

## **Elements of introducing yourself**

The very first topic in this course is **elements of introducing yourself**. This is a fairly basic topic, but it is an important one to begin with because this is usually how all communication begins between strangers.

People want to know who they are speaking to, what their background is, and, possibly, the reason for the meeting. The environment and the format in which a meeting occurs, such as a face-to-face presentation, an online pitch, or a board meeting, and the number of participants, influence the language choice for introductions. Additionally, the language you choose will also influence how a meeting proceeds.

### **Step 1.**

First, we will show a simple comparison between an **informal introduction** and a **formal introduction** when you **first meet someone**.

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#### ***Informal introduction***

**Delian:** Hi. I'm Delian. How's it going?

**Sean:** Ummmm. Hello. I'm Sean. Nice to meet you.

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That was a **simple informal greeting and introduction**, and would not be appropriate in a more formal situation. Instead, greeting and introducing yourself to a stranger in a formal business setting would sound something like this.

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#### ***Formal introduction***

**Sean:** Hello, I just wanted to introduce myself. My name is Sean McMinn. I work for the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

**(Sean extends hand to Delian and they shake hands)**

**Delian:** How do you do, Sean? I'm pleased to meet you. My name is Delian, Delian Gaskell. I work for Duke College, a small liberal arts college here in Hong Kong.

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You will notice that in the more formal introduction, Sean and Delian both stated their full names and where they work. **Delian also made a point of using Sean's name when she acknowledged his introduction and then made a point of saying her own name first name very clearly so Sean could catch it before then stating her full name.** This is considered **common practice** and very **polite in business contexts around the world**. It shows that you are interested in the person who has introduced themselves to you and that you are making an attempt to remember their name and are trying to make it easier for them to recall your name. Remember that in business settings, people will often want to quickly know who they are speaking to and what their background or what company they represent.

In addition, note that Sean and Delian shook hands. The person introducing themselves will be the one who puts forward their hand so the two people can shake hands. **Shaking hands is considered very polite and is a tradition that is often expected in introductions, between both genders and not just between two men.**

In comparison, in the informal introduction, Delian and Sean both used simply stated their first names and used casual expressions like 'How's it going?' and 'Nice to meet you'. Both of these expressions would be too informal for an initial first meeting in a business setting. They also did not shake hands in the informal introduction as this is not expected.

In fact, sometimes it is better to be more formal in your first interaction with a stranger in a business setting. Remember that first impressions are very important, so being polite and formal during first introductions could make the difference between making a positive first impression leading to a fruitful business relationship or making a negative impression in which this will be your first and last meeting.

## **Step 2.**

Next, we will discuss what happens once you have introduced yourself to a stranger in a formal setting. You have already greeted the person, stated your full name and identified which company or institution you work for, so what do you say next?

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### ***Follow-up to formal introduction***

As a **follow-up to the first greeting**, you might say something like...

**Sean:** I'm pleased to meet you, Delian. I don't think we've formally met before, so I just wanted to introduce myself. Please have a seat.

**Delian:** Thank you very much.

**Sean:** So, what do you do at Duke College, Delian?

**Delian:** I am a coordinator for a Business Communications course. What are your responsibilities at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Sean?

**Sean:** I am a senior instructor and am responsible for managing the Center for Language Education's IT team. It's very nice to meet you.

**Delian:** Likewise.

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So in this follow-up to the introduction, it's **customary to express pleasure in meeting the person you've been introduced to** and saying something like '**I don't think we've met formally before**' makes the greeting more cordial and friendly. Depending on the situation, the host or person who has introduced themselves will take the opportunity to politely invite the guest to sit down, though depending on the situation they may also offer coffee or tea.

### **Step 3.**

**Strangers getting to know each other in a formal business setting then will often share more specifics about their duties or responsibilities.** This is type of small talk is done in order to network and find out if the person you're talking to would be a useful future contact.

Here is a review of the steps to introducing yourself in a formal business situation.

1. Give a greeting such as 'Hello' and say something about not having met the person before such as 'I don't believe we've met before' or 'I just wanted to introduce myself'.
2. Then state your full name and your place of employment. If you are the host, this is often when you would invite a guest to sit down or would offer the person some refreshment.
3. The other person would then reciprocate by giving their full name and place of employment.
4. After the initial introduction, there is some polite small-talk expected, where both people express pleasure in having met each other and give some specific details about what they do in their different jobs.
5. Both speakers then tend to end this initial introduction by repeating that they are pleased to have met each other.