two days of his visit according to his preference and convenience. Ms. Deepti Sinha will take care of this

Entertainment: Since this is Mr. Sampath's first visit to Delhi, it was presumed that he might be interested in sightseeing and shopping. Deepti and Vikas will arrange for the tour and accompany him

Check Your Progress 11

Now write a memo to your boss with your suggestions. After you have written the memo, compare it with the one provided as a sample memo in the Answer key.

Writing Memo

Before you write the Memo, we will show you the format of the Memo, its functions and chief characteristics.

As the dictionary definition states, a memo is a message in writing sent by one person or department to another 'within the same business organization'. This is the reason why a memo is sometimes also described as an **inter-office memo**: a message sent from one office to another (of the same company).

Memos are used for a variety of purposes: from making a brief announcement to submitting or circulating an in-house (=within the organization) report. Among the main uses of the memo as a carrier of internal messages are the following:

- Making announcements, requests, policy statements, notices, reminders, suggestions, acknowledgements, congratulations, informal invitations, thank you's, etc.
- Confirming decisions arrived at (or points settled) face to face meetings or telephone conversations with colleagues, workers, etc.
- For submitting or circulating in-house reports, e.g., preliminary survey reports, progress reports, recommendation reports, investigation reports, evaluative reports, and so on. Such memos may run to several pages and use the convention of formal reports like headings, graphics, tables, appendices, etc.

These purposes, for which memos are mainly used, can be seen as falling into the following functional categories:

1. **To inform:** Announcements, policy statements, notices and reports fall in the category. No immediate response is required, but the receivers are expected to note the information and conform to its requirements in their future behaviour, wherever applicable.
2. **To elicit a quick and definite response:** Suitably drafted memos can help elicit quick and definite responses where requests or notices are involved.

3. **To confirm the decisions/conclusions** arrived at a face to face meeting, or in a telephone conversation, and to create a permanent record of the decisions/conclusions.

Style of Memos

As one of the main instruments of communication at the workplace, workaday memos have gradually evolved a distinctive style. They are written by persons in a hurry for persons who are probably in a greater hurry. Hence, an ideal memo should reveal its message to the reader at one quick glance. What is even more important is that the **memo should have an appearance** which will tell the receiver that it can be read quickly. If, for example, the memo looks like several paragraphs of closely typed English prose, it is likely to be put aside to be read later or not read at all. So, if your memo is not a report, **make it brief** and **make it look brief**. Given below is the format of a memo.

MEMORANDUM

Date: 19/5

From: MD

TO: Managers (Sales, Prod, Fin, Exp., Q.C.)

SUBJECT: Export batch No. DO-9951 (To Indonesia)

Matra Importers, Jakarta, have informed us that the last batch of scooters exported to them has the following problems:

- No rear-view mirrors have been supplied though they were included in the order
- Base plates of 32 scooters were found to be loose
- 32 scooters have been supplied in sports grey colour though this colour was not included in the order
- 16 scooters had no tool kits.

Please come to my office at 11 am tomorrow to discuss the matter. I will expect the concerned managers to bring with them explanations as well as remedies.

To Sum Up:

1. Get to your main message directly.
2. Cut out every sentence, in fact every word, that does not contribute to your message.
3. Make your sentences short and simple.
4. Always think of the reader's time
5. State your 'subject' very precisely
6. Itemize the points
7. Pay attention to the Layout

Now write the memo on the basis of the agenda given above—the answer is given in the answer key.

6.10 PRONUNCIATION: STRESS ACCORDING TO PART OF SPEECH

Look at the following words which can be used both as nouns and verbs. The stress falls on the first syllable if it is a noun and the second if it is a verb. Now listen to the audio cassette and countercheck your pronunciation.

For example

<u>Noun</u>	<u>Verb</u>
<u>In</u> crease	in <u>crease</u>

Can you mark the stresses in the following words and read them out aloud:

<u>Noun</u>	<u>Verb</u>
Present	present
Export	export
Record	record
Import	import
Desert	desert
Decrease	decrease
Progress	progress
Refund	refund
Process	process

6.11 SUMMARY

In this unit, through various activities and exercises, we have guided you through the following aspects of meetings:

- the difference between formal and informal meetings
- the format of meetings
- the formulaic language which is required for opening, middle and closing of meetings
- criteria for a successful meeting (a listening activity)

In the Grammar section, we give you practice in **reporting verbs** which are required when you write minutes of meeting.

As a follow up to a meeting, we may have to write a memo to the staff. We have given you the format and style of a memo. We have also given you practice in writing a memo.

6.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

Jones, L and Alexander R, Comfort, J. 1996. *Effective Meetings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. New *International Business English*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Sweeney, S. *Communicating in Business*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

6.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 2

Note: Answers to questions iii & v provide more points than the questions ask for. This is for the learner's benefit.

1.
 - i. Why are meetings necessary?
Meetings provide you with a platform where you can share your views and ideas with other people in the department / company and take decisions based on these shared ideas and opinions. Hence they are a necessary tool for communication and decision making.
 - ii. What should you do when you decide that a meeting is necessary?
Once you decide to call a meeting, you must circulate a memo to all those who are expected to be present for the meeting, well in advance. The memo must state the time, place and venue of the meeting. It must also have information on the issues to be discussed, what will be expected by way of participation from those who are to attend the meeting as well as which members have been called for the meeting.
 - iii. Name five things that should be taken care of by the person who chairs the meeting.
 - call a meeting only when absolutely necessary
 - set clear objectives for the meeting
 - circulate a memo with necessary information well in advance
 - do not call more than six people unless necessary
 - keep the meeting short – not more than an hour
 - encourage all members to participate, especially the quieter ones
 - ensure that decisions are taken
 - circulate minutes of the meeting
 - iv. What should be done once a decision is taken?
Once the chairperson of the meeting has taken a decision, s/he should assign responsibilities to the members and then set deadlines for the completion of the assigned work.
 - v. Name three things that participants should keep in mind.
 - prepare a few key points before the meeting and take them along to the meeting
 - don't memorize information – speak as naturally as possible
 - don't be afraid to admit if you do not know something that you are asked
 - be positive in your criticism
 - offer solutions
2.
 - i. The chairperson or his/her secretary sends a **memo** to invite participants to a meeting.
 - ii. The **venue** for the meeting is also mentioned in the memo.
 - iii. The **minutes** of the previous meeting are circulated to participants

- iv. The organizer or his/her staff make all the **arrangements** for the meeting.
- v. The chairperson **conducts** the meeting.
- vi. **Participants** take part in the meeting.
- vii. The **agenda** is discussed **item** by item.
- viii. **Consensus** is arrived at on issues under discussion
- ix. **Minutes** of the meeting are jotted down during the meeting and then sent to all participants and concerned persons.

Tape script

- A How about meeting at The Moti Mahal?
- B That should be fine. What time?
- A What about after the conference?
- B Would you like to meet for dinner?
- A That would be great. I suggest that I come and pick you up from Pragati Maidan.
- B Let's say 7 pm.
- A Good idea. See you at 7 then. Bye.
- B Bye.

Check Your Progress 3

Tape script

-
- A How about meeting for lunch today?
- B I'm afraid it is not convenient for me today. Can we fix it for tomorrow, please?
-
- A Would you like to go to the electronics exhibition on Saturday?
- B That'll be OK with me. Should we say 4 pm?
-
- A Could we meet at a restaurant on Friday evening?
- B Yes, that would suit me. Shall we say Mc Donald's at C P?
-
- A Would you like to watch the cricket match on Sunday?
- B Yes, that would be great.
-
- A Should we go for a movie this weekend?
- B I'm afraid it won't be possible. Can we keep it for next weekend?
-

2. Tape script (The correct order)

- Mr Bakshi : Gautam Bakshi speaking.
- Ms Jain : Hello Mr Bakshi, this is Sunidhi Jain from Bhopal. How are you?
- Mr Bakshi : Ms Jain! It is good to hear from you. I'm fine thanks, how are you?
- Ms Jain : Fine, thank you. I'm coming over to Delhi in the first week of November for the Trade Fair at Pragati Maidan. Will you be in Delhi at that time?
- Mr Bakshi: Yes sure. In fact we are participating in the Trade Fair this year.
- Ms Jain : Oh good! How about a meeting on 6th evening at The Village?
- Mr Bakshi : Just a minute, let me check my diary.OK, That should be fine.
- Ms Jain : That's great. I suggest 7 o'clock in the restaurant.
- Mr Bakshi : 6th November 7 o'clock then.
- Ms Jain: Thanks a lot. See you then.
- Mr Bakshi : Yes, looking forward to meeting you. Bye then.
- Ms Jain : Goodbye.

Check Your Progress 4

Tape script

- i. OK, shall we begin? We're here today to discuss about the arrangements for the welcome party for our new colleague Ms Sunanda Varma. I'd like to ask Sunil to begin by telling us what planning he has already done so far.
- ii. Thank you for coming. It is ten o'clock. Let's start. What we want to do today is reach a decision on the deadline for launching our new product. Have you all seen a copy of the agenda? Can we hear from Mr Bakshi about what he thinks would be the suitable date for launching the product?
- iii. Right then, can we get started? The purpose of this meeting is to plan in detail for the visit of our very important customer from Holland, Mr Tillman. Can we have Harvinder tell us what planning he has done so far?
- iv. Thank you for coming. It is two o'clock. Let's begin. Our aim is to ensure that we make proper arrangements for our participation in the Trade fair to be held next month in Delhi. On the agenda you will see there are three items. I'd like to ask Sunaina to say something about the first item that deals with the products that we will be displaying at the Fair this year.

Check Your Progress 5

- i. **Preventing someone from interrupting** – Sorry, please let him finish.
- ii. **Stating your opinion** – In my view.....I believe.....
- iii. **Asking to interrupt** – If I may interrupt..... Sorry to interrupt, but.....
- iv. **Closing the meeting** – I think we've covered everything. That's it then. The next meeting will be held on Friday the 20th of June.
- v. **Asking for a clarification** – Excuse me, may I ask for a clarification on this?
- vi. **Inviting someone's opinion** – Could we hear from Puneet? ... What do you think about?
- vii. **Asking for comments** – Any comments?
- viii. **Moving on to the next point on the agenda** – Let's move on to the next point..... Now we come to the question of.....

Check Your Progress 6

1. I think the report is too long. (disagree strongly).
I wouldn't say that at all.
 2. It's too late to make any changes. (agree).
I think you're right.
 1. I feel we all need to work together. (agree strongly)
I couldn't agree more.
 2. In my opinion, we need to cut down expenses on entertainment. (disagree)
That's not how I see it.
 3. We must wait till next year to start this project. (disagree, state the opposite opinion)
- That's out of the question. On the contrary, we should begin working on it as soon as we can.*

Check Your Progress 7

- i. Let's look at the diary for today. I see we've got a teleconference meeting meeting
 - ii. this morning. What's happened to good old fashioned meetings, with √
 - iii. everyone in the same room only discussing things. With all the hot-desking only
 - iv. that goes on in offices these days, not to be mention companies outsourcing be
 - v. work out, soon we'll never meet our colleagues at all! I can't imagine though, out
 - vi. that we'll be able to do without business lunches, however well e-commerce √
 - vii. takes off. I see we're lunching along with some clients today. That shouldn't along
 - viii. be too bad. The boss may be a tough guy, but he is also a bit of a great food lover, great
 - ix. so we'll probably go to a nice restaurant. √
2. teleconference - A conference held among people in different locations by means of telecommunications equipment, such as closed-circuit television.
hot-desking - is a way of saving office space in which workers do not have their own desk and are only given a desk when they need it.
outsourcing - subcontracting work to outside companies

Listening

Tape script

My two pet peeves are being stuck in mismanaged meetings and in traffic jams. Traffic jams are often unavoidable but ineffective meetings are particularly irksome since it is simple to plan and manage successful meetings. Using the tools for creating dynamic and inspirational meetings doesn't require a Ph.D. or months of training. Why then are these simple ideas and tools so often ignored?

Meetings are too often seen as an end unto themselves. I've attended more than my share of meetings where the object was to get to the meeting. Once there, we dutifully filled the time allotted while producing only a minimum of new ideas, plans and action.

Using meetings effectively starts with the understanding that meetings are not the destination but a vehicle for reaching strategic objectives or organizational destinations. With this in mind we can move meetings forward.

Thinking of meetings as vehicles, as the means to an end, clarifies objectives and itineraries. It enables us to get in the driver's seat and focus our attention on the results we want to achieve and the means of achieving them. This requires selecting the appropriate type and structure of meeting, picking a competent meeting leader and facilitator, determining the key participants, and identifying critical steps in order to make the best use of peoples' time and energy.

With a clear destination in mind and key waypoints noted, it is possible to map possible routes and determine when a bike, a bus, a plane, chariot or truck is the appropriate vehicle to get you there quickly. With clear objectives, we can determine how each part of the meeting should be structured and managed to achieve the desired results.

The success of meetings is limited only by our understanding of their purpose and our ability to plan and manage them.

Check Your Progress 8

Possible answers

1. Why does the speaker find meetings bothersome?
Meetings are often mismanaged & ineffective, although you don't need any special qualifications to be able to conduct successful and effective meetings.
2. Why is it necessary to look at meetings as a means rather than an end?
This will enable participants to achieve the objectives of the meeting better.
3. How can a meeting achieve its desired result?
 - *by selecting the appropriate type and structure of meeting*
 - *picking a competent meeting leader and facilitator*
 - *determining the key participants*
 - *identifying critical steps in order to make the best use of peoples' time and energy*
- 1 What do you understand by
 - Pet peeves – what bothers, irritates or annoys me most*
 - In the driver's seat – in a position of authority or command*
 - To map possible routes – to find out possible ways of doing something*

Check Your Progress 9

1. The missing words from the text are in bold.
Secrets of Better Decision Making Meetings
While **effective** meetings are essential to any **organization** and to getting work done, most meetings leave us still looking for a **decision** and tired. A good meeting should **facilitate** decision-making, assist people in taking responsibility, energize the **participants**, and contribute to building **team effort** within the organization.

Successful meetings are ones where attention is paid to three areas; content, **design** and process. Selection of content is crucial. All too often meetings are called to **discuss** issues which would be better resolved with a couple of phone calls while at the same time core issues remain unmentioned. The key is to focus meetings around **key issues**.

Secondly, the design of the meeting can hinder or **support** the decision- making, problem solving or the informational task at hand. In designing, attention needs to be given to idea generation methods, decision processes, agenda, time frames, problem-solving steps, etc.

Third, and most often ignored, is making sure the individual and group **needs** of the participants are met. Are people participating, included, feel that there is room for their **ideas**? Are dysfunctional behaviors openly dealt with, is there positive energy in the group, are people committed to the task at hand and enthused about the way the group is working to complete the task?

2. Chairperson: 'Right then, I think we should begin now, it's ten o'clock. We're here today to discuss some of the reasons for the decline in profits which has affected the company. At the end of the meeting we should have a clear idea of what measures we should take to improve the situation. You've all seen the agenda. I'd like to ask if anyone has any comments on it before we start.'

Voices: 'No / its fine / etc.'

Chairperson: Can I ask Mr Anand to start with his remarks.

Check Your Progress 10

Reporting Verbs

Possible answers:

- i. He/she assured the members that the report would be in by the next day.
- ii. He enquired about the sales figures of the previous week.
- iii. She was reminded to gather the feedback from her department positively by the end of the week.
- iv. He informed the members that the delegation would arrive the next week.
- v. She questioned the necessity of making the scheme compulsory for all the employees.
- vi. She expressed her doubts about the acceptability of flexi-time.
- vii. He suggested that they should ask an advertising agency to design their campaign.
- viii. She asked for an update on the progress of construction work at their new site.
- ix. He expressed his unhappiness with latecomers.
- x. He asked to see the absentee record of the Sales department
- xi. She stressed/emphasized the need to dispatch the goods by the weekend.
- xii. She informed the members that they had gained two important clients through the Trade Fair

Check Your Progress 11

Here is a sample of the Memo you could write to your boss:

Memo

To : Rakesh Menon (GM –Marketing)
 From : Shilpa Gupta (HR Department)
 Date : 21 June 2003
 Subject: Details of Mr Sampath's visit to Delhi

At the meeting held on 20th June 2003 we took these decisions regarding the arrangements for Mr Sampath's visit:

- Vikas will book a room for him at the Park Royal Hotel and also receive him at the airport
- We have made the following lunch arrangements for him and will fix up dinner for the two days of his visit according to his preference and convenience
 On 1st July he will have lunch with the MD at 1 pm at Park Royal
 On 2nd July the GMs will have lunch with him at The Taj.
- Since this is his first visit to Delhi, the G M Marketing will take him on a sightseeing tour of Delhi on Saturday, 1st July. Vikas will take him out for shopping on Sunday if he wishes to shop.
- We have decided to gift him a traditional painting from Cottage Emporium.
- Vikas will also be drafting the welcome letter. He will get the letter approved by you before mailing it to him.

Please let us know whether you are satisfied with these arrangements. We look forward to your suggestions.

S/d

Pronunciation

Noun

present
export
record
import
desert
decrease
progress
refund
process

Verb

present
export
record
import
desert
decrease
progress
refund
pr