

Module 2

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Receiving a visitor at the company

Greeting visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to Madrid/ABC Company. • It's really nice to have you here. • Good/Nice/Pleased/Glad to meet you. • I'm delighted to meet you at last. • It's a pleasure to meet you. • The pleasure is mine. • Please, call me Sean. • It's great to meet you in person after all our emails.
Apologizing for a delay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorry to keep you waiting. The traffic was congested. • Sorry I'm late. My flight was delayed because of the fog.
Checking on the visitor's trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was your flight/trip/ride? • It was smooth/comfortable or bumpy/rough. • It was uneventful.
Introducing a colleague	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let me introduce you to Rory Bush. He'll assist you with everything you need during your stay. • May I introduce you to Harriet Simpson? • Have you met Ally Grant? • This is Ben Neumann from HR.
Offering refreshments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you like something to drink or eat? • I'm ok for now. • Just a cup of coffee. • How would you like your coffee? • Milk and sugar, please. • Here you are.

Describing plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let me tell you the plans for today. We have a meeting with the sales team at 10. • Sounds good.
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When you know the visitor

The following greetings and answers are suitable when you are familiar with the visitor.

How are you doing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine and you? • Good, how about yourself? • Doing well.
How's it going? How are things?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't complain. • Doing good, thanks.
What's up? What's happening in your life?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not much. • Quite busy, actually.
How have you been? (when you haven't seen someone for a long time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything is fine. • Just the same old thing.
How are you holding up? (when you know the other person has been through an unpleasant or unfortunate situation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hanging in there. • I've seen better days. • Not so well.

Making small talk – Topics

The following are safe topics to make small talk.



Work-related	Are you working on a special project these days?
Compliments	I love your purse. May I ask where you bought it?
Common interests	I've heard you're into photography. I've recently done a crash course but would you mind if I ask you some questions?
Mutual acquaintances	By the way, is Caroline still with the company? I haven't heard from her in years.
Personal life	Whereabouts in Spain do you live?

If the conversation is not flowing, you can:

- restate what the other person has said
- use words that show you're paying attention
- avoid sensitive topics
- be less focused on yourself and more on your listener
- share anecdotes

Conversational fillers and connectors

Conversational fillers and connectors are a great aid to make the conversation flow and build a connection with the other person. For example:

- "Actually" is used to gently correct information or take back what you've said.
- "Anyway" can be introduced to change the topic, end a talk or return to a topic.
- "Basically" stresses the most important elements of something.

- "You know" is mentioned to ensure the listener understands what you mean and gets involved.
- "To tell you the truth" is used before you share information in an open and honest fashion.
- "I have to admit/say" goes before a fact you think it is true, especially if the fact is bad, unpleasant or you feel sorry or surprised about it.
- "Between you and me" is said when you share something that you do not want the listener to tell anyone else.
- "How shall I put it?" and "let me put it this way" are said before you tell the listener what you think especially when you are trying to be polite.

Transitioning from small talk to business

One way to move from small talk to business is by building on what was said and then switch to a business-related matter. Phrases that can help to make this shift are the following ones: that reminds me, before I forget I'd like to say that, actually I wanted to talk to you about, on an unrelated topic, not to change the topic but and so, anyway.

Stepping out of a conversation

Phrases that you can say to exit a conversation are the following ones:

- Excuse me but I need to take this call. It's an urgent one. I won't be long.
- Well, it was nice seeing you again. Please give my regards to Ethan.
- I'd love to talk for longer, but I'd better get back to work. See you at the marketing meeting.

Showing a visitor around the company

When giving someone a tour of the office, you may find the following phrases quite useful:

- Let me give you a tour of the office.

- This way, please.
- If you come this way, I will show you where the R&D area is.
- On your right is the administration area.
- Just ahead of us you'll see our quality control area.
- In front of you is the training room, where new recruits are trained.

Giving a tour of the factory

If you have to give a group of people a tour of your factory, you can start it by saying:

- Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Perfect Cleanser Plant. My name is Jane Seymour and I'll be showing you around the factory today.

Regarding questions, you may say:

- I am here to answer any questions you may have.

In relation to safety, you may point out the following:

- Please, stay in the marked walkways.

To let people know what they will see first, say:

- We will first head to the processing plant.

When you want to draw people's attention to a specific place or thing, you can say:

- Let me draw your attention to our new production line that you can see at the end of this hall.

To guide people to another area, you can say:

- Why don't we walk towards the double glass door over there?

When the tour is over, you may say:

- I hope you have enjoyed the tour and learned some interesting facts. Thank you for coming today.

Introducing yourself shortly before a meeting starts



The phrases you may hear before a meeting begins are these:

- Sorry, I'm a bit late. I'm John Doe. We've spoken on the phone a couple of times.
- I'm glad we've finally met. I've heard so many good things about you.
- I'm sure we've met before but I can't place you.

Describing a company

A company can be described in this manner:

- The company was founded/set up/established by David Mills in 1999.
- The company was funded by business angels. "Fund" means "finance".
- The business launched its first prototype three years ago.
- Six months after its foundation, the company broke even. If a company breaks even its profits equal its costs.
- The firm is based in Miami.
- In 2000 ABC and DEF merged.
- Our first subsidiary was set up in Italy.
- We expanded into the Spanish market after we were taken over by Signature Company. If a company is taken over by another one, it is acquired by another one.
- The company was floated five years ago. This means that the company started selling its shares to the public. A listed company is one who shares are traded on a stock exchange.
- We have three branches in South America.
- The company employs 500 people.

Talking about roles and plans

To explain what your role in the project will be, you may say:

- I'll be handling all the IT aspects of the project.
- I'll be your contact person on the administration side of the project.

If the visitor is interested in knowing what you think will happen concerning business, you may say:

- It's hard to predict but we're confident our business will keep growing.
- We're aiming to grow by 15% a year and we're looking to expand into other related areas.
- We forecast sales of \$2 million next quarter. A forecast shows what you expect to happen. The word "predict" refers to a more personal view.

Getting involved in the conversation

If you want to interrupt someone in a conversation, you can say:

- Can I just say something?
- Can I share an idea?

If someone keeps interrupting you, you can tell them:

- Please, let me wrap up my idea before you start.
- Do you mind if I finish?
- Could you hold that thought? I'd like to finish what I was saying.

If you have lost track of a conversation, explain this by saying:

- I'm afraid I don't follow you.
- I'm afraid I don't get it. Could you explain that again?

- Come again? (informal)

If you are participating in the conversation, but others are not and you want to involve them, resort to the following phrases:

- “Come to think of it” is used when something in the conversation makes you realize or remember something.
- “What with one thing and another” is used when you have not done or said something because you have been very busy.
- “As far as I recall” means to the extent I am able to remember.
- “I think you have had a similar experience, haven't you?” and you address a person who has been silent.
- “Now you mention it” is used when you remember or realizes something because of what the other person has said.

Building a professional relationship

You may seek to build, build up or develop a business relationship through generosity. The person who receives an act of generosity may indicate their appreciation by saying "How thoughtful of you!". A thoughtful person always thinks of the things that make others happy or comfortable.

You also establish or foster a professional relationship through praise or compliment. You tell someone that you like or admire something they have done.

Another way to cement or strengthen a relationship is by asking a client or colleague for feedback in order to improve.

Making, accepting and declining invitations



There are different ways to extend, accept and turn down invitations to business functions, business meals or other types of events.

Making invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you have plans for tonight?• Do you fancy going to a tango show tonight with us?• Would you care to visit our new plant this evening?• I'd love it if you could come to the launch party this evening.
Accepting invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank you for the invitation.• I'll be there for sure.• Count me in, means that you want to be included in a plan or activity.• I'm in is the same as "I'll join you".• I'm up for it is said when you are willing to do a particular activity. Another phrase with the same meaning is:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am game.• I'll take you up on that means that you accept an offer you have been made.• I'd be glad to.
Declining invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank you for thinking of me. I wish I could join you but I have an appointment this afternoon.• I'm sorry I can't. My boss needs this report first thing tomorrow so I may be pulling an all-nighter.

	<p>When you pull an all-nighter, you stay awake all night to work or study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sorry but I'll take a rain check for dinner tonight. Would Thursday work for you? When you take a rain check, you reject an offer or invitation with the hope or promise that it can be accepted at a later date.• Nice of you to ask me but I have plans. I hope you have a great time. Please let me know if something like this comes up again.
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Checking the guest's food preferences

If the visitor accepts an invitation to eat out, it is advisable to check if they have dietary restrictions by asking:

- Do you have any preference on the type of restaurant or food?
- Is there anything specific you would like to try while you are in Bolivia?
- Are there any kinds of food you don't eat?

The visitor's answers may vary.

- I'd like to try local food. The word "try" means to taste food or drink to see if you like it.
- I'm in the mood for pasta. This means that the visitor wants to try pasta.
- I can only have gluten free food. I'm a celiac, you know.
- I am lactose-intolerant.

- I'm a vegetarian.
- I'm allergic to seafood.
- I don't eat pork because of my religious beliefs.

At a restaurant

Most menus are divided into three main sections:

- starters, which are called appetizers in American English
- main course, main dish or entrée in American English, and
- desserts

There is usually a section called sides or side dishes, which is food that accompanies the main course. The house speciality is the most characteristic dish served in a restaurant. The beverages section includes alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks.

If you want to order wine, you should ask for the wine list.

When a foreigner is not familiar with a dish, the local person will probably be asked one of the following questions:

- What's in the ...?
- What's...?

The answers may be:

1. It's a kind of...
2. It comes with...
3. It's similar to...
4. It's like...
5. It's made of...

When you want to order, you will typically do so in future simple (I will have pasta) or by using "would like" followed by a verb in the infinitive form (I'd like seafood).

If you invite a visitor to a steakhouse, you should consider that there are different degrees of doneness:

- rare, which is red in the centre and the juicy meat is only cooked on the outside.
- medium-rare, which is pink with some juice and it's firmer than rare
- medium, which is pale pink in the middle with almost no juice, and
- well-done with no sign of pink and cooked for a longer period of time.

Water can be bubbly, sparkling or fizzy, that is, with bubbles of gas in it; otherwise, water is still or flat.

When the waiter brings the meal, you can tell the visitor "enjoy" or "bon appetit", which means "I hope you enjoy the food".

In order to check if the guest's meal is ok, you may ask "What's your salad like?".

Depending on the answer, you may need to complain to the waiter by saying:

- I'm sorry to bother you but I ordered a rare steak and I was brought a well-done one instead".
- The broccoli is overcooked and the carrots are almost raw. Can you replace the dish, please?
- This isn't what I was expecting at all. May I try something else?
- The food is cold and the chicken is tasteless. Could you take care of it, please?
- Sorry but this isn't what I ordered.

- We've been waiting for the main dish for half an hour.
- This wine is corked. This is said when due to a fault in the cork, the wine taste is not pleasant.

If after your complaint, you're told "this is on house", it means you will be asked to pay for that.

When it is time to leave, one of the diners may say:

- It's getting late, I must go back to the hotel because I have a meeting early tomorrow.
- Why don't we ask for the bill? The word "check" is also used in American English.

When one of the diners wants to pay the bill, they will say:

- The meal is on me
- It's my treat.
- I'll get this.

The other diner may show they are grateful by replying "That's very nice of you".

If the host prepared the meal, the guest may say:

- Thank you for the wonderful dinner. It was really tasty and flavourful.
- I had a great time. The meal was delicious.

If you want to offer to drive the guest back to their hotel or the office, you can say:

- Can I give you a ride to your hotel?
- Do you want a lift to the office?

Leave-taking



When a business visit draws to a close, you may want to signal it is time you left by saying:

- Can we call it a day? I really must get going if I don't want to miss the train. Use the expression "call it a day" when you want to stop working, especially because you have done enough or you are tired.
- Thank you for making time for this visit. It was really fruitful. A fruitful visit is one that produces good results.
- Why don't we leave it at that today? The phrase "leave it at that" is used when you want to say that there's been enough discussion and you want to stop.

Next, it may be necessary to summarize what has been discussed or agreed, like this:

- Can we just recap on what we've agreed? To recap is to recapitulate, which is about repeating what has been said without including the details.
- We've covered a lot of ground and I'd like to sum up what we've decided to do next. To cover a lot of ground means to review a lot of information or to discuss many topics.

To express gratitude, you may say:

- I'm grateful for everything you've done for me.
- Thank you for taking the trouble to come to visit us.

To suggest follow-up activities, you can say:

- Could we meet up again in a month?
- We haven't covered everything, so can we schedule another meeting?