



COMMUNICATION SKILLS II

(ENGL 158)

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Meeting and Minutes Writing

The Meeting

- A meeting is generally a formal interaction – social, occupational, business or political.
- Thus, whether it be a business management meeting, meeting of the cabinet or a family meeting, an applicable level of distance and strictness is observed in order to ensure the following:

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- Appropriate and ordered behavior or conduct
- Adherence to the object or agenda of meeting
- Making of decisions which will be binding on all, and which will also guide the future of the organization.

Types of Meeting

1. Formal meetings: In formal meetings, the number of people who should be present to validate the meeting must be present. This is the **quorum**. A formal record of these meetings must be kept.
2. Annual General Meeting (AGM): Annual general meetings are meetings that are held every year to assess the management of organization over the year.

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3. Statutory meetings: Statutory meetings are held in order that directors and shareholders can communicate and consider special reports.

Companies are required by law to hold these statutory meetings.

4. Board meetings: Board meetings are held as often as individual organizations require.

They are attended by all directors and chaired by the Chairman of the board.

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5. Informal Meetings: Informal meetings are not restricted by the same rules and regulations as formal meetings. Such meetings may take the form of brainstorming or discussion sessions where strict agendas may not be necessary, and minutes may not be kept.

Notice of Meeting

- When a meeting is to be convened, a notice is required to be sent to all who are to attend it.
- A notice of a meeting of a company is a document informing the members or directors of a company about an upcoming meeting.
- This document specifies the date, time and place of the meeting and the general nature of the business to be transacted at the meeting.

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A notice of a meeting should satisfy these conditions:

- It should be under proper authority.
- It should state the name of the organization.
- It should state the day, date, time, and place.
- It should inform persons required to attend the meeting in advance.

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- It should state the purpose and, if possible, the agenda.
- It should carry the date of circulation and convener's/secretary's signature.

Agenda of a Meeting

- An agenda is the list of items to be considered at a meeting.
- It is also called business or order of business.
- The agenda may be part of the notice or may be attached as an annexure.
- The secretary prepares it in consultation with the chairperson and get his approval.
- The items of agenda should cover all that is necessary to be considered at that time.



Meeting terminologies

Motion: A formal statement, usually involving some proposed action, put to a meeting for discussion and subsequent decision by vote.

Mover: The proposer of a motion

Amendment: Proposed modification to a motion which is not in conflict with the general thrust of that motion. If the amendment is adopted it becomes part of the original motion (now called ‘motion as amended’ or ‘substantive motion’)



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Point of Order: It is used when a member feels that the meeting procedure is not being stuck to and he/she wants the meeting to return to the correct procedure or order.

Out of Order: When an individual is not sticking to the meeting procedure, being rude, interjecting or misbehaving in some way, the chairperson might rule him/her out of order.

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Point of information: A member may raise his/her hand and ask to make a point of information when it is not his or her turn to speak.

Quorums: This is the minimum number of people who must be present for the members of the meeting to conduct business and take decisions. This minimum is stated in the organization's constitution.

Assignment

1. Mention and explain ten (10) other meeting terminologies.
2. Choose an organization and identify three different ways through which decisions are reached in the meetings of that organization.

Minutes Writing

- Minutes is basically an account of the various issues raised and discussed at a meeting and the decisions taken on such issues.
- The report, on the other hand, is principally an account or a record of the various events that takes place at a human interaction.
- The minutes, unlike the report, is concerned not about events but about discussions.

Types of Minutes

There are three types of minutes.

1. Narrative minutes
2. Resolution minutes
3. Action minutes

Narrative Minutes

- Narrative minutes seek to describe the various contributions which precede decisions as well as vetoes in detail.
- In this way, it becomes quite easy for one to see how thorough discussions were.
- It can establish whether the decisions were arrived at on consensus or whether there was a lot of opposition to it.

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Details included in narrative minutes are:

- Details of how meeting was begun and conducted
- Who initiated issues and what he actually said
- Contributions made in support on in dissension



Cont.

- Motions and Counter-motions
- Decisions made
- How the decisions were arrived – by voting, unanimity, etc.
- Attitudes of members

Resolution Minutes

- Resolution minutes concentrate in responding to the question below:

What decisions were taken at the meeting?

- To this end, resolutions only record the decisions reached, whether they were unanimous or whether there was dissent, and also other details which are essential to the description and implementation of the decisions.

Action Minutes

- Action minutes is closer to resolution minutes than to narrative minutes.
- It can effectively be seen as a kind of resolution minutes in which further emphasis is placed on the person and the strategies by which the decisions are implemented.
- Action minutes are useful in specifying the mode of implementation of decisions.

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They usually contain the following information applicable:

- Executing officer(s)
- Time frame for execution
- Equipment to be used for execution
- Supervising officers

The Structure of Minutes

- Minutes which is a record of formal interaction, cannot be a haphazard representation of this interaction.
- The various items to be recorded in minutes are stipulated, though they may change from organization to organization and from occasion to the other.

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1. Title
2. Attendance or Roll Call
3. Opening
4. Reading of Previous Minutes and Matters Arising
5. Main Business or Main Discussions
6. Any Other Business or Other Matters
7. Closing
7. Endorsement

The Title

The title consists of the following elements:

- Name of organization
- Nature of meeting
- Place, date and time.



Attendance or Roll Call

Items here generally include the underlisted:

- **Members present:** Members who are present and involved in carrying out the business of the meeting. They are also entitled to participate in voting or any kind of way through which decisions are reached.
- **Members absent with apologies:** Members who have provided reasons for being unable to attend a meeting.

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- **Members absent:** Members who have not provided any reason for being unable to attend a meeting.
- **Members in attendance:** Members who are physically present but are not part of the people actually involved in carrying out the business of the meeting. They are also not entitled to participate in any kind of way through which decisions are reached.

Opening

Items here generally include the underlisted:

- Time (if not stated in the title)
- Method of opening – prayer and/or introductory remarks
- Appointment of meeting officials- Chairman, Secretary, Porter (where necessary)
- Determination of quorum (where necessary)

Previous Minutes

- Minutes of previous meetings are read to acquaint members of with the committee's previous discussions and decisions and to evaluate the organization and individuals on this basis.

Items recorded are based on deliberations that ensue; these include:

1. Corrections: Corrections are generally not recorded unless some discussions or agitation.

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2. Moving for acceptance: Important items to record in minutes are:

- who moved for acceptance
- who seconded it

3. Matters Arising: These usually comprise:

- Reports and questions on implementation of decisions taken
- Items deferred to a next meeting or the current meeting precisely

Main Business

- The various topics that constitute the main business are usually provided on the agenda.
- The main business deliberation can be put into two:
 - Discussions
 - Briefing

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Discussions: what is recorded into the minutes from here are usually:

- Issues and their discussions
- Decisions taken on these issues



Cont.

- Briefing: Sometimes, some of the items in the main business do not necessarily entail discussions and decision making.
- What one needs to record are the details of the announcement or the report. This is to provide an opportunity for future reference.
- In addition, one needs to record the ensuing enquiries and discussions of they are important enough.

Any Other Business (AOB)

- This is also referred to as Other Matters.
- Here, we record discussions that do not form part of the agenda drawn for the meeting. The issues here are pertinent items raised by members.
- They are generally announcements, remarks, complaints, suggestions, and enquiries.

Closing

In the minutes, the closing generally covers the following:

- Final and concluding remarks made by the chairman
- Motion for closing
- Prayer
- Time

Endorsement

- This comprises of the name and signature of the person who recorded the minutes.
- Sometimes, the name and signature of the Chairman of the meeting is also provided.

Layout of Minutes

- As a document, the minutes do not communicate only by their words and construction. They communicate also by the way the various parts have been graphically arranged.
- A well-laid out minutes, draws attention to the various parts of the document. It also points to the relationship between those parts.
- Thus, it shows which parts are the main issues and also which sections are under these main parts.

The Importance of Minutes

- As a record of decisions
- As a reflection of consensus
- As a guide to officials
- For evaluation
- For personal accountability
- Attendance and punctuality

The Language of Minutes

- Minutes are a formal document. The language is therefore, formal.
- Features of colloquial language such as contractions, slang expression, figurative expressions, etc. are not advisable in minutes.

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Some notable aspects of the language of minutes are:

1. Tense: The **simple past tense** is generally used for minutes.

- This is because minutes are a record of past speeches and decisions.

2. Reported speech: Reported speech instead of direct speech is used in minutes.

- It facilitates summary and helps to remove untidy and irrelevant parts of contributions.

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3. Passive voice: The passive is so frequently used in minutes.

- This is in response to the fact that what is said and the decisions made are considered more important than the persons who said them.
- This practice highlights group interest and downplays the individual.

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4. The genitive: We have already indicated that resolution and action minutes concentrate on consensus or group decisions rather than on individual contributions. For this reason, general forms such as “the meeting”, “the committee”, or the “members” are used frequently in order to efface the actual speaker or officer. Where it is only one person, the indefinite forms “a”/ “an”, or “one” are used, as in “a member” or “one member”.