

1 What makes a good meeting?

Preparation - a checklist

Successful meetings require good planning. The following is a checklist of essential planning items to consider.

Time and place	When and where is the meeting? Timing - how long will it last?
People	Who will attend? Who will chair?
Roles	Do participants have special responsibilities? Will people have time to prepare input?
Purpose	What is the objective of the meeting? What is the agenda?
Type of meeting	Decision-making? briefing? brainstorming?
Facilities	Do we have a room with equipment? What about refreshments, car parking, etc?
Communication	What documentation is required? Who will prepare and circulate it?

Execution - a checklist

Meetings consist of a chairperson and participants. Both have specific responsibilities to guarantee a meeting is effective. A combination of language and general communication skills are essential.



Create a positive atmosphere

Effective chairing

Opens → Welcomes → Outlines agenda and objectives → States procedure and roles → Checks and clarifies → Invites opinions → Agrees timing → Creates positive atmosphere → Limits digression → Keeps on track → Builds to decisions → Encourages people to speak → Watches time → Reaches objectives → Summarises → Closes and thanks

Effective participating

Presents opinions → Listens to others → Proposes ideas → Asks questions → Concentrates → Respects other views → Takes turns → Works efficiently → Agrees → Disagrees politely → Builds to decisions → Understands the result

2 Meetings: key terms

The process

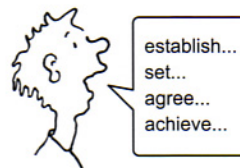
Before the meeting **takes place**, it is important to invite **participants** to propose **items** or **points** for the **agenda**. **Drawing up** the agenda is usually the responsibility of the **secretary** or the **chair**. When the chair **opens** the meeting, it is usual to **run through** the agenda quickly. The first **item** is usually **matters arising**, to allow participants to go through the **minutes** of the previous meeting. After this, the discussion of the other **points** can begin. During the discussion, participants make **recommendations** and **proposals** in order to **solve** problems. If the meeting **is scheduled** for a whole day, it is typical to **take breaks** and to **adjourn** for lunch. Of course, it is necessary to **resume** [start again] after lunch. In the middle of the afternoon, participants often ask for a **time out** if they are feeling tired. At the end of the meeting, the last or next-to-last point is often **AOB** [any other business] which gives participants the opportunity to **raise** other **issues** not included in the main agenda. During the meeting, someone is **nominated** to **take** the minutes and after the meeting this person will **write up** the minutes for **circulation** to the other participants before the next meeting. Finally, the chair will **close** the meeting.

Note:

A chair = chairperson - chairman - chairwoman
To chair a meeting

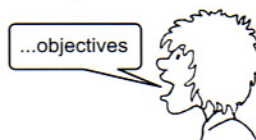
Communication: verbs and nouns

to discuss	a discussion
to propose	a proposal
to decide	a decision
to brainstorm	a brainstorming
to recommend	a recommendation
to summarise	a summary



Arrangements: verbs + a meeting

to organise	_____
to fix	_____
to rearrange	_____
to reschedule	_____



Arranging a meeting

- A: Can we fix a meeting to discuss the budget?
B: Of course.
- A: Can you manage Tuesday next week?
B: Yes, I can make Tuesday.
- A: Shall we say 2 o'clock?
B: That would be fine.
- A: We can hold the meeting in Room 26.
B: OK. Great.
- A: I'll confirm this by email for you.
B: OK, see you on Tuesday at 2.
- A: I'll look forward to it.