


ENGLISH HELPSHEET MEETINGS: USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

1	INTRODUCTION	
2	ASKING FOR and MAKING SUGGESTIONS	
3	ASKING FOR and GIVING OPINIONS	
4	DEALING WITH PROBLEMS	
5	NEGOTIATING	
6	CONCLUDING	

1. Introduction

Function	Useful expressions
Opening the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks to everyone for coming. I hope you didn't have too much trouble getting here. [L] [SEP] • Well, ladies and gentlemen, I think we should begin. [L] [SEP] • Perhaps we'd better get started / get down to business. [L] [SEP] • Right then, I think it's about time we got started / going. [L] [SEP] • Right then, I think we should begin. [L] [SEP] • Let's begin / get going, shall we? [L] [SEP] • Let's get down to business, shall we? [L] [SEP] • Shall we start? [L] [SEP] • OK, let's make a start. [L] [SEP]
Summarizing the background to the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As some of you probably know, ... [L] [SEP] • As you know, ... [L] [SEP] • I think most people know that ... [L] [SEP] • Some months/ years ago ... [L] [SEP]
Stating the objectives of the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've called this meeting in order to ... [L] [SEP]

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose / aim of this meeting is, first, to ... and, secondly, to ... • We are here today to consider, firstly, ...and, secondly, ... • The main objective of our meeting is ... • The big / major / main question we've got to tackle/ consider/ talk about / discuss is ... • The reason we are all here today is ...
Reading the agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you all received a copy of the agenda? • There are three items on today's agenda. First, ..., second, ..., lastly, ... • Shall we take the points in that order? • I suggest we take item 2 last. • Skip item 1 and move on to item 3. • Is there Any Other Business (=AOB)?
Allocating roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary has (kindly) agreed to take the minutes. • John, would you mind taking notes / the minutes today? • Mary will lead point 1, John point 2 and Peter point 3.
Agreeing on the ground rules of the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I suggest we go round the table first. • We will first hear a report on ..., followed by ... • Let's make sure we finish by 11 o'clock. • This meeting is scheduled to finish at ... • There will be 5 minutes for each item. • We'll have to keep each item to 15 minutes. Otherwise, we'll never get through.
Introduction the first item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So, let's start with ... • So, the first item on the agenda is ... • John, would you like to kick off? • Could you lead on this one?
Closing an item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that takes care of the first item. • If nobody has anything else to add, let's move on to the next item.
Introducing a new item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next item on today's agenda is ...

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now we come to the question of ... [L] [SEP] • Now that we've discussed ..., let's now ... [L] [SEP]
Discussing projects and schedules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're currently in discussion with / meeting / talking to ... [L] [SEP] • The project is under budget /within budget / ahead of schedule / on [L] [SEP]schedule / back on track. [L] [SEP] • The project is behind schedule / over budget / in trouble. [L] [SEP] • We've hit a problem / missed the deadline. [L] [SEP]

2. Asking for and making suggestions

Function	Useful expressions
Asking for suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The floor is yours. What do you suggest / recommend? [L] [SEP] • Any suggestions? [L] [SEP] • Do any of you have any suggestions? [L] [SEP] • How do you think we should do this? [L] [SEP] • How do you see this? [L] [SEP] • I'd like to hear your views on this. [L] [SEP]
Making neutral suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (I think) we should / ought to ... [L] [SEP] • I would suggest that we ... [L] [SEP] • I recommend that we should ... If I were you, I would ... [L] [SEP]
Making tentative suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We could always ... [L] [SEP] • It might be a good idea to ... [L] [SEP] • Have you thought of ... -ing? [L] [SEP] • One solution would be to ... [L] [SEP] • What about ...-ing ? [L] [SEP]
Making strong suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only solution is to ... [L] [SEP] • I see / There is no other alternative but to ... [L] [SEP] • We must ... [L] [SEP]

3. Asking for and giving opinions

Asking for opinions

What do you think about / of that? What are your views on that / feelings about that?

What's your opinion about that? Any reaction to that?

Has anybody any comments to make? I'd like to hear your views on this.

Commenting

I get your point. I see what you mean.

That's interesting. I never thought about it that way before.

Encouraging comments

Would anyone like to / Does anyone want to comment on this? What does everyone think about that?

Any thoughts about that? You look as you have a question? Are there any further questions / issues?

Neutral agreement

I agree. Yes / Yeah.

(That's) right / true. (I think) you're right.

Strong agreement

Absolutely! / Exactly! / Precisely! / Yes, definitely.

I totally agree with you. I couldn't agree more. That's (exactly) the way I feel.

Neutral disagreement

(I'm afraid) I don't agree / I disagree. That's not how I see it.

I wouldn't say that. That doesn't seem right.

Partial disagreement (expressing reservations)

- Yes, but ...
- Maybe, but ...
- I know, but ...
- That's true, but ...
- I take / see your point, but ...
- I suppose you're right, but ...
- I agree up to a point, but ...

- But don't you think ... ?

Strong disagreement

I disagree completely! That's out of the question! On the contrary! Of course not! You must be joking!

I can't accept that!

<p>Giving the advantages / disadvantages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advantage / disadvantage of X is that ... • Another advantage / disadvantage is that ... • If we do X, it'll have the advantage / disadvantage of ... • By doing X , we'll be able to/we won't be able to...
<p>Balancing advantages / disadvantages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although it may succeed eventually, it's too much of a gamble. • The project would be very profitable. On the other hand, it would be bad for our image. • The project is very interesting from a scientific point of view. However, ...
<p>Asking for clarification or repetition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorry, I didn't quite follow what you said about ... • Sorry, but what exactly do you mean by ...? • Sorry, I didn't catch the last part. Would you mind repeating? • I'm afraid I don't understand what you mean / your last point. Could you go over it again? • You did say ..., didn't you? • When you say that ..., do you mean that ...? • Sorry, you've lost me. What was that again? / Would you mind saying that again? • If I understand you correctly, you're saying that ... • What (exactly) is the problem? • Are you saying that ...?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the problem that ...? [SEP] • Can you give me an example? [SEP] • Can you expand upon the last point? [SEP]
Giving clarification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well, what I'm saying / trying to say is that ... [SEP] • The point I'm trying to make is that ... [SEP] • What I mean is that ... [SEP] • Have I made that clear(er)? [SEP] • Do you see what I'm getting at? [SEP]
Correcting information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorry, I think you misunderstood what I said. [SEP] • I'm afraid you don't understand what I'm saying. [SEP] • That's not quite right. [SEP] • That's not quite what I had in mind. [SEP] • That's not what I meant. [SEP]

4. Dealing with problems

Function	Useful expressions
Interrupting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excuse me, but I'd just like to point out that ... [SEP] • Could I just say a word on this? [SEP] • I wonder if I might comment on the last point. [SEP] • Could I / May I come in at this point? [SEP] • If I could/may just come here... [SEP] • May I come in here? [SEP] • Could I just say something? [SEP] • (I'm) sorry to interrupt, but ... [SEP] • If I may just interrupt you for a moment, I'd like to say that ... [SEP]
Resuming after being interrupted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let me finish. [SEP] • As I was saying, ... [SEP] What I was going to say was... [SEP]

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was just about to point out that ...
Keeping the meeting on target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're running short of time. [L] [SEP] • I'm afraid we've run out of time. [L] [SEP] • Please be brief. [L] [SEP] • I'm afraid that's outside the scope of this meeting. [L] [SEP] • That's not really why we are here today. [L] [SEP] • Why don't we return to the main topic of today's meeting? [L] [SEP] • I take your point but can we please stick to the main subject? [L] [SEP] • I see what you mean, but I think you're losing sight of the main point. [L] [SEP] • Keep to the point. [L] [SEP] • That's not the point. We're here to discuss ... [L] [SEP] • (I think) we're in danger of getting side-tracked. [L] [SEP] • We'll have to leave that for another time. [L] [SEP]

5. Negotiating

Function	Useful expressions
Making proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My proposal is to ... [L] [SEP] • Our idea is that ... [L] [SEP] • I'd like to propose that ... [L] [SEP] • My suggestion is ... [L] [SEP]
Accepting proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that meets our requirements. [L] [SEP] • That sounds acceptable / reasonable. [L] [SEP] • I can accept that. Fine. [L] [SEP]
Rejecting proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorry, but I'm not really sure about that. [L] [SEP] • That's not quite what we had in mind. [L] [SEP] • I'm afraid I'm not convinced that. [L] [SEP] • I'm afraid I have some reservations about that. [L] [SEP]
Offering counter- proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of ..., how about ...? [L] [SEP]

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather than ..., we might be able to ... • Could ... instead? • Perhaps a better idea would be to ...
Bargaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you guarantee that ..., then we will accept the proposal. • Provided that ..., then we could accept ... If you..., we could... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you can ..., then we are prepared to ...
Persuading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know you'll agree that ... • I'm sure you'll agree that ...
Giving reassurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can assure you that ... • You can be sure that ...

6. Concluding

Function	Useful expressions
Suggesting a vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall we take a vote on that? • I suggest we take a vote on that: who is in favour? Who is against?
Summarizing the main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before we close today's meeting, let me just summarize the main points. • Let me quickly go over today's main points. • Shall we go over the main points? • To sum n up,... • In brief, ... • So, to summarize, there seem to be X main problems ... • So, we've discussed the problem of ... <p style="text-align: center;">Can we now try to reach a decision?</p> • I think we've covered the X main ways of ...-ing. <p style="text-align: center;">We've now got to decide on the best one.</p>
Coming to a conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right, it looks as though we've covered the main items. • If there are no more comments, I'd like to wrap this meeting up.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's bring this to a close. [L] [SEP] • So, if there are no more objections I suggest that ... [L] [SEP] • If everyone is in favour, I suggest that ... [L] [SEP] • Then, I recommend that ... [L] [SEP]
<p>Bringing the meeting to an end</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything else we ought to consider now? [L] [SEP] • Does anyone have anything else to add? [L] [SEP] • Right, then I think we can end the meeting at this point / stop here. [L] [SEP] • The meeting is closed. [L] [SEP] • I declare the meeting closed. [L] [SEP]