Clearer Meetings in English

Original sample lesson · Workplace communication · Flexible intermediate-level practice

Purpose. Help professionals clarify responsibilities, propose realistic next steps and check agreement during a meeting.

Suggested use. 25–35 minutes. Suitable for a guided online lesson or a small-group workshop. It is an illustrative training activity, not a real client case or a complete course.

1 • The situation

A small product team has been preparing a customer update. Marketing wants to send it on Thursday. Support says the help centre is not ready. The meeting has 10 minutes to settle a realistic plan.

Roles

• Marketing lead: wants to keep Thursday’s date and needs clear ownership.
• Support lead: needs two extra days to prepare customer answers.
• Project coordinator: must summarise the decision and next steps.

2 • Notice the communication challenge

Read the exchange and underline the moment where the disagreement becomes more constructive.

Alex: “Thursday is the date. We just need to make it work.”
Sam: “Support will not be ready. We cannot do Thursday.”
Lee: “Can we clarify which part is blocking the launch? If it is the help centre, could we prepare a shorter customer update for Thursday and move the full rollout to Monday?”
Sam: “That could work if the FAQ draft is ready by Friday.”
Alex: “Agreed. Let’s confirm who owns the draft.”

Discuss: What exactly was unclear at the beginning? Which phrase helped the speakers move towards a decision?

3 • Useful language

Use the following phrases to make the conversation more specific and collaborative.

Purpose	Useful phrase
Clarify	“Could you clarify what is preventing us from…?”
Suggest	“Would it help if we…?”
Check agreement	“Are we agreed that the next step is…?”
Confirm ownership	“Who will take responsibility for…?”
Confirm timing	“Can we agree on a date for…?”

4 • Your meeting task

Work in groups of three, using the roles from page 1. You have five minutes to agree a plan. Every person must speak at least twice. Try to use three or more phrases from the table.

You need to agree: (1) What can happen on Thursday? (2) What must wait? (3) Who owns the FAQ draft? (4) When will everyone check progress?

5 • Write the follow-up

Complete the short meeting summary using clear, professional English.

Decision: _____

Action owner: _____

Deadline: _____

Next check-in: _____

Reflection

Which expression helped you sound clear without sounding abrupt? What would you do differently in your next workplace meeting?

Teacher guidance & suggested responses

This page is for the person facilitating the activity. Adjust task difficulty, speaking time and roles to suit the learners; the target is effective communication, not a predetermined answer.

Suggested lesson flow

1. Lead-in (4 min): Ask learners when meetings become confusing.
2. Read and notice (6 min): Students identify the unhelpful disagreement and the useful clarification.
3. Language practice (5 min): Reformulate one abrupt sentence using a phrase from the table.
4. Role-play (8–12 min): Assign roles and give learners a clear decision deadline.
5. Follow-up (5 min): Learners draft the summary and compare versions.

What to listen for

• Requests for clarification rather than repeated disagreement.
• Concrete suggestions and conditional plans.
• Named owners, dates and actionable follow-up.
• Inclusive turns: quieter participants have an opportunity to contribute.

Sample response to the follow-up

“We will send a short customer update on Thursday and plan the full rollout for Monday. Sam will prepare the FAQ draft by Friday at 12:00. Lee will confirm the plan with the team in Friday’s check-in.”

Possible language improvements

Abrupt: “You are wrong; Thursday is impossible.”
Collaborative: “Could we check what would need to change for Thursday to be realistic?”

Vague: “Someone should do the FAQ soon.”
Specific: “Can we agree who will prepare the FAQ and by when?”

About this sample

This is an original, illustrative PUNTO! activity. It does not refer to any real client, employer or university partnership. PUNTO! develops training around the team’s communication situations, after discussing goals and needs. A sample activity does not promise any particular outcome or level.

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