

# Group Meetings: The Agenda

An agenda is a point-form list of topics that will be discussed in a meeting. The agenda is usually distributed a few days before the meeting so that everyone attending knows what to expect and can come prepared. The agenda also helps keep the meeting on track so that time is not wasted on unrelated issues.

The last item on the agenda is sometimes listed as *AOB (any other business)*. This is the time in a meeting when participants can present issues that are not listed in the agenda but directly relate to the purpose of the meeting.

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Look at the agenda below and answer the questions.

- 1. What kind of committee do you think this is?
- 2. What do you think the purpose of the meeting is?
- 3. Who will be running the meeting?
- 4. How often do you think this committee meets?

COMMITTEE MEETING

**Date:** Tuesday Dec. 14, 2010  
**Time:** 11:00-12:00  
**Location:** Room 201

**Chair:** Kumar Devi  
**Secretary:** Patrick Swift  
**Attendees:** Silvia Rame, Don Davis, Karen Lu, Bob Cicarelli, Joanna Milcowicz, Ellen Jones, Tom Wilkinson

**Agenda Items:**

1. Report on monthly inspections (Don)	10 min.
2. Fire safety issues (Tom)	10 min.
3. First-aid kits (Silvia)	10 min.
4. Policies and Procedures manual (Karen)	10 min.
5. Updates on health and safety training (Joanna)	10 min.
6. Other business (Kumar)	10 min.

2

In small groups, plan a meeting to discuss things you would like to do/have done to improve your ESL centre (e.g., lunch area, hours of operation, parking, facilities). Decide on the details and prepare an agenda. Your agenda should include all the information that meeting participants will need.


# Group Meetings: The Minutes

The minutes of a meeting are a written record of its proceedings. The most important parts of the minutes are the summary of what was discussed, the decisions that were made, and any actions that need to be taken. The minutes also often include:

- The name of organization and the names of committees/teams
- The purpose of meeting
- The people who attended; the people who were invited but did not attend (regrets)
- The date of the meeting; the time it began and ended

Minutes of a meeting are usually written by either a secretary/recorder or a member of the committee assigned to that role (often on a rotating basis). They can be written in point form and usually only the most important information is included.

The minutes should be written as soon as possible after the meeting so that nothing is forgotten. They are sent to meeting participants and others (managers, etc.) who need to be informed about what happened at the meeting.

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Audio 6.7: Listen to six segments of a health and safety meeting. Complete the chart with the main points presented in each segment.

	Main Points of the Presentation
Segment 1	
Segment 2	
Segment 3	
Segment 4	
Segment 5	
Segment 6	



Listen to the six segments again. Compare the meeting minutes below to what you hear. Underline 10 statements in the minutes that are not accurate.

### Health and Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday December 14, 2010 11:00-12:00 Room 201

**Chair:** Kumar Devi

**Secretary:** Patrick Swift

**Attendees:** Silvia Rame, Don Davis, Karen Lu, Joanna Milcowicz, Tom Wilkinson

**Regrets:** Bob Cicarelli, Ellen Jones

#### 1. Report on monthly inspections

Don talked about the importance of doing the inspection tasks on a monthly basis. He recommended we have a monthly inspection schedule with staff assigned to doing the inspections. He offered to create a reporting form that everyone can fill out and submit once a week.

**Action:** Don will draft a form and present it to the committee at the next meeting.

#### 2. Fire safety issues

Tom said there were problems with the first fire drill that happened after the alarms were tested. The lab reported that they couldn't hear the alarm. We need to have the company that installed the alarms come in and check them to see what happened and perhaps replace some of them. Tom also suggested that we remind all staff to review the fire safety plan on a yearly basis so that everyone knows the procedures.

**Action:** Kumar offered to send a memo to managers.

#### 3. First aid kits

Silvia inspected the seven first aid kits in the building and found that supplies in the kits are old, some of the packages have been opened and the medications have expired. The kits need to be updated. She suggested we order refills for all of the kits. She recommended that we buy first-aid kits for all the delivery vehicles as well.

**Action:** Silvia will report on the cost of updating the kits at the committee's next meeting.

#### 4. Policies and procedures manual

Karen reported that the manual is completed but still needs to be edited. Once that is done, it will be distributed to all of the managers. She recommended that each manager meet with the people in his/her department to go over the emergency procedures so that everyone is clear about what they need to do if something happens.

**Action:** Kumar offered to send a memo to all managers.

#### 5. Health and safety training

Joanna said she wanted to find out from managers what their training needs are before making any arrangements. She showed us a questionnaire that she wants to give the managers to get that information. She recommended the managers discuss training needs with staff to see if they have specific needs that they would like to have addressed.

**Action:** Joanna will email the questionnaire to all managers and request their feedback.

#### 6. Other business

Kumar said us that the admin assistant, Katie, will be updating the emergency contact information for everyone in the company. Kumar is going to send a letter to all the managers asking them to give Katie that information by the end of the month.

# Group Meetings: Introductions

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In a group business meeting, the chairperson usually introduces a new person to a group of people who already know each other. The introduction is brief and includes the person's name and job title as well as the company/organization/department they work for.

When meeting with a group of people who don't know each other, it is common for everyone to introduce themselves. Your personal introduction should be brief and concise. It would include your name and a brief description of the experience you have that is relevant to the meeting participants (e.g., *I've worked on several projects like this one in the past; My area of expertise is ...; I'm here because I am interested in...*).



**Audio 6.8:** Listen to two examples of the chairperson introducing a new person to a group and answer the following questions.

1. How does the chairperson begin the introduction?
2. What information about the person does the chairperson include?

2

**Imagine you are the chairperson of a meeting in which participants will be discussing funding for ESL classes. You have invited an ESL learner to participate in the meeting. Interview your partner to find out about his/her background and experience learning English. Practise introducing your partner using this information.**



**Audio 6.9:** Listen to two examples of people introducing themselves in a formal meeting. Compare the two introductions.

1. What information did each introduction include?
2. Which introduction do you think is more appropriate? Why?

4

**Imagine you are attending a meeting at a community center where you would like to volunteer. In small groups, practise introducing yourself. Include a brief description of your previous work experience or your skills.**

# Group Meetings: Giving Opinions

As a participant in a meeting, you may be asked to give an opinion or make a suggestion. You may also want to comment on the opinions and suggestions of others. Here are some expressions you can use:

**As a participant**

Giving opinions: *I (really) feel that ...; In my opinion ...; I think that ...*


Making suggestions: *Perhaps we should; Maybe we could; How about ...; I suggest we ...; Why don't we ...?*

Agreeing/disagreeing: *I have to agree with (name of participant); Exactly! That's what I think, too; I agree with you to a point, but ...; I'm afraid I don't agree; Good point! Sounds good!*

Commenting on the opinions of others: *I see what you mean; Yes, I get your point; I never thought about it that way before.*

**As the chairperson**

Asking others for their opinions: *What do you think? Do you (really) think that ...?; How do you feel about ...?; (Name of participant), can we get your input?; Can I hear what everyone else thinks about ...?; (Name of participant), how do you feel about this?*

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**Audio 6.10:** Listen to a segment of an informal meeting to plan a company open house. Make notes about the expressions you hear and complete the table below.

Asking others for their opinions:
Giving opinions:
Making suggestions:
Agreeing/disagreeing:
Commenting on the opinions of others:

# Group Meetings: Interrupting Politely

Part of the chairperson's role in a meeting is to make sure everyone has a chance to contribute to the discussion. Sometimes it is necessary to interrupt if someone in the group is dominating the conversation. One way to do this is by bringing other people into the discussion. You can use phrases like:

- *What do you think about that idea, (name of another participant)?*
- *Do you have anything you would like to add, (name of another participant)?*
- *Would anyone else like to add to this discussion?*
- *Perhaps someone else has something they'd like to say about this issue.*

Here are some polite expressions you can use as a participant when you want to interrupt:

- *Sorry to interrupt*
- *Pardon me/excuse me for interrupting*
- *Could I add something here?*

In addition to the words you use, interrupting politely also involves timing and using an appropriate tone of voice. It's best not to interrupt someone in the middle of a sentence. Also, using an aggressive, sarcastic or negative tone when interrupting will likely sound rude.

## 1

**Audio 6.11: Listen to a short segment of a meeting. The participants are discussing three different designs for a promotional flyer that the company wants to distribute to potential customers.**

1. Listen to how each person interrupts. Identify appropriate and inappropriate ways of interrupting.
2. Listen to how the chairperson deals with someone who is dominating the conversation. Identify the strategies/phrases used.

## 2

**With a partner, take turns rephrasing the sentences below so that they are more polite.**

1. Hey, I have something to say!
2. It's my turn to speak.
3. Ahmed, you have been talking a lot. Can we hear from someone else now?
4. Mary, stop interrupting!
5. Could you please shut up?
6. I want to say something.
7. I need to interrupt.
8. Let me speak please.
9. You've talked long enough. Give someone else a turn now.
10. You talk so much that no one can get a word in edgewise.