

LESSON 1: MEETINGS

“A productive meeting is one where everyone walks away with clarity, purpose, and a sense of accomplishment.”

Business English

1. Introduction to topic

Learning about meetings in a Business English class is super important because meetings are a huge part of how businesses operate. They're where decisions get made, problems get solved, and teams come together to collaborate. If you can communicate clearly and confidently in a meeting, you're more likely to get your ideas across, work well with others, and build strong professional relationships. By focusing on meetings, you're not just improving your English—you're also getting ready for the real-world situations where good communication can really make a difference in your career.

2. General Questions

1. In your opinion, what is more effective... In-person or Online meetings?
2. Do you personally enjoy attending meetings?
3. How often do you have meetings in your company/ in your department?
4. If you could change one thing about the meetings at your work, what would it be and why?
5. What is the future of Meetings? (e.g. all online, less/ more frequent, etc)
6. Is Microsoft TEAMS the best software in your opinion?
7. Can you remember a super productive meeting? How about a meeting that could have been replaced by an email?
8. Do you think that every country has a similar method when it comes to having meetings?

3. Images

- **Can you describe each photo?** (e.g. where are they? What industry could they be working in? etc)
- **Compare and contrast these photos** (What is similar? What is different?)



4. Reading

A recent study from Stanford University looked into how long periods of videoconferencing affect our health. Researcher and communications expert Jeremy Bailenson called this problem "Zoom fatigue," but he noted that it isn't just linked to Zoom. During the past years, many of us have spent a lot of time online using different video-conferencing tools. The COVID-19 pandemic made platforms like Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, and Google Hangouts necessary for staying in touch with loved ones. Many businesses have relied on these tools for meetings, and teachers have used them for online classes.

Bailenson pointed out several reasons why video-conferencing can be so tiring. He explained that it's not just the tiredness and eye strain from looking at a screen for a long time. It also causes "cognitive overload" and makes us feel pressured to always stay connected. We often feel like we need to be in constant contact with friends or always available to bosses, clients, or students. Bailenson warned that this can lead to burnout and stress, which increases the risk of developing moderate to severe depression. He also mentioned that this anxiety can hurt our self-confidence, as having many faces watching you in meetings is similar to the stress of public speaking.

Comprehension Questions

1. What is "Zoom fatigue," and who created this term?
2. Which video-conferencing platforms are mentioned in the text as essential during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. According to Jeremy Bailenson, what are some of the main reasons why video-conferencing can be so tiring?
4. How does "Zoom fatigue" affect a person's mental health, according to the study?
5. Why does Bailenson compare video-conferencing to public speaking?

5. Listening

Watch this TED talk:

https://www.ted.com/talks/david_grady_how_to_save_the_world_or_at_least_yourself_from_bad_meetings?subtitle=en&geo=es

- Summarise the video
- Note down the key expressions and any new vocabulary

6. Key Vocabulary

a) Match the business meeting vocabulary to the correct definition

1. Action Item
2. Consensus
3. Follow-up meeting
4. Protocol
5. Chairperson
6. Minutes
7. Agenda
8. Brainstorming

- a. Specific tasks or activities that need to be completed after the meeting.
- b. Rules and behaviour needed to be followed by all members.
- c. General agreement among all participants in the meeting.
- d. A meeting held later to ensure that decisions are implemented.
- e. A method used during meetings to generate ideas or solutions through open discussion.
- f. A list of topics or issues to be discussed during the meeting.
- g. The person who leads the meeting.
- h. A summary of talking points during the meeting.

b) Write an example sentence using each expression

7. Grammar / Common mistakes

Can you guess the missing **preposition** from these common business meeting expressions?

1. "Let's begin by going over what's ___ today's agenda."
2. "Can someone take notes and send them ___ after the meeting?"
3. "We have a few action items to look ___ by the end ___ this meeting."
4. "We need enough people present ___ make any official decisions."
5. "The project proposal is due ___ next Tuesday, so please be ready."
6. "Let's get input ___ the CEO before we finalize the plan."
7. "I'll send a follow-up email ___ confirm the next steps and deadlines."
8. "We'll start ___ a brainstorming session to create ideas ___ the campaign."
9. "Alex will now give a presentation ___ the market research findings."
10. "The goal ___ today's meeting is to finalize the contract with our new client."**

8. Writing task

Explain which 3 ideas are the **most productive (150-200 words)**

1. All meetings should have a chairperson.
2. All meetings in Europe should be conducted in English.
3. There should be a 2 meeting limit every day.
4. All meetings should have a 30-minute time limit.
5. All meetings should be recorded for the other employees.
6. All meetings should be conducted standing up.

Upload your writing

ANSWER KEY

4. Reading

1. Zoom fatigue is the effect on our health from spending long periods of time videoconferencing. This term was created by Jeremy Bailenson from Stamford University.
2. Essential platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic were ZOOM, FaceTime, Skype, and Google Hangouts.
3. According to Bailenson, some reasons why videoconferencing is tiring include eye strain and cognitive overload.
4. Zoom fatigue affects a person's mental health by making them feel pressure to always feel connected and can lead to burnout and stress.
5. Bailenson compares public speaking to videoconferencing because with both you have many faces watching you,

6. Key Vocabulary

- Action Item **A**
- Consensus **C**
- Follow-up meeting **D**
- Protocol **B**
- Chairperson **G**
- Minutes **H**
- Agenda **F**
- Brainstorming **E**

7. Grammar

1. on
2. out
3. at – of
4. to
5. by
6. from
7. to
8. with – for
9. on
10. for