



# Meetings

## MEETING 1: REPORTING BACK

When reporting back, what type of information do you think your superiors expect from you?

Think of a time when you had to report back to someone on one of the following issues. Practice reporting this to your partner.

- The result of a meeting
- How a project was going
- Something that went badly
- A trip abroad
- What someone said
- A success
- A piece of research
- A course you've been on

## EXERCISE 1

Match the extracts to the meanings

1. I <b>had planned</b> to spend an extra day in Cracow	A) something happening around the time of speaking
2. It <b>was made clear that I should go</b> exploring	B) a recent event affecting the present
3. <b>It's going to be</b> a bit more complicated than we anticipated	C) a recommendation
4. <b>They're really pushing</b> the area for development	D) a prediction made with some certainty
5. <b>I'll be writing</b> everything up later this week	E) something decided in the past
6. <b>I had been looking</b> around Cracow for a couple of days	F) an activity in progress at a particular time in the future
7. The client <b>has told us the site is likely</b> to be around the area of Cracow	G) an activity in progress up to a certain point in the past

### Reporting a personal observation:

I get the impression that...

From what I could see...

### Reporting from another source:

Apparently, it seems that...

According to...

I gathered from...

It was made clear that...

### Expressing doubt:

I'm a bit wary of...

I'm a bit reluctant to...

### Avoiding commitment:

I wouldn't like to say...

I can't promise anything.

I wouldn't go so far as to say...

## ROLE PLAY

Background	Your company has come up with a potential new market and you have been asked to conduct some initial research.
Student A	Read the newspaper extract below and report back to your partner <i>Although a lot of new investment is coming into the local market, the airport is insufficient for the volume of traffic expected. This will have a serious impact on the local economy. If a solution is not found, business will go elsewhere, possibly to new ascension countries such as Bulgaria and Romania.</i>
Student B	Read the country briefing and report back to your partner. <i>Contrary to expectations, this country is being surprisingly slow to awaken investors' interest. The cost of production in this country is lower than in a lot of other European states and the number of skilled workers is high and constantly improving. The infrastructure is adequate to deal with the predicted volume of traffic, but if some serious action is not taken soon in terms of</i>
Discussion	Compare your findings and discuss any differences in your information
Your notes:	

### HYPOTHESIS

A hypothetical statement offers a possible scenario or outcome for the future. This is a good way to offer a suggestion. Hypothetical statements are often “if ... then” statements.

*Assuming...*  
*Assuming that we go with that...*  
*But what if we...*  
*It might work if we...*  
*Supposing we...*  
*It could be possible if we...*  
*If..., then...*  
*How about we try...?*

When we are talking about hypotheses:

We use **present tense forms** after phrases like **what if, in case** and **suppose** to talk about the **future** if we think it is **likely to happen**: *Those steps are dangerous. Suppose someone has an accident.*

*We should leave home early in case we are late.*

We use a **past tense** form to talk about the **future** after **suppose** and **what if** to suggest something is **not likely** to happen: *It might be dangerous. Suppose they got lost. What if he lost his job. What would happen then?*

We use modals **would, could** for a hypothesis about the **future**: *We can't all stay in a hotel. It would be very expensive. Drive carefully. You could have an accident.*

We use **would** in the main clause and the **past** in a subordinate clause to talk about the **imagined future**: **I would always help someone who really needed help. I would always help someone if they really needed it.**

We use modals with **have** to talk about something that **did not happen in the past**: *I did not see Mary, or I might have spoken to her. It's a pity Jack wasn't at the party. He would have enjoyed this party.*

## MEETING 2: DECISION-MAKING

Read the following conversation between attendees in a company meeting. The attendees are deciding whether to change one of their supplier after a recent increase in price of the supplier's product. From the context, try to guess what the meaning of the words/phrases in **bold** are.

**Geoff:** 'Well, you all know that Ryder's have raised the price of their components from \$1200 to \$1350 for 100. It's quite a large increase. So now maybe the time to move to a new supplier. **I would appreciate your input** on this.'

**Tim:** 'In my opinion we should move to another supplier, as you said it's a very large increase. They are just taking advantage of the situation. I had a meeting with the sales manager of their competitors Fizon Industries on Tuesday and they said they can supply us with 100 for \$1255.'

**Phil:** 'We **shouldn't rush into anything**. We've worked with Ryder's for nearly 10 years and we've never had any problems with them. We should talk to Ryder's again and try to **reach a compromise**. I'm sure they won't want to lose our contract.'

**Geoff:** 'I spoke to their sales manager last week, and they won't lower the price. To be honest, **I'm in two minds**, Ryder's have always been very professional. But by increasing their price by so much, means we'll have to either pass it on to our customers or reduce our profits.'

**Tim:** 'Look Phil, **we don't have any option**. Ryder's won't move on price. We only have 3000 components left in the warehouse. Those will last us for a maximum of 45 more days. **Time is running out**. We need to make a decision today. I think that Ryder's is trying to abuse the trust that we have with them and their products. I think how they've handled this situation shows a lack of respect towards us as a customer.'

**Phil:** 'Tim, don't **jump to conclusions** about their intentions. I'm sure they are not abusing the situation. From a production side I think that we should **keep our options open**. We all know that Fizon Industries don't have a good reputation on quality or service. So we could be saving money today to spend it tomorrow.'

**Tim:** 'Phil, **I appreciate your concerns** about quality, and we can include something about it in the service level agreement with Fizon Industries. There are also a number of other of companies that I'm waiting to hear back from. But **the bottom line** is cost. Ryder's components are just too expensive now.'

## CONVERSATION

### ENDERS

Ending a conversation may seem like it should be easy, but many people find this difficult. Here are a few phrases you can use to end a conversation.

(Note: It is not rude to end a conversation. Sometimes people wait for the other person to finish, but that may take a long time. It is okay to be the one to end the conversation. Just make sure you use polite language to do so.)

*Sounds great.*

*We'll follow up with all of this soon.*

*Let's talk soon.*

*I hate to have to run, but I should get going.*

*I would love to hear more about this at a later time.*

*I appreciate you taking the time to discuss this.*

*I'm afraid I need to go.*

*Sorry to cut this short, but*

*I have ... (a meeting, an appointment, etc.)*

*I look forward to speaking more about this.*

Example: "We'll follow up with all of this soon. Thanks for your time."

## 1/2 CONVERSATION

Below you can find the some polite questions/ expressions typical for a small talk. What do you think the other statements sound like?

A: Lovely day today, isn't it?

B: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_

B: Many happy returns of the day.

A: \_\_\_\_\_

B: Get well soon!

A: Could you do me a favour?

B: \_\_\_\_\_

A: May I offer you a drink?

A: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_

B: It doesn't matter.

## DEFINITIONS

Below you can find the expressions from the exercise Meeting 2. Match the expressions to their definitions and try to use them in a sentence related to your professional experience.

- A) I would appreciate your input
- B) rush into something
- C) reach a compromise
- D) in two minds
- E) we don't have any option
- F) time is running out
- G) jump to conclusions
- H) keep our options open
- I) I appreciate your concerns
- J) the bottom line

1. When two companies reach an agreement by making concessions, they \_\_\_\_\_

2. A way to stress that you have to make a decision quickly because of lack of time, is \_\_\_\_\_

3. A different way to say what the most important factor is when making a decision, is \_\_\_\_\_

4. A way of asking people for their opinion, is \_\_\_\_\_

5. When you make a conclusion without knowing all the facts, you \_\_\_\_\_

6. A different way of saying that we don't have any choice with a decision, is \_\_\_\_\_

7. A different way of saying we should wait before doing anything, that contains 'into', is \_\_\_\_\_

8. A different way of saying 'I understand what you're worried about', is \_\_\_\_\_

9. A different way of saying we should wait before doing anything, that contains 'our', is \_\_\_\_\_

10. A different way of saying 'I'm still not sure what to do about something', is \_\_\_\_\_

## READING –PURPOSE OF A MEETING

The boards of the two fiercely competitive companies decided to organize a rowing match to challenge each other's organisational and sporting abilities. The first company was strongly 'theory X': ruthless, autocratic, zero staff empowerment, etc. The second company was more 'theory y': a culture of developing people, devolved responsibility and decision-making.

Race day arrived. The Y company's boat appeared from the boat-house first, with its crew: eight rowers and a helmsman (the cox). Next followed the X company boat and its crew - eight helmsmen and a single rower.

Not surprisingly the Y company's boat won an easy victory.

The next day the X company board of directors held an inquest with the crew, to review what had been learned from the embarrassing defeat, which might be of benefit to the organization as a whole, and any future re-match.

After a long and wearing meeting the X company board finally came to their decision. They concluded that the rower should be replaced immediately because clearly he had not listened well enough to the instructions he'd been given...

### LET'S TALK

- Do you enjoy attending meetings?
- Do you think that attending meetings is ever as waste of time?
- Have you ever been the chair of a meeting?
- What are the qualities of a good chairperson?
- What are the qualities of a good participant?
- How can meetings be run effectively?
- What things shouldn't you do in a meeting?
- What is the most difficult meeting you have been to?
- What are the most common problems experienced in a meeting?
- How should people prepare for a meeting?
- Have you ever taken minutes in a meeting?
- Do you think it is difficult to reach unanimous decisions?
- Have you ever attended an online or telephone meeting?
- Was it easier or more difficult than attending a meeting in person?

Douglas McGregor, an American social psychologist, proposed his famous **X-Y theory** in his book 'The Human Side Of Enterprise'. Theory x and theory y are referred to in the field of management and motivation, as a valid basic principle from which to develop positive management style and techniques.

McGregor's ideas suggest that there are two fundamental approaches to managing people. Many managers tend towards theory x, and generally get poor results. Enlightened managers use theory y, which produces better performance and results, and allows people to grow and develop.

McGregor's ideas significantly relate to modern understanding of the **Psychological Contract**, which provides many ways to appreciate the unhelpful nature of X-Theory leadership, and the useful constructive beneficial nature of Y-Theory leadership.

# ANSWERS

## SCRIPT FOR FILL IN THE BLANKS EXERCISES

NOTES:

### EXERCISE 1

1 E                      3 D                      5 F                      7 B  
2 c                      4 A                      6 G

### 1/2 CONVERSATION

A: Lovely day today, isn't it?

B: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_ B: Many happy returns of the day.

A: \_\_\_\_\_ B: Get well soon!

A: Could you do me a favour?

B: \_\_\_\_\_

A: May I offer you a drink?

A: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_

B: It doesn't matter.

LESSON TIME 120'

MAIN GOAL:

Vocabulary  
Grammar  
Skills

### EXERCISE

1 C                      2f                      3J                      4A                      5 G  
6. E                      7. B                      8. I                      9. H                      10. D

