

Language Checklist

Cultural diversity and socialising (1)

Welcoming visitors

Welcome to ...

My name's ...

Arriving

Hello. My name's ... from ...

I've an appointment to see ...

Sorry -- I'm a little late / early.

My plane was delayed ...

Introducing someone

This is ... He/she's my Personal Assistant.

Can I introduce you to ... He/she's our
(Project Manager).

I'd like to introduce you to ...

Meeting someone and small talk

Pleased to meet you.

It's a pleasure.

How was your trip? Did you have a good
flight / trip / journey?

How are things in (London)?

How long are you staying in (New York)?

I hope you like it.

Is your hotel comfortable?

Is this your first visit to (the Big Apple)?

Offering assistance

Can I get you anything?

Do you need anything?

Would you like a drink?

If you need to use a phone or fax, please say.

Can we do anything for you?

Do you need a hotel / a taxi /
any travel information / etc.?

Asking for assistance

There is one thing I need ...

Could you get me ...

Could you book me a car / taxi / hotel / ... ?

Could you help me arrange a flight to ... ?

Can you recommend a good restaurant?

I'd like to book a room for tomorrow night.

Can you recommend a hotel?

Skills Checklist

Socialising (1)

Before meeting business partners and fellow professionals from other countries, you could find out about their country:

- the actual political situation
- cultural and regional differences
- religion(s)
- the role of women in business and in society as a whole
- transport and telecommunications systems
- the economy
- the main companies
- the main exports and imports
- the market for the industrial sector which interests you
- competitors.

You might also want to find out:

- which topics are safe for small talk
- which topics are best avoided.

If you are going to visit another country, find out about:

- the conventions regarding socialising
- attitudes towards foreigners
- attitudes towards gifts
- the extent to which public, business and private lives are mixed or are kept separate
- conventions regarding food and drink.

You might also like to find out about:

- the weather at the relevant time of the year
- public holidays
- the conventions regarding working hours
- leisure interests
- tourism
- dress
- body language
- language.

Language Checklist

Socialising (2)

Saying what's on and what's available

There's a (good) film / play / concert / on at ...

We have a good theatre in the city ...

There are some ...

– interesting museums / public buildings ...

– good restaurants

Are you interested in ...

– eating out?

– visiting / seeing ... ?

Inviting

Would you be interested in going to see ...

I'd like to invite you to have dinner this evening. Is that a good idea?

Responding to an invitation

That would be very nice.

I'd like that.

Thank you. That would be a pleasure.

Declining an invitation

I'd like to, but I'm afraid ...

That would be nice, but unfortunately ...

– I'm rather tired ...

– I have an appointment this evening ...

– I'm rather busy ...

– I have some work to do ...

Stating preference

I like (Japanese) cuisine very much ...

I think I'd like to ...

I think I'd prefer ...

I particularly like (classical) music ...

Looking at a menu

The (fish) sounds nice ...

I think I'd like to try ...

I think I'll have ...

Shall we have a bottle of ... ?

Commenting on an evening out

It's been a lovely evening.

It's been very nice.

Thank you very much for your hospitality.

I enjoyed it very much.

Skills Checklist

Socialising (2)

Before receiving visitors to your company

Be prepared to talk in English about your professional field and/or your company and business:

- the professional field you are involved in
- your professional activities
- current research and other projects
- future plans
- the history of your company
- company organisation
- who owns the company
- the number of employees
- the international involvement of your company
- products and services
- the market
- competition.

Be able to talk about:

- your country and your town
- history
- tourism
- museums and public buildings
- entertainment
- cultural and religious centres of interest.

You may wish to talk about:

- education
- transport systems
- the economy
- companies
- exports and imports.

Language Checklist

Telephoning (1)

Introducing yourself

Good morning, Aristo.

Hello, this is ... from ...

Hello, my name's ... calling from ...

Saying who you want

I'd like to speak to ..., please.

Could I have the ... Department, please?

Is ... there, please?

Saying someone is not available

I'm sorry he/she's not available

Sorry, he/she's away / not in / in a meeting / in Milan.

Leaving and taking messages

Could you give him/her a message?

Can I leave him/her a message?

Please tell him/her ...

Please ask him/her to ring me on ...

Can I take a message?

Would you like to leave a message?

If you give me your number I'll ask him/her to call you later.

Offering to help in other ways

Can anyone else help you?

Can I help you perhaps?

Would you like to speak to his assistant?

Shall I ask him to call you back?

Asking for repetition

Sorry, I didn't catch (your name / your number / your company name / etc.).

Sorry, could you repeat your (name, number, etc.).

Sorry, I didn't hear that.

Sorry, I didn't understand that.

Could you spell (that / your name), please.

Acknowledging repetition

Okay, I've got that now.

(Mr Kyoto.) I understand.

I see, thank you.

Skills Checklist

Telephoning: Preparation for a call

Reading – background information

Desk preparation

Have the following available:

- relevant documentation / notes
- correspondence received
- computer files on screen
- pen and paper
- diary.

Check time available

How much time do you need?

How much time do you have?

Objectives

Who do you want to speak to?

In case of non-availability, have an alternative strategy:

- call back / be called back – when?
- leave a message
- speak to someone else
- write or fax information.

Do you want to:

- find out information?
- give information?

Introduction

Do you need to refer to:

- a previous call?
- a letter, order, invoice or fax?
- someone else (who?)
- an event (what? when?)

Prediction

What do you expect the other person to say / ask you? How will you respond?

Language

Key phrases (see Language Checklist)

Pronunciation

Spelling

Language Checklist

Telephoning (2)

Stating reason for a call

I'm ringing to ...

I'd like to ...

I need some information about ...

Making arrangements

Could we meet some time next month?

When would be a good time?

Would Thursday at 5 o'clock suit you?

What about July 21st?

That would be fine.

No, sorry, I can't make it then.

Sorry, I'm too busy next week.

Changing arrangements

We've an appointment for next month, but ...

I'm afraid I can't come on that day.

Could we fix an alternative?

Confirming information

So ...

Can I check that? You said ...

To confirm that ...

Can you / Can I confirm that by fax?

Ending a call

Right, I think that's all.

Thanks very much for your help.

Do call if you need anything else.

I look forward to ... seeing you / your call /
your letter / your fax / our meeting.

Goodbye and thanks.

Bye for now.

Skills Checklist

Telephoning (2)

Voice

- speed
- clarity
- volume

Structure

- background information
- key information
- repetition, emphasis and confirmation
- possible confirmation by fax

Style

- formal / informal
- cold call / new contact / established contact
- in-company vs. customer
supplier
outside agent
- colleague / friend / business associate / public
- company image

Structure of a call

Beginning

introduce yourself

get who you want

small talk

state problem / reason for call

|

Middle

ask questions

get / give information

confirm information

|

End

signal end

thank other person

small talk

refer to next contact

close call

check that there's nothing else to say

Language Checklist

Telephoning (3)

Stating reason for the call

I'm ringing about ...

Unfortunately, there's a problem with ...

I'm ringing to complain about ...

Explaining the problem

There seems to be ...

We haven't received ...

The ... doesn't work.

The quality of the work is below standard.

The specifications are not in accordance with our order.

Referring to previous problems

It's not the first time we've had this problem.

This is the (third) time this has happened.

Three months ago ...

We had a meeting about this and you assured us that ...

Threatening

If the problem is not resolved ...

we'll have to reconsider our position.

we'll have to renegotiate the contract.

we'll contact other suppliers.

the consequences could be very serious.

Handling complaints and other problems

Asking for details

Could you tell me exactly what ... ?

Can you tell me ... ?

What's the ... ?

Apologising

I'm sorry to hear that.

I'm very sorry about the problem / delay / mistake ...

Denying an accusation

No, I don't think that can be right.

I'm sorry but I think you're mistaken.

I'm afraid that's not quite right.

I'm afraid that can't be true.

Skills Checklist

Telephoning (3)

If you receive a complaint:

- consider your company's reputation
- express surprise
- ask for details
- suggest action
- promise to investigate
- make reasonable suggestions, offers to help.

Consider your customer and:

- show polite understanding
- use active listening
- reassure customer.

If you make a complaint:

- prepare for the call
- be sure of the facts
- have documentation available
- decide what you require to resolve the problem – at least partially – or completely.

Who is to blame?

Who is responsible?

Are you talking to the right person?

Was your order or your specifications correct?

Were you partly responsible for arrangements which went wrong, e.g. transport?

Does responsibility actually lie elsewhere, i.e. with a third party?

If you do not get what you want:

- keep control – state what you need calmly
- do you need to continue to do business with the other side?
- if you do, keep a good relationship
- express disappointment – not anger
- don't use threats – unless you have to!

Language Checklist

Structure (1) The introduction to a presentation

Greeting

Good morning / afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

(Ladies and) Gentlemen ...

Subject

I plan to say a few words about ...

I'm going to talk about ...

The subject of my talk is ...

The theme of my presentation is ...

I'd like to give you an overview of ...

Structure

I've divided my talk into (three) parts.

My talk will be in (three) parts.

I'm going to divide ...

First ...

Second ...

Third ...

In the first part ...

Then in the second part ...

Finally ...

Timing

My talk will take about ten minutes.

The presentation will take about two hours ...
but there'll be a twenty minute break in
the middle. We'll stop for lunch at 12
o'clock.

Policy on questions / discussion

Please interrupt if you have any questions.

After my talk there'll be time for a discussion
and any questions.

Skills Checklist

Effective presentations – planning and preparation

Audience

- expectations
- technical knowledge
- size
- questions and / or discussion

Speaker's competence

- knowledge
- presentation technique

Content

- what to include
- length / depth (technical detail)
- number of key ideas

Structure

- sequence
 - beginning, middle, end
- repetition, summarising

Delivery

- style
 - formal / informal
 - enthusiasm / confidence
- voice
 - variety / speed
 - pauses
- body language
 - eye contact
 - gesture / movement
 - posture

Visual aids

- type / design / clarity
- relevance

Practice

- tape recorder
- script or notes

Room

- size / seating
- equipment (does it work?)
- sound quality

Language

- simple / clear
- spelling
- sentence length
- structure signals

Language Checklist

Using visuals

Types of visual support

visual (n.)
 film / video
 picture
 diagram
 chart
 pie chart
 – segment
 table graph
 – x axis / horizontal axis
 – y axis / vertical axis
 – left hand / right hand axis
 line graph
 – solid line
 – dotted line
 – broken line

Equipment

(slide) projector
 – slides (Br. Eng.)
 – diapositives (Am. Eng.)

overhead projector (OHP)

– transparency (Br. Eng.)

– slide (Am. Eng.)

flip chart

whiteboard

metaplan board

Introducing a visual

I'd like to show you ...

Have a look at this ...

This (graph) shows / represents ...

Here we can see ...

Let's look at this ...

Here you see the trend in ...

Comparisons

This compares *x* with *y*

Let's compare the ...

Here you see a comparison between ...

Describing trends

to go up		to go down	
to increase	an increase	to decrease	a decrease
to rise	a rise	to fall	a fall
to climb	a climb	to decline	a decline
to improve	an improvement	to deteriorate	a deterioration
to recover	a recovery		
to get better	an upturn	to get worse	a downturn
to level out	a levelling out		
to stabilise			
to stay the same			
to reach a peak	a peak	to reach a low point	
to reach a maximum		to hit bottom	a trough
to peak			
to undulate	an undulation		
to fluctuate	a fluctuation		

Describing the speed of change

a dramatic			dramatically
a marked			markedly
a significant	increase / fall	to increase / fall	slightly
a slight			significantly

Skills Checklist

Using visual supports

Visuals must be:

- well prepared
- well chosen
- clear

Available media

Use media which suit the room and audience size.

- overhead projector (OHP)
 - transparencies / OHTs / slides (Am. Eng.)
- slide projector
 - slides / diapositives (Am. Eng.)
- video / computer graphics / flip chart / whiteboard

Use of visual aids

Combination of OHP and flip chart with pens often good.

First visual should give the title of talk.

Second should show structure of talk – main headings.

Keep text to minimum – never just read text from visuals.

Do not use too many visuals – guide is one per minute.

Use pauses – give audience time to comprehend picture.

Never show a visual until you want to talk about it.

Remove visual once finished talking about it.

Switch off equipment not in use.

Use of colour

For slides, white writing on blue / green is good. Use different colours if colour improves clarity of message (e.g. pie charts).

Use appropriate colour combinations: yellow and pink are weak colours on white backgrounds.

Use of room and machinery

Check equipment in advance.

Check organisation of room, equipment, seating, microphones, etc.

Use a pointer on the screen (not your hand).

Have a good supply of pens.

Check order of your slides / OHTs, etc.

You in relation to your audience

Decide appropriate level of formality, dress accordingly.

Keep eye contact at least 80% of the time.

Use available space.

Move around, unless restricted by a podium.

Use gesture.

Language Checklist

Structure (2) The main body

Signalling different parts in a presentation:

Ending the introduction

So that concludes the introduction.

That's all for the introduction.

Beginning the main body

Now let's move to the first part of my talk,
which is about ...

So, first ... To begin with ...

Listing

There are three things to consider. First ...

Second ... Third ...

There are two kinds of ... The first is ... The
second is ...

We can see four advantages and two
disadvantages. First, advantages.

One is ... Another is ... A third advantage is
... Finally ...

On the other hand, the two disadvantages.

First ... Second ...

Linking: Ending parts within the main body

That completes / concludes ...

That's all (I want to say for now) on ...

Linking: Beginning a new part

Let's move to (the next part which is) ...

So now we come to ...

Now I want to describe ...

Sequencing

There are (seven) different stages to the
process

First / then / next / after that / then (x) /
after x there's y, last ...

There are two steps involved.

The first step is ... The second step is ...

There are four stages to the project.

At the beginning, later, then, finally ...

I'll describe the development of the idea.

First the background, then the present
situation, and then the prospects for the
future.

Skills Checklist

Structure (2) The main body

Organisation of presentation

- Logical progression of ideas and/or parts of presentation.
- Clear development.
- Sequential description of processes.
- Chronological order of events,
i.e. background → present → future.

Topic

Main parts	Sections	Subsections
A	i	a. b.
	ii.	
B	i.	a. b.
	ii.	
	iii.	a. b. c.
C	i.	a. b.
	ii.	

Internal structure of the main body of a complex presentation

Signalling the structure

- Use listing techniques.
- Link different parts.
- Use sequencing language.

Signalling the structure ...

- makes the organisation of the talk clear
- helps the audience to follow
- helps you to follow the development of your talk.

Language Checklist

The end of the presentation

Ending the main body of the presentation

Right, that ends (the third part of) my talk.

That's all I want to say for now on ...

Beginning the summary and/or conclusion

I'd like to end by emphasising the main point(s).

I'd like to finish with ...

- a summary of the main points.
- some observations based on what I've said.
- some conclusions / recommendations.
- a brief conclusion.

Concluding

There are two conclusions / recommendations.

What we need is ...

I think we have to ...

I think we have seen that we should ...

Inviting questions and/or introducing discussion

That concludes (the formal part of) my talk.
(Thanks for listening) ... Now I'd like to invite your comments.

Now we have (half an hour) for questions and discussion.

Right. Now, any questions or comments?

So, now I'd be very interested to hear your comments.

Handling questions

Understood but difficult or impossible to answer

That's a difficult question to answer in a few words.

- It could be ...
- In my experience ...
- I would say ...
- I don't think I'm the right person to answer that. Perhaps (Mr Holmes) can help ...
- I don't have much experience in that field ...

Understood but irrelevant or impossible to answer in the time available

I'm afraid that's outside the scope of my talk / this session. If I were you I'd discuss that with ...

I'll have to come to that later, perhaps during the break as we're short of time.

Not understood

Sorry, I'm not sure I've understood. Could you repeat?

Are you asking if ... ?

Do you mean ... ?

I didn't catch (the last part of) your question.

If I have understood you correctly, you mean ... ? Is that right?

Checking that your answer is sufficient

Does that answer your question?

Is that okay?

Skills Checklist

Structure (3) Ending the presentation

A summary

- Restates main point(s).
- Restates what the audience must understand and remember.
- Contains no new information.
- Is short.

A conclusion

- States the logical consequences of what has been said.
- Often contains recommendations.
- May contain new and important information.
- Is short.

Questions

- Inviting questions implies that the audience are less expert than the speaker.
- Beware of the 'nightmare scenario' – total silence! Have one or two prepared questions to ask the audience.
- Keep control of the meeting.

Discussion

- Inviting discussion gives the impression that the audience have useful experience, so is often more 'diplomatic'.
- You still need to control the discussion.

Inviting discussion and questions

- Often the best solution.
- Keep control, limit long contributions, watch the time.

Handling questions

- Listen very carefully.
- Ask for repetition or clarification if necessary.
- Paraphrase the question to check you understand it.
- Give yourself time to think – perhaps by paraphrasing the question.
- Check that the question is relevant. If not, don't answer if you don't want to.
- Refer questioner to another person if you can't answer.
- Suggest you'll answer a question later if you prefer.
- Check that the questioner is happy with your answer: eye contact and a pause is often sufficient.
- Keep control.
- Don't allow one or two people to dominate.
- Be polite.
- Signal when time is running out – 'Time for one last question'.
- At the end, thank the audience.

Language Checklist

Chairing and leading discussion

Opening the meeting

Thank you for coming ...
 (It's ten o'clock). Let's start ...
 We've received apologies from ...
 Any comments on our previous meeting?

Introducing the agenda

You've all seen the agenda ...
 On the agenda, you'll see there are three items.
 There is one main item to discuss ...

Stating objectives

We're here today to hear about plans for ...
 Our objective is to discuss different ideas ...
 What we want to do today is to reach a decision ...

Introducing discussion

The background to the problem is ...
 This issue is about ...
 The point we have to understand is ...

Calling on a speaker

I'd like to ask Mary to tell us about ...
 Can we hear from Mr Passas on this?
 I know that you've prepared a statement on your Department's views ...

Controlling the meeting

Sorry Hans, can we let Magda finish?
 Er, Henry, we can't talk about that.

Summarising

So, what you're saying is ...
 Can I summarise that? You mean ...
 So, the main point is ...

Moving the discussion on

Can we go on to think about ...
 Let's move on to the next point.

Closing the meeting

I think we've covered everything.
 So, we've decided ...
 I think we can close the meeting now.
 That's it. The next meeting will be ...

Skills Checklist

Preparation for meetings

Chair

- Decide objectives.
- What type of meeting (formal or informal, short or long, regular or a 'one off', internal / external information giving / discussion / decision making)?
- Is a social element required?
- Prepare an agenda.
- Decide time / place / participants / who must attend and who can be notified of decisions.
- Study subjects for discussion.
- Anticipate different opinions.
- Speak to participants.

Secretary

- Obtain agenda and list of participants.
- Inform participants and check:
 - room, equipment, paper, materials.
 - refreshments, meals, accommodation, travel.

Participants

- Study subjects on agenda, work out preliminary options.
- If necessary, find out team or department views.
- Prepare own contribution, ideas, visual supports, etc.

The role of the Chair

- Start and end on time.
- Introduce objectives, agenda.
- Introduce speakers.
- Define time limits for contributions.
- Control discussion, hear all views.
- Summarise discussion at key points.
- Ensure that key decisions are written down by the secretary.
- Ensure that conclusions and decisions are clear and understood.
- Define actions to be taken and individual responsibilities.