



Small Talk

Whether you are holding the meeting or attending the meeting, it is pleasant to make small talk while waiting for the meeting to start. You can talk about things unrelated to the meeting, such as weather, weekend plans, or family.

Sample Dialogue:

Claire: Hi Jude. How are you?

Jude: Great thanks, and you?

Claire: Well, I'm good that the warm weather has finally arrived.

Jude: I know what you mean. I thought winter was not going to end.

Claire: Have you made plans for the weekend yet?

Jude: My family and I are heading to the countryside for a camping this weekend.

Welcome

The chairperson, or whoever is in charge of the meeting should formally welcome everyone to the meeting and thank the attendees for coming once everyone has arrived.

Useful Expressions:

- Thank you everyone for coming at such short notice.
- Well, since everyone is here, we should get started.
- Hello, everyone. Thank you for coming today.

Opening a Meeting

- I really appreciate you all for attending today.
- I think we'll begin now. First, I'd like to welcome you all.
- We have a lot to cover today, so we really should begin now.

Sample Welcome:

Claire: Well, since everyone is here, we should get started. First I'd like to welcome you all and thank everyone for coming, especially at such short notice. I know you are all very busy and it's difficult to take time away from your daily tasks for meetings.

Introductions

If there is a guest speaker, or if anyone at the meeting is new to the group, this is the time when introductions should be made. The person in charge of the meeting can introduce the new person, or ask the person to introduce him or herself.

Useful Expressions:

- I'd like to take a moment to introduce our new marketing coordinator.
- I know most of you, but there are few unfamiliar faces.
- Olivia, would you like to stand up and introduce yourself?
- Hi everyone. I'm Nancy Paige. I'll be acting as Stella's assistant while Susan is away on maternity leave.

Roll Call / Apologies

It is probably unnecessary to take attendance out loud if the meeting is a small group. The person who is taking the minutes will know everyone personally and can determine who is present and who is absent. In a larger meeting, it may be necessary to call out names or send around an attendance sheet. And if an important person is absent, it may be necessary for the the chairperson to apologize for his or her absence and offer a brief explanation for it.

Useful Expressions:

- It looks like everyone is here today.
- Unfortunately, David cannot join us today. He has been called away on business.
- If you notice anyone missing, please let Sophia know so that she can make a note of it.
- Louise will be standing in to take the minutes today, as Karen is home with the flu.

Objectives

Some people who hold meetings prefer to pass around copies of the agenda, while others use an overhead projector. No matter which format is used, attendees should be able to follow the agenda as the meeting progresses. Before starting the first main item on the agenda, the speaker should provide a brief verbal outline of the objectives.

Sample Introduction to the Agenda:

Claire: As you can see here on the agenda we will be mainly talking about the upcoming tourist season. First, we'll discuss the groups that will be coming from Taiwan. After that, we'll talk about the Canadian Tours, followed by the Australian tours. Next, I'm going to ask some feedback from all of you about last year's tours and how we can improve them. And finally, we'll be voting on where and when to have this year's annual teambuilding.

VOCABULARY

chairperson/chair ~ the person who leads or presides at a meeting

guest speaker ~ a person who joins the group in order to share information or deliver a speech

minutes ~ a written record of everything said at a meeting

apologies ~ item on agenda announcing people who are absent; apologies for absent

objectives ~ goals to accomplish

agenda ~ list of objectives to cover in a meeting

overhead projector ~ machine with a special light that projects a document onto a screen or wall so that all can see

COMPREHENSION CHECK

Are the following statements True or False?

- _____ 1. The person who is in charge of the meeting is the one who takes the minutes.
- _____ 2. An agenda should outline the order and amount of time to spend on each item at the meeting.
- _____ 3. The best way to call a meeting is to inform each participant individually by phone.
- _____ 4. It's okay to talk about things unrelated to the meeting while waiting for it to begin.
- _____ 5. Engaging in small talk throughout the meeting is an effective way to keep the focus.

- _____ 6. It's irrelevant for the speaker to give a brief verbal outline of the objectives before starting the first main item on the agenda.
- _____ 7. The minutes of the meeting is not necessarily needed.
- _____ 8. The person in charge of the meeting should formally welcome all the attendees for coming.
- _____ 9. It is necessary to apologize and give a brief explanation if an important figure is absent.
- _____ 10. It is important to take attendance out loud even if the meeting is a small group.

LET'S TALK

1. Have you been a chairperson of a meeting at work or anywhere else? How was it?
2. What are the things you need to prepare before an important meeting with the boss?
3. Have you been invited as a guest speaker of a meeting?
4. Have you been assigned to take the minutes of a meeting at work?
Was it an easy thing to do?
5. Have you been absent at an important meeting at work? Why or what happened?

PRACTICE

You are the chairperson of your company's monthly meeting. Make a welcome address and give an introduction to the agenda of the meeting using the items below.

- making of textbooks
- seminars
- rules and regulations of the school
- upcoming visit of the investors