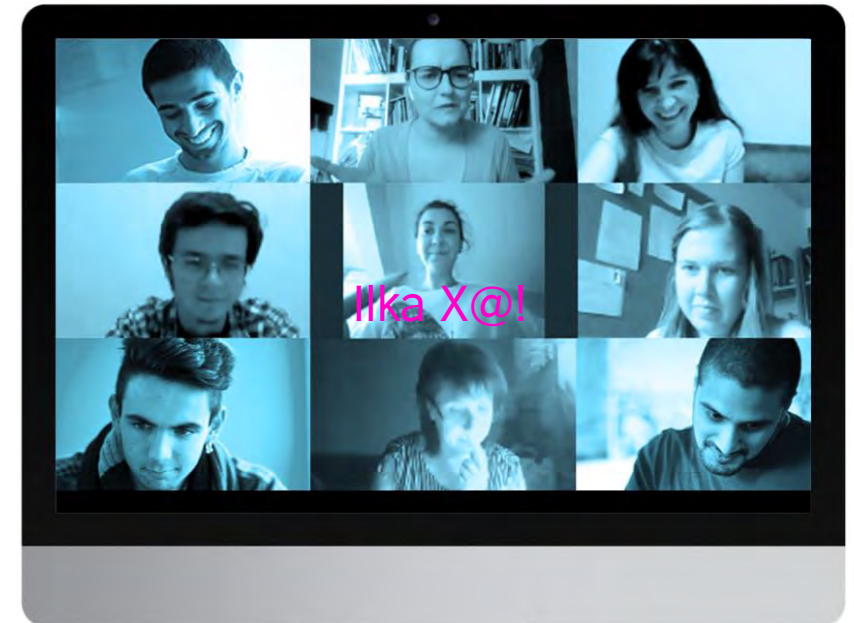


# Before we start, please make sure...

- ✓ your name on Zoom is clear (use Latin letters)
- ✓ your camera is on and mic is off (unmute when needed)
- ✓ you are in a quiet area that helps you focus
- ✓ you have a notebook or a note app ready to take notes



# Trouble-shooting

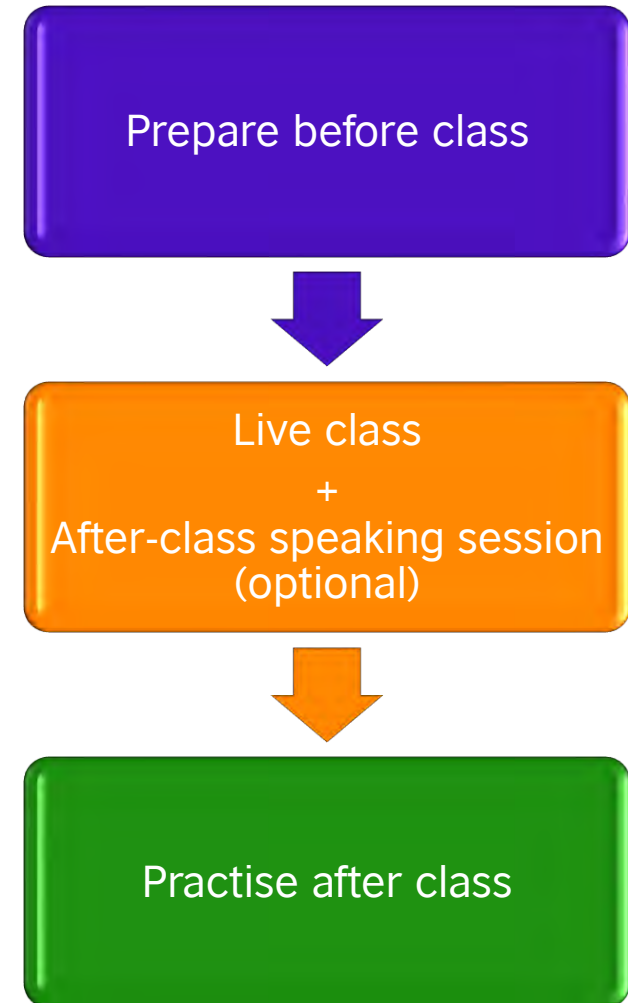
Theme:  
Business Communication



# Welcome to English Online

## How does it work?

You need to complete all three parts to get the most out of English Online.



# After-class speaking session

Stay back after class for 5 or 10 minutes to talk to your classmates from around the world.

**This extra speaking practice will help you...**

- improve your conversation skills
- practise using language learnt in class
- support and help your fellow students
- practise using English in a natural context
- become a part of a global learning community



After-class  
speaking  
sessions

# Lesson objective

In this lesson you will work in a group to decide how to deal with difficult co-workers.

You will:

- Practise vocabulary for *describing difficult colleagues*.
- *Discuss* characteristic behaviour, *suggest* reasons for it and *make* decisions

## Highlighted skills:

Speaking (live class) and Listening (before and after the lesson)

## Language focus:

**Vocabulary:** vocabulary for describing difficult colleagues and describing characteristic behaviour.

# Lead-in

Think of some challenging personalities you have worked with in the past (or maybe work with now!) and discuss the questions below with a partner.

1. Do you know/Have you known any chatterboxes? What are your tactics for ending a conversation with one?
2. What are your experiences of working/studying with a know-it-all? How disruptive was it?
3. Have you ever had a boss who was a staller? What was the impact on your team?
4. What could be the more serious impacts of having a back-stabber in your team?

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A chatterbox – someone who keeps on talking and therefore stops you from concentrating on your work

A know-it-all – a people-pleaser who will agree with everyone but then back out

A staller – someone who puts off making any decision

A back-stabber – someone who is pleasant to your face but complains about you behind your back

# Language focus

Use the structures in the language box.  
Describe the following with your partner/group.

- 1 At least two things that everyone experiences in their first job.
- 2 At least two things that are characteristic of people-pleasers.
- 3 At least two things that are characteristic of clams.
- 4 Something you have experienced at work.
- 5 One thing that tends to be characteristic of bullies at work.
- 6 Something you would hate to experience at work.



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# Task



# Task preparation

Each of you will get a card about a difficult colleague.  
Write some notes on why you think this person behaves in this way.

## Discussing problems

This might be due to ...

It's possible that s/he ...

One thing that worries/concerns me is ...

... is causing problems

## Saying what you want to happen

Personally, I think we should ...

I'm in favour of ...

I think the priority here is to ...

I feel that we should ...

# Task

In a group, decide what the reasons for their behaviour might be and how you should deal with them.

Report back to the class.

## Discussing problems

This might be due to ...

It's possible that s/he ...

One thing that worries/concerns me is ...

... is causing problems

## Saying what you want to happen

Personally, I think we should ...

I'm in favour of ...

I think the priority here is to ...

I feel that we should ...

# Task role cards

## Card A

**Ben is highly skilled in passive-aggressive behaviour. He takes pot-shots and engages in non-playful teasing. He is mean-spirited and works to sabotage his leaders and colleagues.**

# Task role cards

## Card B

Amanda is whiny, finds fault in every situation, and is always accusing and blaming other for problems. Self-righteous, she sees it as her responsibility to complain to set things right – but rarely bring solutions to the problems she complains about.

# Task role cards

## Card C

**Vera is abrupt, intimidating, domineering, arrogant and prone to making personal attacks. Using an extremely aggressive approach to get what she wants. Vera will behave like an adult having a temper tantrum. Vera doesn't mind making a scene in a public place.**

# Task role cards

## Card D

**Gary is a controller and a micro-manager. He is always pushing for more responsibility and is a very bad delegator. He gets into turf-wars with other colleagues and always insists he knows best. Gary is an excellent worker but his attitude is undermining his colleagues.**

# Feedback



# Review

**What have you learned from today's lesson?**

**What did you find interesting/boring?**

**What did you need more practice with?**

**Did you participate fully?**

**Did you achieve your aims for this lesson?**

# Lesson materials


## Make sure you have

- downloaded the \*.pdf with this presentation
- saved the Zoom Chat



# What's next?

Complete the *Practise after class* activities online.



The image shows three activity cards from a digital learning interface. The first two cards are identical, each featuring a woman wearing headphones and the text 'Listening activity'. The third card is titled 'Vocabulary' and 'Defining difficult colleagues', showing a close-up of a dictionary page with the word 'vocabulary' and its definition. Below these cards is a yellow button labeled 'Review vocabulary'.

Listening activity

Listening activity

Vocabulary

Defining difficult colleagues

Review vocabulary

Read more about how behaviours affect business.



<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading/c1-reading/cultural-behaviour-in-business>

# How can you make more progress?

Book your next lesson in the theme.



If you have finished the theme, try the optional assessment!

# After-class speaking session

You can talk about any topic that interests you!

Use these questions as a guide, if needed.

- Have you ever tried to change your behaviour at work because of a difficult co-worker?
- What behaviours in office environments make you feel angry?
- How would you react if you had a bullying manager?
- How do you deal with a chatter box?
- Have you ever stabbed someone in the back?

For help, contact:

[support.englishonline@britishcouncil.org](mailto:support.englishonline@britishcouncil.org)

## Dos

- ✓ Treat everyone with respect
- ✓ Keep your camera on and participate
- ✓ Let others share ideas too
- ✓ Listen to everyone
- ✓ Click 'Leave' if you cannot stay back

## Don'ts

- ✗ Don't take pictures or record
- ✗ Don't share personal details
- ✗ Don't let your children be visible onscreen