

LEARNING english



**IMPROVE YOUR
PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**
Emails, text messages, business reports,
presentations and negotiation

BBC
WORLD
SERVICE

Welcome

Do you use English for work? Would you like to get a job which allows you to use English? In this booklet, we look at some of the ways in which people use English at work and with colleagues. We show you how you can improve your professional skills in English, both in writing and in speaking. The booklet is designed both for people using English for work and students who are preparing to enter the workplace.

Using extracts from BBC World Service Learning English programmes, this booklet will help you to...

- ① write business emails.
- ② write business reports.
- ③ write minutes of meetings.
- ④ write letters of complaint.
- ⑤ send text messages to business contacts.
- ⑥ improve your presentation skills.
- ⑦ improve your negotiating skills.
- ⑧ communicate more effectively across cultures.

On the final page you will find a glossary explaining some of the words and phrases in the booklet. Words in the glossary are underlined.

How to use this booklet

Each page looks at a different topic. On each page, you'll find...

- a short introduction which explains the topic.
- an extract from one of the BBC World Service's Learning English programmes.
- a reading task to accompany the extract.
- key tips to help you upgrade your own use of English.
- a task to help you practise what has been explained.

How to tune in to the programmes

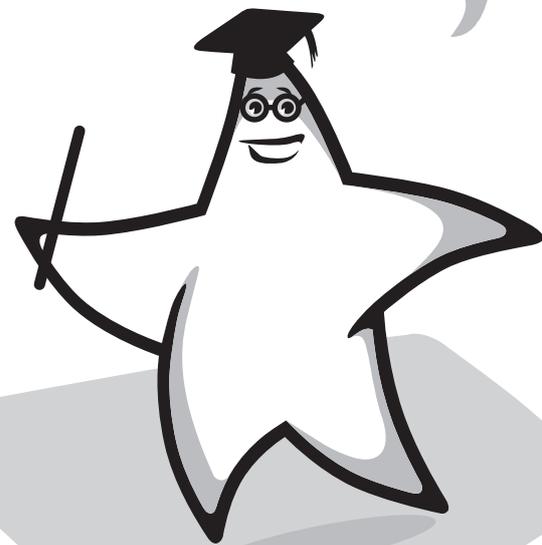
Depending on where you are in the world, you can hear Learning English radio programmes on short wave, medium wave or FM.

You can also listen to some of the previous week's programmes on the internet using the BBC World Service Radio Player. Click on the 'LISTEN TO BBC WORLD SERVICE – START RADIO PLAYER' button at: www.bbcworldservice.com/learningenglish

For free schedules, giving details of the Learning English radio programmes you can hear in your area and where to find them on your radio, log on to:

www.bbcworldservice.com/learningenglish/radio/highlights.shtml

or write to: Learning English, BBC World Service, Bush House, London WC2B 4PH, UK.



DOWNLOAD THIS BOOKLET FROM THE LEARNING ENGLISH WEBSITE

This study booklet is one of a series of booklets that can be downloaded from the Learning English website. Go to: www.bbcworldservice.com/learningenglish/radio/studyguides/index.shtml

1 Writing business emails

Around the world, email has become the most important form of communication for businesses. You can communicate internationally very quickly, without worrying about time differences between countries – and you can expect to get a quick reply. However, there are some problems with writing emails. Because it is so easy, it is tempting to write in the same way as you speak. This is not a problem with emails between friends, but when you are sending an email for business, there are some important things to think about.

The BBC World Service radio series **Better Business Writing** gives advice on improving your writing for business purposes, with each programme focusing on a different type of written document.

In this extract, business people Ruth Lee and Brett Smith talk about some of the problems with emails they receive at work.

Before you read this extract If you use email, how do you normally begin and end messages? If you have never used email, imagine you are going to write a message to your manager. How would you start the message? How would you end it?

Ruth: It's very annoying when you get an email from someone you don't know but the message is rude and over-familiar at the same time. So, for example, I sometimes get messages which start 'Dear Ruth' then jump right into a request. For example, when I told a recruitment agency I didn't want to employ one of their candidates, the email simply said 'Dear Ruth, Why don't you want to interview Person X?' followed by the name of the sender. They don't know me so they should have used my full title – Ms Lee – and been more polite.

Brett: Yes, it's very common to get emails which are written in a very off-putting style. If I receive a message which is all in upper case I never read it – all those capital letters make it look as if the person is shouting at you! And I also think that often people don't think about the impact of what they are writing on the recipient. Because it's so quick to write, people forget to write the pleasantries – like the word 'please'. And, I say, the result is an email which doesn't make me want to respond positively.

1. Find 2 things which Ruth dislikes in business emails.
2. Find 2 things which Brett dislikes in business emails.

5 top tips for writing emails for business

1. Always give your message a clear title by writing in the 'Subject' box.
2. Open your message with a greeting, e.g. 'Dear Ms Lee'. If you have spoken to the person before, it is probably acceptable to use his or her first name. However, if this is the first contact, it is best to use titles such as 'Mr' or 'Ms'. If you do not know if the recipient is a man or a woman, you can write their full name after 'Dear'.
3. Begin with a pleasantry. If you are replying to a message, you could say 'Thank you for your message.' If this is the first contact, tell them why you are writing ('I am writing to inform you about...').
4. Use complete sentences and don't forget to use words like 'please' if you are asking the person to help you.
5. Let the person know if you expect them to contact you by saying 'Please let me know...'.

TASK Improve the email

Look at the email below. The writer has broken some important rules for business emails. Can you correct it?

To: BBC English Editor
From: John Smith
Subject:

I NEED 20 MORE COPIES OF ENGLISH CLUB MAGAZINE! IF YOU CAN'T POST THEM TO ME, SEND ME EMAIL COPIES.

John Smith

② Writing business reports

Report writing plays an important role in business. When a company needs to consider how to improve business or make effective changes, it usually investigates the options available and then produces a report which summarises all the possible choices and makes recommendations on the best course of action. This allows those responsible for the business to make decisions based on the evidence given in the report.

In this extract, education manager Simon Williams talks about the importance of effective report writing, and gives some guidelines for writing effective reports.

Before you read the extract Do you ever have to write reports for work or for study? Try to think of four elements of a good report.

The ability to write effective reports is vital in my work. We need to be sure that any decision we make has been considered fully, and that we have considered all possible options before starting to make changes. For example, if we want to offer courses in a new country, we need to look at all possible issues before giving the move the go ahead. It's therefore very important that a report gives managers all the information they need to make a decision. A good report will usually start by giving a brief introduction to the issue being investigated, so that anyone who reads it will immediately understand the situation. There should also be a summary of the information which has been gathered, and how it was gathered. In the example about providing courses in other countries, this might include information about the target country and other, similar courses offered there – and how we found this information. This will help the decision makers see that all bases have been covered. There should also be a short discussion of all the options which could be considered, and the pros and cons of each option. Finally, the report should give some recommendations – which option or options are the best in this situation? You need to remember that managers are very busy and the role of the report is to make sure they are well informed and advised. Oh – and the report shouldn't be too long – too many pages and the decision makers simply won't read it!

1. In Simon's opinion, what are the main purposes of a written business report?
2. Re-read the text to find four elements of a good report. Are they the same as the ones you thought of?

5 top tips for effective report writing

1. Provide a short background or introduction section which summarises the reasons for compiling the report.
2. Give information about what you did – what information did you gather? Where did it come from?
3. Outline the different options which are possible, based on the evidence you have gathered and provide a summary of the advantages and disadvantages of each one.
4. State clearly what you recommend that the company should do, and give your reasons.
5. Remember that this is a formal business document, so it should be written in formal language. And don't forget to keep it short so that busy managers can read it quickly!

TASK Writing a report

What is the best way or ways to learn English where you live? Try to find out as much as possible about the English learning resources which are available and compile a report about the most effective way to learn and use English in your town.

You could present your findings to your Learning Circle, or to colleagues or fellow students. For information on how to create an effective presentation, see page 6.

③ Writing minutes of meetings

Usually, following a business meeting, it will be someone's responsibility to write the minutes of the meeting. 'The minutes' is the name given to the written summary of the points discussed at the meeting, with a note of who contributed and any decisions which were made. After they are written, minutes are usually circulated to all the people who attended the meeting to allow them to check that they are correct, and to provide a record of what was said.

Clearly, writing meeting minutes is a very important task. In this extract, Simon Williams talks about the role of 'minutes' in business.

Before you read the extract Have you been to a meeting recently? This could be a business meeting, a meeting at school or simply a meeting with a group of friends. How much can you remember about the conversation? Can you remember who said what?

In my work, I have meetings with many different committees so it is absolutely vital that minutes are taken at each meeting. This means that we don't get confused about what has been said at each meeting and that the members of the various committees can be reminded of what has been decided before they come to the next meeting. If I'm lucky, there will be a secretary to take the minutes but sometimes I have to do it myself. It's actually quite a difficult job – you have to make sure you make accurate notes of what is said and what has been decided. It's also vital to identify any action points which have been decided, and who has to do what before the next meeting. But, of course, when you write up the minutes, you need to summarise what has been said so that it is both accurate and brief – no-one wants to read minutes which go on for pages and pages. So, really, the perfect minute taker is someone who can listen, understand and summarise what is being said as the meeting is going on. It's a very important skill.

1. What two reasons does Simon give for taking minutes at meetings?
2. Find four different types of information which the minute taker needs to identify.

5 top tips for writing up minutes

1. The minutes should start with the title of the meeting, the names of those who attended and the date, time and place of the meeting.
2. Group the information under topics. If the meeting had a formal agenda, you can use the items on the agenda as titles of different sections of the minutes. Remember to number the sections and the points within each section.
3. Identify the most important information which was discussed and, most importantly, any decisions which were agreed.
4. Don't try to write down all of the exchanges which took place. Include those which were important to the outcome of the meeting.
5. Remember that the minutes are an impartial summary of what was said. The language used should be formal and unbiased. If someone becomes angry, avoid saying 'Mr X then shouted at Mr Y'. Instead try 'There was heated disagreement.'

TASK Take and write up your own minutes

If you are a member of a Learning Circle, try to arrange for minutes to be taken at your meetings. You could take turns in being the minute taker. The minutes can be written up for the next meeting and members who miss a meeting can find out about the things they missed.

④ Writing a letter of complaint

Many companies aim to give very good customer service. Sometimes, however, things go wrong and then the ability to complain effectively is important. There are usually two reasons for writing a letter of complaint about bad service. You may want the company to do something about the problem – for example, you may want them to refund your money. On the other hand, you may simply want them to know that you are not happy.

In this extract from **Better Business Writing**, businesswoman Ruth Lee talks about an occasion when she had to write a letter of complaint.

Before you read the extract Think about a time when you had bad service. Did you complain about it? What was the result? Now compare your experience with Ruth's.

The last letter of complaint I wrote was about three months ago. My company uses a taxi company quite regularly when people have to travel to the airport. On this occasion, I had booked a taxi about a week in advance to take two members of staff to the airport because they had to fly to France for an important meeting. However, when they came back from France, the two staff members told me that the taxi had never arrived. In the end, one of the two men picked up his colleague in his own car and drove to the airport himself. They almost missed the flight. So I wrote a two-page letter to the taxi company, pointing out how much business my company gives them and telling them that we wanted some kind of compensation otherwise we'd take our business elsewhere. The next day, I received a full apology, along with a substantial amount credited to our taxi account to cover the next taxi journeys booked by my company.

1. In your own words, describe the problem which prompted Ruth to write to the taxi company.
2. What two things did the taxi company give to Ruth after they received her letter?

5 top tips for writing effective letters of complaint

1. Set a formal tone at the beginning of the letter. If you are writing to a company and don't know the name of the person who will deal with the complaint, begin the letter 'Dear Sir/Madam'.
2. Tell the reader why you are writing. A good way to do this is to use the phrase 'I am writing to complain about...'
3. Give a clear description of what happened to cause the complaint. It is important to make this as factual as possible. A neutral or formal tone will make your complaint more believable.
4. Say what you want to happen as a result of your letter. Do you want a refund or a letter of apology? You may simply want to tell the company how you feel. Phrases such as 'As you can imagine, I am very disappointed by this poor service. It is not what I expected from your company.' Finish this section by telling the person reading the letter that you expect a reply: 'I look forward to receiving your reply.'
5. End on a formal note. If you started your letter 'Dear Sir/Madam', end it 'Yours faithfully' then sign your name. This is normal for any formal letter.

TASK Upgrade the letter

Look at the following letter. It was written by someone who is unhappy with the food and service they received in a restaurant. However, there are some problems with the letter. Can you rewrite it to make it an effective letter of complaint?

Dear Sammy's Restaurant

I had dinner in your restaurant yesterday and it was terrible. The food was really awful and the waiters were terrible. They didn't help us at all. I want a refund.

Thanks

Roberto Darcy

5 Sending text messages to business contacts

Around the world, sending text messages from mobile phones is becoming the fastest-growing method of electronic communication. It's convenient and often easier than leaving a message if the person you are trying to contact cannot answer the phone. Text messaging – or 'texting' – has also developed a new form of English, full of abbreviated forms of words. However, there can be problems if you use this text language in a work context.

In this extract from **Better Business Writing**, Ruth Lee talks about what to do – and what not to do – when you text business contacts.

Before you read this extract Do you send text messages to colleagues or friends? If you do, what kind of messages do you send? If you don't, can you think of any problems you could have when writing a message to send from a mobile phone?

I send text messages for work when I'm unable to attend a meeting or if I'm running late and I have to let my colleagues know. I usually include information in the text message about the people attending the meeting, the time of the meeting, any phone numbers that are required and so on. Of course, text messages need to be kept short – and this can be very difficult because you need to choose the words you use carefully. If you are writing to a new business contact you usually have to use proper business language but, because there's a limit to the number of characters you can use in a text, I find I usually abbreviate words. It's OK to do that but it's difficult to find the right balance between being business-like and trying to keep the message short.

1. When does Ruth send text messages?
2. Why should text messages be kept short?
3. What does Ruth think is difficult when sending a text to a business contact?
4. Look at these abbreviations. Can you identify the words they represent?
a) probs b) poss c) info d) CU

5 top tips for sending texts to business contacts

1. Identify the most important information in the message you want to send. What does the person who receives the text really need to know? If you try to write too much, you may run out of space.
2. Identify words which you can abbreviate easily. But remember – if your abbreviations are unusual or contain letters and numbers (e.g. 'l8r' for 'later') the recipient might not understand the message.
3. Avoid long introductions. Unlike emails, you don't need to say 'Dear...'. However, you could start with a simple 'Hello.'
4. Although this is a formal situation, you don't need to use lots of formal language. Keep your message brief.
5. End your message with your name, so that the recipient knows who has called!

TASK Rewrite the text message

Look at the message below. Can you rewrite it as a text message?

Dear Ana

I'm sorry but I will be a little late for our meeting because my train has been delayed. There are severe problems on the railway line. I think I can arrive at your office at approximately 2 o'clock this afternoon. I'm sorry for this inconvenience and hope that this doesn't cause you any problems. Please call me if you need to talk before our meeting.

With best wishes
Lisa

6 Improving your presentation skills

Nowadays many more people find that they need to give presentations. In large companies, many people work in teams and members of one team may have to present their work to others. At school or university, students may have to stand in front of the class to talk about a subject which they have been studying. The result of presenting in this way is that people can become more confident, both in their work and in their ability to speak – in English – in front of others.

The BBC World Service radio series **Power Speaking** looks at ways in which you can become a more confident speaker of English. In this extract from the programme, Yvonne Evans, a communication skills trainer, explains how you can develop good presentation skills.

Before you read the extract Think about the last time you listened to someone giving a presentation. It could have been at work, at school or on TV. Was it a good presentation? If so, what did the speaker do to make you interested and involved? If not, what was bad about it?

One method that I like for putting together presentations depends on the number 3. First you should divide your talk into 3 sections – an introduction, a middle and a conclusion – then subdivide each of the middle sections into 3. Having 3 main ideas to talk about is useful – it is easy for the audience to remember 3 main points and it gives the talk a good structure. Remember, too, that the beginning should tell the audience what you are going to talk about, the middle should be the ‘content’ of the talk and the end should say ‘this is what I talked about’. All of this gives a very clear framework and that is what an audience needs. They also need to know that you are confident. One thing which I do when preparing a presentation is to speak it out to myself over and over again at night on my own until I have the right words to convey the message I want. Structure and practice – that’s what builds your confidence as a presenter. Knowing exactly what you are going to do and say helps you concentrate on how you sound during the presentation itself.

1. Why is the number 3 important to Yvonne when she is preparing a presentation?
2. What are two important elements which can help you become a confident presenter?

5 top tips for improving your presentation skills

1. Start with a clear introduction which sets the scene for the audience. Remember to tell them 3 things: why you are giving the presentation, what you are going to talk about, and how long the presentation will take.
2. Have a clearly structured middle section in your presentation. Again, splitting the points you want to make into groups of 3 ideas will make them more memorable.
3. In the final section of your presentation, try to give clear conclusions, remind the audience of what was said during the talk and, if it is appropriate, give them the opportunity to ask questions.
4. Take time to practise your presentation somewhere quiet. Think carefully about the words you want to use and the images you want to create.
5. Remember that visual aids such as slides or posters can help people remember what you are saying. But be careful – if there is too much to look at and to read, the audience may stop listening.

TASK Learning English presentation

Imagine you have been asked by your local school or college to give a presentation on the BBC World Service and how it can help you to learn English. How would you structure your presentation? What would you say? Could you structure your presentation using Yvonne’s suggestion of ‘groups of 3 ideas’?

If you have the opportunity, you could offer to give the presentation during an English lesson at the school or college. This would help you develop your presentation skills and help the students to improve their listening skills.

7 Improving your negotiating skills

When we hear the word 'negotiation' we often think of politicians or high-powered business people trying to work out the details of treaties or important business deals. However, the ability to negotiate – in other words, to find a solution which is acceptable to both sides in a discussion or an argument – is important in all areas of life.

In this extract, Simon Williams talks about the importance of having good negotiating skills.

Before you read the extract Think about a time when you have had an argument or a disagreement with someone. How did you get over this problem? What did you do to resolve the argument?

No matter what your job is, you probably have to deal with difficult situations from time to time. In my job, we sometimes get students phoning to complain because they haven't received a piece of information, or because they want us to do something which we can't do. And when you get an angry telephone call, you really need to be calm and try to negotiate a positive outcome for both you and the person who is calling. I think the first important thing in effective negotiating is to listen and to show you understand the problem. Often, it helps to say what the person has told you in your own words. I often use the phrase 'So, can I check that I have understood. You've said...'. This shows that you really have been listening but it also gives the person on the other end of the phone the chance to calm down a little bit and it allows you to take over the conversation. It's also important not to promise to do lots of things immediately. When I have a difficult person on the phone, I often say 'I need to look into this – can I take your number and call you back in half an hour?'. This gives me time to think about the things I can do to solve the problem. You need to consider the things you can compromise on and those that you can't before you make a decision or an offer. And you need to be sure that you phone back when you say you will – otherwise the person will get even angrier!

1. Find two examples of situations in which Simon has to use his negotiating skills.
2. Simon gives two pieces of advice for dealing with difficult phone calls. What are they?

5 top tips for to help improve your negotiating skills

1. Listen carefully to what is being said then repeat it in your own words. This shows that you are listening and gives you the chance to take control of the conversation.
2. Be careful not to become angry if the person who is speaking to you becomes annoyed. Buy time by saying that you need to find out what you can do to help and you will phone back immediately. If you are in the same room as the person, ask to take a short break to allow things to calm down.
3. Think carefully about what you can compromise on. Don't offer to do things which you cannot do, but identify where you can make small changes which will make the other person happier.
4. Tell the person what you can do. If you can only make small compromises, start by saying 'Unfortunately, we can't give you everything you have asked for, but we can...'. This lets them focus on the positive things which you are offering.
5. Don't be tempted to give in to impossible demands. Be very clear and calm when telling people that you cannot do what they ask, and explain why this isn't possible. It is important to help the other person to understand your point of view.

TASK Negotiation roleplay

You can practise your negotiating skills with friends or in your Learning Circle.

- Choose one of the situations below, or a situation which can happen to you at work.
- One person should take the role of the person who is complaining, and the other should be the 'negotiator'.
- Act out the situation you have chosen. Try to reach an amicable solution to the problem. If this isn't possible, try to ensure that the 'complainer' understands your situation.
- Try to work in groups of three. Two people can take part in the roleplay, and the third can watch and say what was done well, and where improvements could be made. Then change roles so every member of the group has the chance to use their negotiating skills.

At work

Person A: You have been working very hard and feel you deserve promotion – or at least a bonus payment.

Person B: You are Person A's boss. You know that he/she has been working hard but, at the moment, there is no room for promotion. But, the company is making a good profit so the situation may be different in 6 – 9 months.

In business

Person A: You are a travel agent who books flights and hotels for business travellers. Person B phoned you three weeks ago to make a reservation but did not pay a deposit. As a result, the hotel has cancelled the reservation.

Person B: You made a reservation for a business trip three weeks ago. You did not realise you needed to pay a deposit. Now you have been told that the reservation has been cancelled.

8 Communicating across cultures

Nowadays, there are more people who speak English as a second or third language than there are native speakers of English. In business, English is being used as the main medium of communication across many cultures. However, knowing the English language doesn't necessarily mean that people will be able to communicate effectively. As well as looking at language improvement, **Power Speaking** discusses what you need to consider when you are communicating across cultures.

In this extract, trainer Yvonne Evans talks about the problems which can arise when people from different cultures meet to discuss business.

Before you read the extract Think about a film you have seen recently. This needs to be a film from a different country. How did the people in the film greet each other? How did they talk to each other? Can you see any differences between the way they behaved with each other and the ways people in your country behave in the same situation?

When you are meeting with people from different countries, it's very important to be aware that communication might not go smoothly just because you both speak English. This is because lots of our communication is non-verbal – this means we communicate a lot through gestures, and facial expressions – and a lot of it depends on a shared cultural understanding. One example is when you shake hands. In the UK, it is quite complicated: depending on your generation, you may or may not automatically shake hands with someone you meet at work. The rules for this are generally unspoken but understood – and if you come from a different culture, they may be impossible to understand. There are other things too. Eye contact is a key one. In some cultures, you are expected to make eye contact with the people you are talking to, in others it can be seen as offensive. That's why knowing something about different cultures, and being open minded about the differences between cultures is so important. It's not just language that makes us effective communicators!

1. Find two examples of non-verbal behaviour.
2. Find two examples which Yvonne gives of culture-based 'rules'.

5 top tips for communicating effectively across cultures

1. If you are working with colleagues from different cultures, try to find out something about those cultures. Being informed about different cultures can help you to identify where misunderstandings have occurred.
2. Be observant. If you are watching foreign films or TV programmes, watch how people communicate with each other. Can you identify any differences from the ways people communicate in your country?
3. Be open-minded. Problems can arise when people don't respond or act in the way we expect them to, but this might be a result of cross-cultural interference. Try to be aware of those differences, and help others to be aware too.
4. Choose your language carefully. Try to avoid very informal or slang expressions, or too many idioms. Using simple, clear language will help you convey your message clearly.
5. Share information about your own culture with visitors from other countries. It is often small things which can be confusing: for example, in your country, do you take your shoes off before you enter the house? Try to be aware of the little things which make your culture special.

TASK Becoming culturally aware

Imagine you have been asked to give a talk about everyday life in your country to a group of foreign visitors. What kind of things would you tell them. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Greeting friends and meeting new people: For example, do you shake hands with friends?
- Socialising: Where do people usually go to socialise? Is it usual to invite guests to your home? Should guests bring gifts for the host?
- Shopping: Should you bargain for things in shops? Should you put the money into the shopkeeper's hands or should you put it on the counter?

Answer key

① Writing business emails

1. Emails from people she doesn't know which are over-familiar and which sound rude.
2. Emails which are written in upper case and leave out words like 'please'.

Here is one suggested way to improve the email.

To: Tim Moock
From: John Smith
Subject: 20 Copies of English Club Magazine

Dear Mr Moock

I am writing to ask if you could send me 20 more copies of English Club Magazine for my Learning Circle. If this is not possible, could you email the magazine please? Please let me know if this is possible.

Thank you
Regards
John Smith

② Writing business reports

1. Reports should provide decision makers with all the information they need to understand the issues. It should also provide recommendations for the steps which the business should take.
2. A good report should have...
 - background to the issue being investigated.
 - a summary of the information which has been gathered and how it was gathered.
 - a list of options for the next step which the business should take.
 - recommendations taken from the list of options.

③ Writing minutes of meetings

1. Minutes prevent people being confused about what was said at a meeting. They also help the committees prepare for the next meeting.
2. Minutes should contain details of...
 - what was discussed at the meeting.
 - any decisions which were made.
 - any action which needs to be taken before the next meeting.
 - who has to do something before the next meeting.

④ Writing a letter of complaint

1. The taxi company failed to collect the two members of staff. As a result, they almost missed their flight to France.
2. Ruth received an apology and credit to pay for future taxi journeys.

Here is one suggested way to improve the letter.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to complain about the food and service which I received in your restaurant last night.

I had invited a close friend to dinner and we were looking forward to a pleasant evening. We both ordered chicken from your special dinner menu. When the dishes arrived, the chicken was not properly cooked and the rice and vegetables were extremely cold. We asked the waiter to change our meals, but he refused, telling us there was nothing wrong.

As you can imagine, we were very upset and disappointed with our meal and therefore I am writing to you. Given the situation, I consider that at least a partial refund of our bill should be made. I enclose the receipt for the money we paid.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully
Roberto Darcy

⑤ Sending text messages to business contacts

1. When she's going to a meeting and has been delayed, or if she can't attend the meeting.
2. You can only use a small number of letters and numbers in a text message.
3. Messages need to be short but also business-like.
4. a) problems b) possible c) information d) see you

Here's one way to improve the text message.

Hello. Am delayed on train. Probs on line. Can arrive 2pm approx. Is this OK? Sorry for any probs. Call me to talk b4 meeting.

Lisa

⑥ Improving your presentation skills

1. It helps to give structure to the presentation. She divides her talk into 3 sections. In the middle section, she tries to structure her ideas into groups of 3.
2. Structure your ideas clearly and practise what you are going to say.

⑦ Improving your negotiating skills

1. People call to say they haven't received information or that they want something which isn't possible.
2. a) Repeat what the caller has said in your own words.
b) Give yourself time to think by saying you will call back later.

⑧ Communicating across cultures

1. Gestures and facial expressions are examples of non-verbal communication.
2. Cultural rules: knowing who to shake hands with in the UK; knowing if you should make eye contact (or not) with the person you are speaking to.

Glossary

Writing business emails

over-familiar (adj)

If people are over familiar they are too friendly and informal when the situation (e.g. a business meeting) means they should be more reserved.

off-putting (adj)

If someone puts you off your food, they do something to make you dislike what you are about to eat. We use the adjective – off-putting – to describe situations which make us dislike something.

upper case (n)

capital letters

recipient (n)

From the verb 'to receive'. The recipient of a letter is the person who receives it.

pleasantry (n)

A nice or kind word or phrase

Writing business reports

options (n)

different possibilities or choices

to give something the go ahead

to give permission for something to happen

to cover all the bases

to make sure that you do everything you can to ensure a positive outcome

pros and cons

advantages and disadvantages

to compile

to gather together all the information

Writing minutes of meetings

to contribute

if you contribute in a meeting you add to the discussion

to circulate the minutes

to send the minutes to everyone who attended the meeting

to take (the) minutes

to write down what is said and decided in a meeting

action points

things which must be done before the next meeting

to write up the minutes

to use the notes taken in the meeting to help produce a clear summary of what was discussed

exchanges (n)

In this context, an exchange is a short discussion between two or more people.

impartial (adj)

unbiased; not taking sides

heated (adj)

In this context, heated means angry. Discussions and arguments can become heated.

Writing a letter of complaint

compensation (n)

money given to someone after something goes wrong. For example, people who are injured at work might ask for compensation from their employer.

substantial (adj)

a formal word meaning 'large'

to prompt (someone to do something)

to encourage someone to do something; to give them the idea to do it

Sending text messages to business contacts

to abbreviate words

abbreviations (n) abbreviated (adj)
to make words shorter

to run late

When you are running late, you have been delayed and think you are going to miss your next appointment.

characters (n)

In this context, characters are the letters or numbers in the text.

Improving your presentation skills

to subdivide

to divide something which has already been divided. For example, we can divide a cake into two halves, then subdivide each half into quarters.

to convey an idea

to demonstrate or show an idea so that others understand it

to set the scene

to give some information about an event before it happens. So the introduction will give the audience information about the main section of the presentation.

Improving your negotiating skills

treaty (n)

an agreement, usually between two or more countries

to resolve a problem

to find a solution to a problem

to compromise on something

to make changes to your ideas in order to help you reach agreement

to give in

to surrender

amicable (adj)

friendly, but not VERY friendly

Communicating across cultures

medium (n)

what we use to communicate ideas: talking is a medium of communication; newspapers are also a medium of communication

to greet

to say hello when you meet someone

offensive (adj)

If something is offensive it makes people unhappy or upset, usually because it is rude or unpleasant. It offends them.