

Notes

I'm trying to arrange a meeting for ...

Note the use of *for*:
... *for next month*.
... *for next year*.
... *for the project group*.

Can you make Tuesday?

This means *Can you come on Tuesday?*
Note the different uses of *make*:
Could we make it Thursday instead?
I could make it at 2 p.m.
I can't make the meeting.

Is Juan coming, by the way?

Use *by the way* to ask for additional information:
By the way, is anyone else coming?
Who else is coming, by the way?
We can also use *happen to*:
Do you happen to know if Juan is coming?

... it should be finished by 3:15.

Note that times can be said in two ways:
3:15 (*a quarter past three or three fifteen*)
3:20 (*twenty past three or three twenty*)
3:30 (*half past three or three thirty*)
3:45 (*a quarter to four or three forty-five*)
by 3:15 means that it could finish earlier

Compare:
at 3 o'clock (exactly 3 o'clock)
at around 3 o'clock (maybe a little earlier or later than 3 o'clock)

Note that *half three* in informal British English is 3:30.

... just in case the meeting overruns.

Another way of saying:
Just in case it doesn't finish on time.

... he didn't want to miss the meeting.

Note that *miss* has two meanings:
Unfortunately I had to miss the meeting.
I'm sorry I missed you earlier.

Compare with:
Juan is a very important member of the team – we really miss him when he is away.

I'd like to come over to Poznan next week ...

come over means travel from one place to another.
I'm thinking of coming over to visit.
You must come over and see the new office.

Any day next week except Friday would suit me.

Any day leaves the options open. The writer could have said:
I'm free every day next week except Friday.
That suits me means That's a good time for me.

Could you check with Alex and get back to me?

get back to me leaves the method of communication open; the contact could be by phone, email or letter.

... I'll order some sandwiches ...

Ordering sandwiches for a business lunch is not appropriate in all cultures! Some other useful lunch phrases:
Would you prefer to eat out?
Is there anything you don't eat?
Are you a vegetarian?
We can have a working lunch.
We often do business over lunch.

Otherwise I'll see you in the office at 12:30.

In this example, *otherwise* means *if I don't hear from you*.

British/American differences

British

American

Differences in time:

<i>a quarter past three or three fifteen</i>	also: <i>a quarter after three</i>
<i>a quarter to four or three forty-five</i>	also: <i>a quarter of four</i>

Differences in dates:

British – 1/11/03 = 1 November 2003 (<i>the first of November, two thousand and three</i>)
American – 1/11/03 = January 11, 2003 (<i>January eleventh, two thousand three</i>)



Dialogues 2

Working through an agenda

- A: Has everyone got a copy of the agenda? Lee, **could you take the minutes, please?**
- B: No problem.
- A: Thanks. So, let's start. As we're rather short of time today, **I'd like to leave item four until the next meeting.** Is that OK with everyone?
- B: That's fine with me.
- A: Good, so **can we look at item one?** That's John's proposal that future department team meetings should be held away from the office. **What are your thoughts on this?**

Reporting back to a meeting

- A: John, could you give us your report?
- B: Certainly. As you know, **I was asked to find out what the people in my department thought** about arranging more meetings away from the office. I found that most of my staff were opposed to the idea. **The majority feeling was** that they would prefer to organise meetings in this building.
- A: That's interesting. Sandra, what did you find out?
- C: Quite the opposite. In my department, **of the fifty people I asked, only five** did not like the idea of having meetings away from the office.

Reaching an agreement

- A: I think we should abandon the idea altogether. **Does everyone agree?**
- B: Not really. I think we need to send a questionnaire to all the staff so we can find out exactly what they think.
- C: **Is that really necessary?** You've heard what John and Sandra have said – there are so many different views. It's not worth it.
- A: **I suppose you're right.** It just seemed like a good idea to me.
- B: It is a good idea. Perhaps we could look at it again next year!

Making a point

- A: **The other point I want to make** is that we need to be informed about the dates of meetings well in advance. I was told about the date of this meeting very late and that caused me a lot of problems. Some people were not able to come at all. **We really must avoid this in the future.** Communication is very bad in this company.
- B: **That's not true.** Some people simply do not read their messages. The date was set three weeks ago and everyone was told then.

Notes

... could you take the minutes, please?

The *minutes* are the written record of what is discussed during a meeting.

The *agenda* is the list of items discussed in a meeting.

Minutes are *taken* during a meeting.

The minutes of a meeting can be *written up* and *approved*.

... I'd like to leave item four until the next meeting.

We usually talk about *items* or *points* on an agenda.

... can we look at item one?

Note that we can look at an item on the agenda. Some other useful verbs and prepositions:

Let's move on to item two on the agenda.

Can we go through the minutes?

We need to vote on it.

What are your thoughts on this?

Asking for opinions:

How do you feel about this?

What do you think?

I'd like to hear everyone's opinion.

... I was asked to find out what the people in my department thought ...

Reporting back:

It was my job to find out about ...

You asked me to find out about ...

I've talked to the office staff and the general opinion is ...

The majority feeling was ...

Majority opinions:

Most people are in favour of the change.

The majority opinion is in favour.

Minority opinions:

Not many people agree with the idea.

The minority opinion is against it.

British/American differences

British

favour

emphasise

American

favor

emphasize

... of the fifty people I asked, only five ...

More numbers and percentages:

One in fifty agreed with the idea.

Two in three are against it.

Nearly 100 per cent of the staff replied to the questionnaire.

A quarter/Half/Three quarters of the staff were in favour.

Does everyone agree?

Ways to find out if there is agreement:

Are we all in agreement?

Do you have the same opinion?

Does anyone disagree?

Is that really necessary?

really is used more in spoken English to emphasise what you are saying:

Are you really sure?

Is he really leaving the company?

They really don't want to leave the office.

I suppose you're right.

The speaker uses *suppose* to admit that the other speaker is, in fact, right.

The other point I want to make ...

Some alternative expressions:

I'd like to make another point.

Just one other point ...

I'd like to make one final point.

We really must avoid this in the future.

Making a strong statement:

It's vital that we avoid this in the future.

It's essential that we make changes.

It's crucial that people should read their messages.

That's not true.

Note that this is a very direct statement and could be considered impolite. Less direct alternatives:

I'm sorry, but I don't agree.

I don't think that's true.

I'm not sure that's true.

Is that really true?

Dialogues 3

A follow-up phone call (1)

- A: Hi, Kitty. **I'm just phoning to let you know** what happened in the meeting.
- B: Thanks. So how did it go?
- A: **Bad news I'm afraid.** They rejected all of our proposals to change suppliers to AKK. Some of the managers agreed that we needed to change but Anton Trofimov persuaded them to leave things as they are.
- B: So **what reasons did he give?**
- A: Anton said he thought that the current arrangements were 'good enough' and finally everyone else agreed with him.
- B: I don't believe it. How can they be so **short-sighted?**

A follow-up phone call (2)

- A: Hello again, Kitty. **I thought I should let you know immediately** that **Anton has been having second thoughts.** He's been through the figures which I presented at the meeting again and **he now thinks we've made a good case** for moving our business over to AKK.
- B: Do you want me to do anything?
- A: No, but thanks for offering. Anton would like me to provide some more information about AKK at another meeting to be held next week. **I'll call you tomorrow so we can discuss details then.**
- B: Fine. Speak to you then.

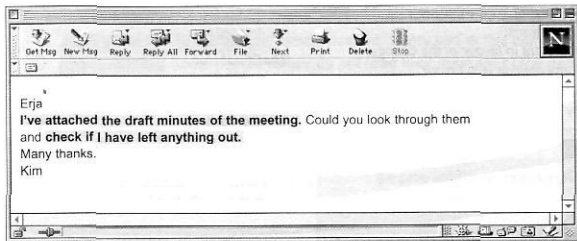
Action points (on a dictaphone)

Here are the main points covered during the meeting on February 14th and action to be taken.

- **Jaroslav to produce a questionnaire** to find out how the staff would like to spend the 'New Year bonus'.
- Juliet to research costs **for proposed building project.**
- Winston to look into improving our security systems.
- Tree planting project – **no decision made.** Leave until the next meeting.

The next meeting will be on March 3rd.

Sending minutes by email



Notes

I'm just phoning to let you know ...

Announcing the reason for a call:

I'm just phoning to say thank you for doing the minutes.

I'm just calling to remind you about next week's meeting.

Bad news I'm afraid.

The speaker says *bad news* at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis. He could also have said:

I'm afraid I have some bad news.

Other examples:

Good news, I'm happy to say.

I'm happy to say I have some good news.

... what reasons did he give?

Note the use of *give*:

to give a reason/reasons

to give an explanation/explanations

... short-sighted.

When you only think about the present, not the future.

I thought I should let you know immediately ...

You can also say *I wanted to* instead of *I thought* in this situation:

I wanted to let you know what happened.

... Anton has been having second thoughts.

to have second thoughts means to change your opinion after you have thought about it again.

Are you having second thoughts?

On second thoughts, I'd like to accept the proposal.

... he now thinks we've made a good case ...

The speaker uses the word *now* to show that he has changed his mind.

British/American differences

British

Bad news I'm afraid.

On second thoughts ...

American

There's bad news.

(Also used in British English.)

On second thought ...

I'll call you tomorrow so we can discuss details then.

I will call is usually reduced to *I'll call* in spoken English. It implies a promise/a firm arrangement:

I'll let you know.

I'll send you a message.

I'll organise it, etc.

Here are the main points ...

We can start the memo with *Here are ...* or simply use the following:

The main points.

Action points.

Jaroslav to produce a questionnaire ...

Note the use of the infinitive *to* in these statements. This is very common when writing informal action points from a meeting:

Juliet to research costs for the proposed building project.

Winston to look into improving our security systems.

... for proposed building project.

Note how the article *the* (for the proposed project) can be left out when the memo is in note form.

... no decision made.

No decision was made.

Auxiliary verbs (*was* in this example) can be left out when you write/speak in note form.

I've attached the draft minutes of the meeting.

Alternatives:

The draft minutes are attached.

Herewith the draft minutes. (more formal)

Drafts can be *first drafts*, *rough drafts* or *final drafts*.

... check if I have left anything out.

Other possibilities:

Let me know if I have forgotten anything.

Check if I have made any mistakes.

Practice

1 Complete the sentences using the verbs from the box below. Use each verb once only.

arrange	cover	miss	cause	make
give	report	happen	leave	abandon

EXAMPLE: I'd like to ... **arrange** ... a meeting for next week.

- Can you the meeting on Tuesday?
- I hope that the changed time won't you any problems.
- I must hurry. I don't want to the meeting.
- Do you to know if Motoko is going to be there?
- I don't like it all. We should the idea.
- Let's discussion on this point until the next meeting.
- I'll talk to the staff and back to you next week.
- Did Tonya a reason why she couldn't attend?
- We have a lot of things to in this meeting.

2 Complete the sentences with words taken from the dialogues. The first letter of each word is provided.

- The **m** of the staff were in favour.
- Can we look at the first **i** on the agenda?
- Is it **n** to send an agenda beforehand?
- I'd like to leave point two **u** the next meeting.
- Can we go **t** the report now?
- I can meet any day next week **e** Monday.
- Does Tuesday **s** you?

3 Complete the sentences with one of the alternatives.

EXAMPLE: I'm phoning to **let** you know what happened.

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|
| a | Who is going to the minutes? | let/explain |
| b | Could you us when you know the answer. | make/take |
| c | I'd like to a point. | tell/say |
| d | We need to a date for the meeting. | make/remind |
| e | We a good case for changing the system. | take/set |
| f | Are you second thoughts about the proposal? | made/took |
| g | All of our proposals were | having/taking |
| | | disagreed/rejected |

4 Complete the sentences with a preposition.

EXAMPLE: The meeting should be finished *by* 3 p.m.

- a I booked the room 1 p.m.
- b I'll see you Thursday at 11 o'clock.
- c I'd like to hear everyone's thoughts the proposal.
- d the ten people I asked, only one was against the idea.
- e It seems like a good idea me.
- f Can we move to the next item the agenda?
- g Most of the participants were favour of the suggestion.
- h One twenty of the staff are unhappy with working conditions.
- i Could you look the minutes and let me know if I've forgotten anything.
- j I hope I haven't left anything

5 Write what you would say in these situations. Refer to the dialogues and notes.

EXAMPLE: Check that everyone has a copy of the agenda.

- Has everyone *got a copy of the agenda?* ?
- a Suggest leaving the next item on the agenda until the next meeting.
I'd like
- b Ask if everyone agrees that date of the next meeting should be changed.
Does everyone ?
- c Ask Fiona if she is going to attend the next meeting.
Are you ?
- d Call a colleague to tell him/her what happened in the meeting.
I'm just phoning
- e Tell a colleague that you are sending the agenda as an email attachment.
I've
- f Say that you have one more point to make.
Just
- g Ask what people think about the idea.
What ?

6 Match the two parts of the sentences.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 I'd like to leave point three | a are in favour of the changes. |
| 2 The majority feeling | b and we can discuss details then. |
| 3 You've all heard | c is that people want to work shorter hours. |
| 4 Very few people | d I'll expect to see you at 2 p.m. |
| 5 Bad news | e what Maria has said about this. |
| 6 I'll call you tomorrow | f until the next meeting. |
| 7 Could you check the dates | g suits me. |
| 8 If I don't hear from you, | h I'm afraid. |
| 9 Any day except Thursday | i and get back to me. |

7 Complete the sentences with a form of the verb in brackets. Refer to the dialogues and notes.

EXAMPLE: Hi, John. *I'm trying*... (try) to arrange a meeting for next week.

- a I hope it (not cause) you any problems if we postpone the meeting.
- b I (order) some sandwiches for lunch.
- c I'm sorry I (miss) the last meeting.
- d I (see) you in the conference room at 3 p.m.
- e (everyone/agree) with the proposals? Good, then let's move on.
- f Hello, Anton. I (call) to let you know what happened in the meeting.
- g I don't think that Margaret (read) the report.
- h Memo: Frieda (find out) about tree planting costs.
- i I (attach) the minutes from the last meeting.
- j I (have) second thoughts about your proposals.

6

Entertaining and socialising**Some useful phrases.**

Listen to the recording and repeat.

Would you like tea or coffee?

How do you like your coffee?

Can I have a soft drink?

Could you translate the menu for me, please?

Do you have an English menu?

We're ready to order.

That was delicious.

Can I have the bill please?

So where do you live?

In a small town not far from Milan.

Did you watch the match on TV last night?

Where are you going for your holidays this year?

We're planning to go to Italy.

I've been invited to dinner with the Managing Director this evening.

I'd like to take a small present. Do you have any suggestions?

I'm sure she'd like some flowers.

It's a formal dinner.

We're having an informal reception.



Dialogues 1

Coffee or tea?

- A:** Would you like some coffee?
B: Do you have any tea?
A: Yes, we do. Do you take milk and sugar?
B: No thanks.
C: Can I have a soft drink, please?
A: Yes, of course. We have some orange juice and some sparkling water.
C: I'll have an orange juice, please.

Translating the menu

- A:** I hope you like Russian food. Let me translate the menu for you. I recommend the set menu which is 'borsch' – that's beetroot soup, followed by 'buglama', which is a kind of lamb stew cooked in spices – it comes with mashed potato and salad.
B: Sounds good. What about dessert?
A: There's a choice of ice cream.
B: I'm happy with that. Let's order.

Ordering a meal (1)

- A:** We're ready to order. To start, I'd like chicken soup and my colleague would like the grilled sardines.
B: Thank you. And for your main course?
A: I'd like fried chicken and French fries and, was it roast duck and boiled rice?
C: That's right. With a green side salad, please.
B: Thank you. And to drink?
A: We'd like a bottle of sparkling water, please?

Ordering a meal (2)

- A:** Are you ready to order?
B: Yes please. I'd like the steak, please.
A: How would you like it cooked?
B: Medium rare.
A: Thank you. Are you having a starter?
B: No thanks. I'm in rather a hurry.

Paying the bill

- A:** That was very good. Can we have the bill, please?
B: Here you are, sir.
A: Excuse me, but could you tell me what this is for?
B: It's for the bread.
A: Oh yes, I see. Do you take credit cards?
B: I'm sorry, we don't. If you need some cash, there's a cash machine just across the road.