

# LESSON 1: MEETINGS

*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."*

*Business English*

## 1. Introduction to topic

Learning about meetings in a Business English class is very important because meetings are a big part of how businesses work. In meetings, decisions are made, problems are fixed, and teams work together. If you can speak clearly and confidently in a meeting, you'll be better at sharing your ideas, working with others, and building good work relationships. By studying meetings, you're not just improving your English—you're also getting ready for real job situations where good communication is very important for your career.

## 2. General Questions

1. What do you think is better: in-person meetings or online meetings?
2. Do you like going to meetings?
3. How often do you have meetings at your company or department?
4. If you could change one thing about the meetings at your work, what would it be and why?
5. What do you think meetings will be like in the future? (e.g., all online, more or fewer meetings, etc.)
6. Do you think Microsoft TEAMS is the best software for meetings?
7. Can you remember a really good meeting? What about a meeting that could have just been an email?
8. Do you think every country has the same way of 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 at how long video calls affect our health. Researcher Jeremy Bailenson called this problem "Zoom fatigue," but he said it's not just about Zoom. Over the past few years, many of us have spent a lot of time on different video call tools. The COVID-19 pandemic made apps like Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, and Google Hangouts important for staying in touch with family and friends. Many businesses used these tools for meetings, and teachers used them for online classes.

Bailenson gave several reasons why video calls can be so tiring. It's not just because staring at a screen for a long time makes us tired and strains our eyes. Video calls also make our brains work harder and make us feel like we always need to be connected. We often feel pressured to stay in touch with friends or be available for bosses, clients, or students. Bailenson warned that this can lead to burnout and stress, which might cause depression. He also said that seeing many faces on a video call can hurt our confidence, similar to the stress of speaking in public.

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

- Watch the video with English subtitles.
- Watch the video with Spanish subtitles.
- 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. Tasks or actions that need to be done after the meeting.
- b. Rules and behaviours everyone must follow.
- c. Agreement among all meeting members.
- d. A follow-up meeting to check if decisions were carried out.
- e. A way to come up with ideas or solutions by discussing them openly.
- f. A list of things to talk about in the meeting.
- g. The person who runs the meeting.
- h. A brief summary of the main points discussed in 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 start by looking \_\_\_\_ today's agenda."
2. "Can someone take notes and send them \_\_\_\_ after the meeting?"
3. "We have a few tasks to check **\*\*by\*\*** the end \_\_\_\_ this meeting."
4. "We need enough people \_\_\_\_ make any important decisions."
5. "The project proposal is due \_\_\_\_ next Tuesday, so be prepared."
6. "Let's get feedback \_\_\_\_ the CEO before we finish the plan."
7. "I'll send a follow-up email \_\_\_\_ confirm the next steps and deadlines."
8. "We'll start \_\_\_\_ a brainstorming session to come up with ideas \_\_\_\_ the campaign."
9. "Alex will now give a presentation \_\_\_\_ the market research results."
10. "The goal \_\_\_\_ today's meeting is to finish 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 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 standing up.

**Upload your writing**

## ANSWER KEY

### 4. Reading

1. Zoom fatigue is the affect 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