

Course : Oral Expression
Level: 1st Year License
Group: 1B6

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Formal Discussions (Meetings / Interviews)

Formal meetings and interviews require specific language, structure, and etiquette to communicate effectively. Using appropriate expressions, tone, and organization is essential to appear professional and confident.

Starting a Meeting or Interview:

- Begin with greetings and introductions: “Good morning, everyone,” “Hello, my name is...,” or “Thank you for meeting with me today.”
- Introduce participants if necessary: “Let me introduce my colleague, Mr. Ahmed,” or “This is Ms. Sara, our project manager.”
- Clearly state the purpose: “The purpose of today’s meeting is to discuss...,” or “I’m here for the interview for the position of...”

During a Meeting:

- Express opinions politely: “I suggest that...,” “I think we should...,” “In my opinion...,” or “It might be a good idea to...”
- Ask questions or request clarification: “Could you please explain...?,” “I’m not sure I understand, could you clarify...?,” or “Would you mind elaborating on...?”
- Agreeing and disagreeing politely: “I agree with your point because...,” or “I see your point, but I think...”
- Taking turns speaking: Wait for pauses, use phrases like “May I add something?” or “If I could just make a comment...”
- Summarizing points: “To summarize what we discussed...,” “The key points are...”

During an Interview:

- Answering questions clearly and professionally:
 - Use complete sentences and avoid vague answers.
 - Example: Q: “Can you tell me about yourself?” A: “I am a recent graduate in Business Administration. I have experience in customer service and am particularly interested in project management.”
- Asking questions: “Could you tell me more about the responsibilities of this role?” or “What are the main goals for this position?”
- Expressing skills and experiences confidently: “I have experience in...,” “I am skilled at...,” or “I successfully managed...”
- Ending the interview politely: “Thank you for your time,” or “I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this position with you.”

Ending a Meeting:

- Summarize the discussion and next steps: “In conclusion, we agreed to...,” or “The next steps will be...”
- Closing statements: “Thank you all for your participation,” “I look forward to our next meeting,” or “Have a good day.”

Key Points for Professional Communication:

- Maintain formal language and avoid slang.
- Use polite expressions and respectful tone.
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace.
- Prepare in advance by knowing the agenda, topics, or possible interview questions.
- Active listening is important: nod, make brief comments, and ask relevant questions to show engagement.

Formal meetings and interviews are structured interactions where professionalism, clarity, and effective communication are essential. They occur in workplaces, academic settings, and professional networking situations. Success in these interactions depends not only on language proficiency but also on understanding etiquette, tone, and structure.

1. Starting a Meeting or Interview

The beginning of a meeting or interview sets the tone. Key aspects include:

- **Greetings:** Use formal greetings appropriate to the context. Examples include:
 - “Good morning, everyone.”
 - “Hello, my name is [Name]. Thank you for joining this meeting.”
 - “I’m pleased to meet you today.”
- **Introductions:** Introduce yourself and others clearly and politely.
 - “Let me introduce my colleague, Mr. Ahmed, our project manager.”
 - “This is Ms. Sara, who will be assisting with today’s agenda.”
- **Stating Purpose:** Clearly explain why the meeting or interview is taking place.
 - Meetings: “The purpose of today’s meeting is to discuss the marketing plan for next quarter.”
 - Interviews: “I am here to discuss my application for the position of [Job Title].”
- **Checking Availability and Agenda (for meetings):**
 - “Is everyone ready to start?”
 - “Let’s quickly review the agenda for today’s meeting.”

Starting professionally creates a positive impression and ensures everyone understands the focus.

2. Conducting a Meeting

During meetings, participants must communicate clearly, listen actively, and manage turns politely. Key language and strategies include:

- **Expressing Opinions:** Use polite and professional phrases:
 - “I suggest that we focus on the client feedback first.”
 - “It might be beneficial to consider alternative solutions.”
 - “In my opinion, increasing social media marketing could improve results.”
- **Asking Questions and Clarifying:**
 - “Could you clarify what you meant by the last point?”
 - “I’m not sure I understand. Could you explain further?”
 - “Would you provide an example of that approach?”
- **Agreeing and Disagreeing Politely:**

- Agreement: “I agree with your point because it aligns with our previous findings.”
- Polite disagreement: “I see your point; however, I think we should also consider the budget limitations.”
- **Managing Turn-Taking:**
 - Wait for pauses before speaking.
 - Use phrases like: “May I add something?” or “If I could make a comment...”
- **Summarizing Discussions:**
 - “To summarize, the key points we discussed are...”
 - “The main decisions from today’s meeting are...”
 - “The next steps will be...”
- **Maintaining Professional Tone:**
 - Avoid slang or overly casual expressions.
 - Speak clearly, moderately, and politely.
 - Use gestures and eye contact to reinforce engagement.

3. Interviews

Interviews are usually formal one-on-one or panel interactions to assess candidates’ suitability. Key aspects include:

- **Answering Questions:**
 - Speak confidently in full sentences.
 - Provide clear, relevant examples to support your answers.
 - Avoid vague responses; instead, structure answers with:
 1. Introduction/statement of skill or experience
 2. Specific example or evidence
 3. Result or benefit

Example:

- Q: “Tell me about yourself.”

- A: “I am a recent graduate in Business Administration with experience in customer service. I have led small teams to improve customer satisfaction, which increased client retention by 15%. I am eager to bring these skills to your team.”
- **Highlighting Skills and Achievements:**
 - “I have experience in project management and team coordination.”
 - “I am skilled at problem-solving and working under deadlines.”
 - “In my previous role, I successfully implemented a new filing system that improved efficiency.”
- **Asking Questions Professionally:**
 - “Could you tell me more about the responsibilities of this role?”
 - “What qualities do you expect from a successful candidate?”
 - “How is performance measured in this position?”
- **Closing the Interview:**
 - “Thank you for your time and consideration.”
 - “I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this position.”
 - “I look forward to hearing from you.”

4. Ending a Meeting

Ending a formal meeting correctly is important to leave a professional impression:

- **Summarize Key Points and Decisions:**
 - “To conclude, we agreed to...”
 - “The next steps will include...”
- **Clarify Follow-Up Actions:**
 - “I will send the minutes of the meeting by tomorrow.”
 - “Please let me know if you have any questions after reviewing the report.”
- **Formal Closing Statements:**
 - “Thank you all for your participation.”
 - “I look forward to our next meeting.”

- “Have a good day.”

5. Professional Communication Tips

- Maintain **formal language**, avoiding slang or casual expressions.
- Use **polite expressions**: please, thank you, excuse me, and could you...?
- Speak **clearly** and at a **moderate pace**, with proper pronunciation and intonation.
- Practice **active listening**: nod, make brief comments, and ask clarifying questions.
- Prepare **in advance**: know the agenda, potential interview questions, or relevant topics.
- Be **organized**: structure your answers and points logically, providing reasons and examples.