

2 PREPARING FOR A MEETING

2.1 How should I prepare for the meeting?

There are several factors that can contribute to a successful meeting.

- Find out as much as you can about the meeting before you go: a) topic b) who will be present (nationality, position in company, age)
- Decide exactly what it is you want to discuss, then note down any key words and phrases in English that you might need.
- Prepare a script of anything particularly important that you want / need to say. Then practise reading your script aloud. Modify to make it more concise and convincing.
- Try to predict what people are likely to say. Write down some key phrases that will help you to agree with or counter what they might say.
- Are the participants likely to agree with what you are going to say? If not, think of ways in English to counteract their objections.

2.2 How can I increase the chances of the meeting being useful for me?

In addition to preparing for the meeting (see 2.1 above), there are other things that you can do to ensure that you get the full benefits of the meeting.

- Try to sit near to the people who are likely to talk the most, this should enable you to hear better.
- If you need time to reflect on what is being said, suggest having a coffee break to enable you to collect your thoughts and prepare what you want to say.
- After the meeting, send the chairperson an email summarizing what you think has been the outcome of the meeting.

2.3 I will be chair of the meeting. What guidelines should I follow?

When chairing a meeting try to do the following:

- Define a clear purpose for the meeting
- Follow an agenda
- Start and finish meetings on time
- Increase participant involvement during meetings
- As far as possible, reduce dysfunctional practices during meetings (e.g., side conversations, discussion of irrelevant issues, hidden agendas)
- Resolve emotional conflicts among meeting attendees in a professional manner

2.4 What is brainstorming? How should it be conducted?

The objective of a brainstorming session is to encourage participants to come up with new and creative solutions to a problem. The difference from an ordinary meeting is that

- in the initial stages there are no assumptions on what constitutes a good solution, so no idea is criticised or evaluated
- participants should have no constraints on generating ideas, even ideas that initially may seem irrelevant or wildly impractical
- ideas are merely used to stimulate or develop another idea (related or not)

If you are chairing a brainstorming session, ensure that:

- you establish the duration of the session
- there is a clear focus – the ideas can be widely divergent, but they should all relate to solving a specific problem
- quiet or reticent attendees also participate actively
- someone keeps a note of the ideas on a whiteboard or flipchart

When the session has reached its set duration, now is the time to evaluate and discuss the ideas.

<http://www.springer.com/978-1-4939-0631-4>

Meetings, Negotiations, and Socializing

A Guide to Professional English

Wallwork, A.

2014, XVI, 178 p. 1 illus., Softcover

ISBN: 978-1-4939-0631-4