Hi, I’m Gina.

Welcome to Oxford Online English!

Tomorrow, you have an important meeting, and you’re the chair.

It’s the first time you’re chairing a meeting in English!

Think about this situation.

Would you know what to say to start the meeting, prese’nt your main ideas, or summarise your

meeting agenda?

In this lesson, you’ll learn how to chair a meeting in English.

You can learn useful English words and phrases which you can use in your next meeting.

Now imagine: you’re in the meeting room.

You need to start the meeting.

What will you say?

Part one: welcoming attendees and starting the meeting.

Before the meeting starts, you have to make sure that everyone is paying attention.

Do you know how to do this?

You could say:

If I could have your attention, please.

Could I have your attention, please?

Good afternoon, everyone.

You can also put two of these phrases together.

For example:

Good morning everyone, could I have your attention please?

Remember, you’re the chair.

You need to take charge and lead the meeting.

Make a strong start to your meeting by using emphasis in your voice.

For example, in the first phrase, we have the word please after the pause(pɔːz) at the end.

Emphasise the word please to sound firmer and show people that you expect them to listen

to you.

Do it like this:

If I could have your attention, please.

You could also do this for the phrase:

Could I have your attention, please.

Listen to the phrase again.

When I say it, does it sound like a question?

Could I have your attention, please.

The form is a question, but you can read it like a statement.

This makes it sound firmer and shows people that you need them to pay attention to you

now.

After you have everyone’s attention, it’s time to welcome the attendees and get things

started.

Here are some good general phrases to use:

I’d like to welcome you all here today, now let’s get down to business.

In this phrase, ‘get down to business’ means ‘begin discussing the important information.’

Thank you all for coming.

Perhaps we can make a start.

Thanks everyone and welcome to today’s meeting.

Let’s begin.

If this is your first time meeting these people, you could also introduce yourself.

If there are other pre(i)senters in the meeting, this is also the time to introduce them.

For example:

I’d like to welcome you all here today, my name is Gina Mares and I’m the Marketing

Manager, and this is Jon and he’s the head of the design department.

Now let’s get down to business.

Thank you all for coming.

My name’s Gina and I’m the Marketing Manager.

I’m sure you all know Dasha, who’s in charge of web content.

Perhaps we can make a start.

Thanks everyone and welcome to today’s meeting.

I’m Gina Mares, the Marketing Manager.

This is Jess, from the accounts department, and she’ll also be presenting today.

Let’s begin.

Next, we have to introduce the topic and talk about the items on the agenda.

Part two: introducing the topic and outlining the agenda.

After you’ve welcomed everyone to the meeting, you want to make sure they have a clear idea

of what you’ll be discussing.

This can also help you to stay organized throughout the meeting.

First, you want to introduce the overall topic of the meeting.

Then, introduce the agenda of the meeting: all the key points you will be discussing.

Today’s meeting is about ... We’ll talk about ...

The aim of this meeting is to ... We’ll go over ...

When you go over something, what do you think that means?

It means to analyze or look at something carefully.

You can also use cover.

For example:

In today’s meeting, we’ll go over ... Or: In today’s meeting, we’ll cover ...

These are both useful when discussing an agenda.

Now, it’s your turn to practice beginning a meeting.

Start with getting the attendees’ attention, then welcome the attendees and get the meeting

started.

Finally, you can introduce the topic of the meeting and outline your agenda.

I’ll give you an example, and then you can create your own.

Good morning everyone, if I could have your attention please.

I’d like to welcome you all to the meeting today.

Let’s begin.

The aim of this meeting is to talk about the marketing strategies for the next few months.

We’ll go over our budget, goals, and welcome the new hires.

OK?

Now, it’s your turn.

Create an introduction for a meeting you’ve recently had, or you can just use some general

topics from your job.

You can pause the video and think about it.

How did you do?

OK, now let’s move on to the main part of the meeting.

Part three: getting through the agenda.

Now, you will get into the most important part of the meeting: presenting your main

ideas.

How you do this depends on what you are talking about, but there are some general rules that

you can always use.

You want to begin with the first item on your agenda.

To do this, use phrases like:

So, let’s start with ... The first item on the agenda is ...

After a phrase like this, you will present and discuss the agenda item.

For example:

So, let’s start with some new business: marketing strategies.

The first item on the agenda is how we can make our online advertising more effective.

After you’ve discussed this first topic, you need to let the attendees know that you’ve

finished and that the discussion should move forward.

How can you do this?

A simple closing statement will be good, such as:

I think that covers the first, or second, or third item.

If nobody has anything else to add, we can continue on to the next item.

Now, you can move on to the next point.

Here are some useful phrases for this:

Let’s move on to the next item: … Now we come to the…

The final item on the agenda is…

Using words like next or final can be very helpful.

It helps everybody understand where you are and what you’re doing.

Let’s see how to use these in some full sentences:

Let’s move onto the next item: the marketing budget for these new strategies.

Now we come to the main challenge: how to get 100,000 new contacts in the next few months.

The final item on the agenda is to welcome our new hires: James in Finance and Debra

in HR.

You can repeat these steps until you’ve covered all of the items on your agenda.

Now it's your turn.

Imagine you’re chairing a meeting at your company.

Write down three agenda items.

Practice using different English phrases to introduce each item.

Again, you can pause the video and think about the points we’ve just gone over, and also

practice making your own examples.

Next, we’re going to look at attendee participation in the meeting.

Part four: inviting attendees to participate.

As chair, one of your responsibilities is making sure attendees get a chance to express

their ideas and take part in discussions.

What can you say to bring others into the discussion?

You could ask a question like:

..., what’s your opinion on this?

Would you like to share your thoughts on this question?

Could you add anything to our ideas here?

These are good phrases to make sure all attendees have a chance to participate.

Also, as a chair, you may have other attendees who need to present ideas or lead the discussion

for part of the meeting.

When you want to hand over to another attendee, you can use phrases like:

..., would you like to introduce this item?

I’d like to turn it over to ... who is going to lead in the next point.

Alright, now ... we’ll have the floor.

Just add the person’s name to use these phrases.

For example:

Amit, would you like to introduce this item?

However, there could be a problem here.

What if some of the attendees talk too long, or start going off-topic?

Part five: dealing with distractions and staying on topic

Nobody likes meetings which go on too long, right?

To be a good chair, you need to keep people focused on the agenda and avoid distractions.

When someone is speaking for too long, there are good, professional phrases that you can

use:

Let’s not get too far off-topic here.

We can discuss that at the end if you feel it’s important.

I don’t think that’s relevant to today’s discussion.

If someone talks about a topic that would be good to discuss at a later time, you can

use the phrase shelve it or table it.

This means you want to talk about it, but in the future:

I think we should shelve that until next time.

Good point, but let’s table it until the next meeting.

At this point, you’ve got through your agenda, made sure that everyone has a chance to speak,

and stayed on topic.

Great!

But, you have one more job:

Part six: summarizing and concluding the meeting.

Once you’ve finished discussing everything, you need to summarize your key points.

This will provide a conclusion to your meeting and help people remember the most important

points from the agenda.

Here, you can say things like:

Before we close, let me just summarize the main points.

To sum up…

In brief, ... Shall I go over the main points?

Then, use verbs like discussed, went over, and talked about to list the items from the

meeting.

For example:

To sum up, we discussed using the new internet marketing strategies and cutting the budget

by $1,000 next month.

We also talked about our new sales goals and increasing our traffic.

Finally, we welcomed James and Debra to the company.

Now, it’s time to finish up.

Here, you should show that you're finished and ask for any final questions.

To finish, simple phrases like these are effective:

OK, it looks like we’ve covered the main items for the meeting today.

Right, that’s all for today’s meeting.

Don't forget to ask if there are any final questions from the attendees.

This will help them to clarify anything they didn't understand and make any final points.

Is there any other business?

Are there any questions before we finish?

Now, I’d like you to practice concluding a meeting.

First, I’ll give you an example and then you can create your own:

To sum up, we discussed using the new internet marketing strategies and cutting the budget

by $1,000 each month.

We also talked about our sales goals and increasing our site traffic.

Finally, we welcomed James and Debra to the company.

Right, that’s all for today’s meeting.

Are there any questions before we finish?

No?

Great, I’d like to thank Bob, our CEO, for coming here all the way from Beijing.

Thank you all for attending.

That’s all for today.

OK, your turn.

Summarize your meeting, thank everyone for coming, and conclude.

Now you know how to chair a meeting from beginning to end.

Are you chairing a meeting in English in the near future?

I hope you can use some of the words and phrases from the lesson to make it easier for you!

Each section has a lot of useful language to learn and practice, so you might want to

go through some sections again to really get comfortable with the language you need.

That’s all for this lesson.

Good luck, and thank you for watching!

Please visit Oxford Online English dot com for more free lessons like this.

See you next time!