Rescheduling meetings

English at Work / 15 essential phrases / Part 1 of 2

01 **Could we reschedule our meeting?**
Polite. A useful opening when you need to change the date or time but have not agreed an alternative.
“Could we reschedule our meeting? I'm no longer available on Tuesday.”

02 **Would it be possible to change the time of our meeting?**
More formal. A tactful request to a client or senior colleague.
“Would it be possible to change the time of our meeting on Thursday?”

03 **Could we bring the meeting forward to [time/date]?**
Polite. Ask to meet earlier.
“Could we bring the meeting forward to 10 am on Tuesday?”

04 **Is there any chance we could meet earlier?**
Polite, conversational. Useful on the phone when you want to check flexibility.
“Is there any chance we could meet earlier, perhaps at 9.30 am?”

05 **Could we push the meeting back to [time/date]?**
Polite, conversational. A natural choice with colleagues.
“Could we push the meeting back to 4 pm today?”

06 **I'm afraid we'll need to postpone the meeting until [time/date].**
More formal. Use when a delay is necessary; follow with a request for agreement.
“I'm afraid we'll need to postpone the meeting until Friday. Would that work for you?”

07 **I'm afraid I have a scheduling conflict.**
Polite. Explains that another commitment overlaps.
“I'm afraid I have a scheduling conflict at 2 pm.”

08 **Something urgent has come up.**
Neutral. Gives a brief reason without revealing private details.
“Something urgent has come up. Could we meet tomorrow instead?”

Offer, agree & confirm

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09 **I apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.**
More formal. Acknowledges the effect on the other person.
“I apologise for any inconvenience this may cause, especially at such short notice.”

10 **Would [time/date] work for you?**
Polite. Checks whether a proposed time is suitable.
“Would Wednesday at 11 am work for you?”

11 **I'm available at [time] or [time]. Which would suit you better?**
Polite. Gives the other person a choice.
“I'm available at 10 am or 3 pm on Friday. Which would suit you better?”

12 **Unfortunately, that time doesn't work for me. Could we try [alternative]?**
Polite. Declines without ending the conversation.
“Unfortunately, 10 am doesn't work for me. Could we try 11.30 am?”

13 **That works for me.**
Neutral. Accepts a proposed time.
“Thursday at 9 am? That works for me.”

14 **Just to confirm, we're meeting on [date] at [time].**
Polite. Checks the final details aloud or in writing.
“Just to confirm, we're meeting on Thursday 14 January at 9 am Madrid time.”

15 **I'll send an updated calendar invitation.**
Neutral. Tells the other person what will happen next.
“I'll send an updated calendar invitation with the new Teams link.”

A reliable sequence

Reason → request → alternative → agreement → exact date, time and time zone → updated invitation.

Earlier or later?

Choose a clear verb. Confirm the exact time.

Reschedule — Change the date or time in either direction.
Could we reschedule for Wednesday?

Postpone — Move an event to a later time; a new date may not be fixed yet.
We need to postpone until next week.

Bring forward — Move to an earlier time (especially common in British English).
Can we bring it forward to 10 am?

Push back — Move to a later time in scheduling contexts; conversational workplace language.
Could we push it back to 4 pm?

Put off — Delay until later; more conversational and sometimes suggests avoidance.
Let's put it off until Friday.

Cancel — Decide that the planned event will not take place; no replacement is implied.
We've cancelled Tuesday's meeting.

Rearrange — Change the arrangements, including the date or time; common in British English.
Can we rearrange our meeting?

Move up — Move earlier; especially common in American English.
Can we move it up to 11 am?

> **International meetings**
> Use from [old time] to [new time]. Say the date in words and name the time zone: Tuesday 12 January, 11 am Madrid time (CET). Confirm the platform or location, too.

Small changes, big difference

Common mistakes and a practical scheduling checklist.

Instead of: Can we reschedule the meeting more early?
Say: Can we reschedule the meeting for an earlier time?
Use earlier, not more early.

Instead of: Could we postpone it from 3 pm to 11 am today?
Say: Could we bring it forward to 11 am today?
Postpone means delay; do not use it for an earlier time.

Instead of: I have a compromise at 2 pm.
Say: I have another commitment at 2 pm.
A compromise is an agreement involving concessions.

Instead of: Are you available in Monday at 10?
Say: Are you available on Monday at 10?
Use on for days and at for clock times.

Instead of: Please confirm me the new time.
Say: Please confirm the new time.
Confirm takes the thing being confirmed, not this person-object pattern.

Instead of: I can't. Change it.
Say: I'm afraid that time doesn't work for me. Could we try 3 pm?
Offer an alternative instead of giving an abrupt instruction.

Before you end the call

Check the original appointment, agree the revised date and time, state the time zone if needed, confirm the location or meeting link and identify who will send the updated invitation. If no time is agreed, explain the next step.

Useful patterns: on Monday • at 10 am • reschedule for Friday • postpone until Friday • from 2 pm to 4 pm

Three model conversations

Read them aloud. Replace the names, times and reasons.

01 / Client call — earlier meeting

Employee: Good morning. I'm calling about our meeting on Tuesday at 3 pm. Could we bring it forward to 11 am?

Client: I'm afraid I have a call at 11. Would 10.30 am work for you?

Employee: Yes, that works for me. Just to confirm, Tuesday 12 January at 10.30 am Madrid time (CET).

Client: That's right.

Employee: Great. I'll send an updated invitation. Thank you.

02 / Colleague — scheduling conflict

Alex: I'm afraid I have a scheduling conflict tomorrow at 2 pm.

Priya: Could we push our project meeting back to 4 pm?

Alex: Unfortunately, 4 pm doesn't work for me. Could we try Thursday at 10 am?

Priya: Yes. Thursday 14 January at 10 am, room 3.

Alex: Perfect. Thanks for your flexibility.

03 / Customer service — appointment

Agent: Would you prefer a later time or a different day?

Customer: A later time on Friday, please.

Agent: I can offer 1 pm or 3.30 pm. Which would suit you better?

Customer: 1 pm works for me.

Agent: Just to confirm, Friday 15 January at 1 pm at our city centre branch. You'll receive a confirmation email shortly.

Three emails to adapt

Replace the brackets. Keep your message brief and specific.

01 / Request an earlier meeting

Subject: Request to bring forward our meeting on [date]

Dear [name],
Would it be possible to bring our meeting on [date] forward from [old time] to [new time]? An urgent commitment has come up.
If that time is not convenient, I am also available at [alternative]. All times are [time zone].
Thank you for your flexibility.
Kind regards,
[your name]

02 / Postpone a meeting politely

Subject: Request to postpone our meeting on [date]

Dear [name],
I'm afraid we need to postpone our meeting on [date] because [brief reason].
Would [option 1] or [option 2] work for you? Both times are [time zone].
I apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.
Kind regards,
[your name]

03 / Accept and confirm the change

Subject: Re: Request to reschedule our meeting

Dear [name],
Thank you for letting me know. [Proposed time] works for me.
Just to confirm, we'll meet on [date] at [time] [time zone] via [platform]. Could you please send an updated invitation?
Thank you, and see you then.
Kind regards,
[your name]

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