



Lesson Plan Guide

BEP 189 - Getting your Ideas Across in Meetings (1)



This is the first in a series of three lessons (BEP 189-191) based around a meeting in which four managers discuss the pros and cons of implementing cuts either directly or through policy changes. The focus of this lesson is on helping the learners to develop their awareness of functions clustered around the idea of giving an opinion.

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- **Lesson Plan - slide by slide with answers**
- **Dialog script and language examples**
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Lesson Map

SLIDE NUMBER	CONTENT/AIMS
1 - Opening Slide	Quick chat-switch on to English
2 - Lesson Objectives	The 4 Objectives framed as 'can do' statements
3 - Vocabulary Review	Key lexical items recycled/pre-taught
4 - Collocations	Language focus-Collocation
5 - Before you start	Effective meetings
6 - Before you start	An informal meeting
7 - Pre-task	Opening a meeting
8 - Pre-task	Asking and giving opinions
9 - Pre-task	Expressing doubt or support
10/11 - TASK	Expressing opinions in meetings
12	Review
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Fast Track Options

You could half the number of collocations used on Slide 4 or possibly give a few comprehension questions in place of the activity on this slide. These are not the main focus of the lesson but useful if you are concerned with your learner's overall development. If really pressed for time, give the learners the answers to the matching exercises on 8 and 9 and simply get them to practice them, after clarifying meaning and register issues.

Lesson Overview

This is the first in a series of three lessons based around a meeting in which four managers discuss the pros and cons of implementing cuts either directly or through policy changes. The participants are:

- Alison the chairperson
- Stewart from sales
- Pat from HR
- Nate from marketing

The focus of this lesson is on helping the learners to develop their awareness of functions clustered around the idea of giving an opinion:

- **Asking for someone's opinion**
- **Giving an opinion in a neutral register**
- **Casting doubt on someone's opinion**
- **Supporting the opinions of others**

To do this, they will explore the general topic area (the language of meetings) by being presented with lexis used during, and to talk about, meetings. They will then work on a second set of lexical items as a means of focusing on the content of the listening text before hearing it. They will be guided to notice language used to realise the above functions and complete a task wherein they role-play a meeting called to discuss cutting a particular company benefit.

Learners also look at identifying and formulating the objectives for meetings and discuss their experiences in this area.

Slide One – Opening Slide

Ask the learner(s) to tell you if they've listened to BEP 189 and completed any of the associated work. If so, review this briefly and ask if they have any questions.

Use this slide for giving a generalized opening to the session by asking about, in this case, any meetings the learners have attended, what were the objectives, were they well organized etc.

Slide Two – Objectives

Briefly discuss the word list with the student, checking for pronunciation and proper use. Also, elicit other contexts in which these terms (or those similar) can be used.

Slide Three – Vocabulary Review

Quickly check that the learners are clear about the meaning of written objectives for the session. Ask if there are any particular areas they need to focus on. If so, keep this in mind as you progress through the slides. Ask if the learners have experienced any changes of policy affecting them or their colleagues at work.

Slide Four – Collocations (Audio Slide)

1. Float in the first two tables and ask students to match the words to form collocations. Check for pronunciation, and focus on word stress.

Answers: 1/h, 2/f, 3/a, 4/c, 5/e, 6/b, 7/g, 8/i, 9/j, 10/d

2. Note that '*transit pass*' is two nouns together, **noun + noun**, and that there are other examples of this in the list. Ask the learners to identify them.
3. Do the same with the pattern **adjective + noun** using *direct cuts* as your example and the target items as prompts. Those who have not listened to this podcast could predict what they think is going to be said at the meeting. Those that have can recount what they remember.
4. Listen to the recording, and check answers for context use.
5. Ask the student to summarize the meeting in their own words, using as much of the target language as possible.

Slide Five – Effective Meetings

1. Ask the question, 'What makes a meeting effective?' Elicit some ideas and make a note of them on the lesson notes document. Discuss and float in the prompts.

Compare the learner's ideas with the prompts. See if they can add any more and make a note of these.

2. Float in the first box of vocabulary and check student understanding. Correct pronunciation and intonation as required.
3. Float in the second question, asking which words can combine with 'meetings' to form a collocation.

Slide Six – An Informal Meeting

1. Ask the learners 'What do need to do to set up a meeting on a practical level?' Use prompts; where, when, why, and who if necessary.
2. Ask how you might notify people you want to attend a meeting and elicit 'by email'.
3. Tell the learners they have received an email indicating that their head office may be relocated to the UK. Ask them to prepare and informal meeting to discuss the issue; advantages/disadvantages, and to organize another meeting with the rest of the management team to present their conclusions.
4. Use the flowchart on the right side of the slide as a guide.

Slide Seven – Opening a Meeting (Audio Slide)

1. Float in the first table of jumbled sentences. Ask the student to complete. If necessary, ask the student to explain the context of each sentence, or elicit other ways to express the idea using target language from previous slides.

Answers

Part 1 - Jumbled Sentences:

1. We need to make a clear list of all priorities in the next half hour.
2. This meeting has been called to update everyone on the recent policy changes.
3. So let's review what we need to get done today.
4. As you know, our meeting here today is part of a larger overhaul of employee benefits.
5. I just need some input on this project and then we can all get back to work.

Example #4 is the example featured in the recording.

2. Ask if they can remember who is chairing the meeting. Play the first section of the recording and pause. Ask the learners to reconstruct the text orally.

Answers

Correct order: c/b/a/d/e

Slide Eight – Asking and Giving Opinions

1. Float in the first two tables and ask students to match the phrases from the left table to those in the right in order to make complete sentences.

Answers: 1/b, 2/h, 3/d, 4/c, 5/f, 6/d, 7/g, 8/a

2. Follow the prompts for the follow-up questions and ask students which sentence (and which speaker) can be used for: asking for an opinion or, giving a neutral or tactful opinion.

Answers:

Asking for an opinion

Do you want to start us off here? Any initial thoughts on this?

Giving a neutral opinion

Well, we could go either way with this.

Casting doubt on an opinion

Do you really think so? Aren't those perks?

I don't know.

Supporting an opinion

I think Pat's right.

Slide Nine – Expressing Doubt or Support

1. Float in the first two tables of expressions casting doubt or support, and ask student to match the left side with the right to make complete sentences.
2. Follow up by asking which sentence is used for which function.

Answers: 1/b, 2/h, 3/a, 4/c, 5/e, 6/g, 7/f, 8/d

Casting doubt on an opinion: 1, 4, 7

Supporting an opinion: 2, 3, 5, 6, 8

Note: For casting doubt, the answers will all be in the form of a question.

3. Ask student if the phrases would be used for formal, informal, or neutral situations.

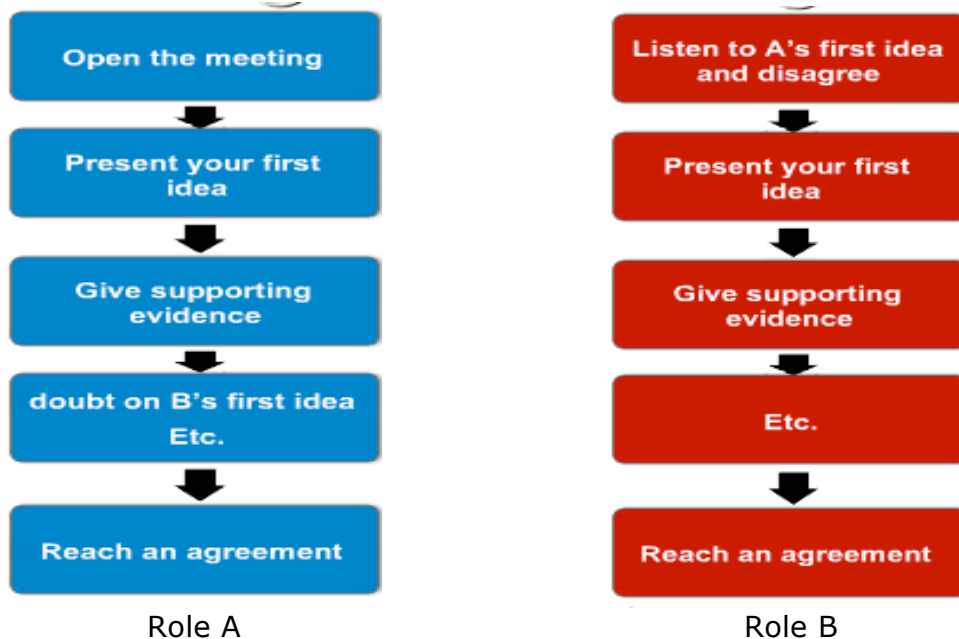
Slides Ten & Eleven – TASK

1. Ask where the learners take their lunch break. Do they eat in the office, eat out or use facilities provided by the company? Do they think the quality of food and drink is high? Is it good value for money?
2. Float in the context for the task. Tell them to imagine that this company is based out of town and there is a large shopping centre very close to the office.
3. Find out if any of these apply to the learner's own situation and get them to rank them in terms of importance to them.

4. Allow student sufficient time to prepare for the role play, and using the flow chart as a guide, ask student to open the meeting and proceed through the other steps before finally reaching an agreement.

5. The details of the meeting are as follows:

- Staff have enjoyed subsidized food for as long as you've worked at the company. There will be resistance.
- Many of them prefer to eat out as the quality of the food has deteriorated a lot over the last year.
- This could be related to the suppliers increasing costs by 40%.
- 70% of staff are under 30 and enjoy healthier eating options. They tend to eat out and a good but economical restaurant has just opened to meet this demand two-minute walk from the office.
- Canteen staff will have to be laid off if the measure goes through.
- The company already got rid of the end of year bonus and production staff went on strike as a result.



The teacher will assume "Role B"

Slides Fourteen and Fifteen – Task Report

1. Take the learners through the prompts and note their comments. Compare this with your own feedback and remind them they will receive a feedback form shortly after the lesson.
2. Ask if they would like the opportunity to try again at the beginning of the next lesson. Encourage them to do this and say they can use the feedback form to help them. Emphasize the positive rather than the negative and try to end the lesson on a high note.

Language Notes

BEP 189 Dialog

Alison: All right everyone. If we could get started here... as you know, our meeting here is part of a larger overhaul of employee benefits. We've been tasked with looking at travel and transportation benefits. And remember, our goal is a 15% reduction...

Pat: Quick question Alison: We can do this either through direct cuts to the benefits or through policy changes, correct?

Alison: Yes, that's right. So...Pat, do you want to start us off here? Any initial thoughts on this?

Pat: Well, we could go either way with this. I mean, there's lots to consider... Per diem rates, mileage, transit passes, parking subsidies... and also the distance at which employees should be renting a car or flying.

Alison: Okay. I think we can all agree on that. Anything more specific?

Pat: Maybe we should focus on the travel expenses. The per diem and mileage. Those mostly affect the sales department. The others affect *all* employees. And the fewer people we affect, the better.

Stewart: Do you really think so Pat? Travel expenses for the sales guys are an important cost of doing business. But transit passes and parking subsidies... aren't those perks? There may be an important difference there.

Nate: I don't know Stewart. I think Pat's right. And our mileage rate is, what, 55 cents a mile? That's above average. And those sales guys get a pretty generous per diem.

Language Examples

Identifying the purpose of a meeting

- This meeting has been called to update everyone on the recent policy changes.
- In the next half hour, we need to make a clear list of all priorities.
- So, let's review what we need to get done today.
- I just need some input on this project and then we can all get back to work.

Asking for opinions

- I'd like your opinion here.
- What do you think about this situation?
- What's your take on the changes to the website?
- Could we have your thoughts on the budget cuts?

Giving a neutral opinion

- I think both options are pretty good.
- Well, I can see advantages to both choices.
- It's a tough call, so either way.
- It's a tough choice. There's lots to think about.
- We could go either on this.
- I think there's some good points and bad points.
- It's pretty difficult and there many things to think about.

Casting doubt on an opinion

- Are you sure about that?
- OK, is this really true in this situation?
- Wait a sec... aren't we forgetting something?

Supporting an opinion

- I think there's a lot of support for that idea.
- That's how I see things too.
- With you 100% on this one, and here's a few reasons why....
- That makes a lot of sense to me too.
- I've seen plenty of examples to support the point Jill's making.
- I think there's a lot of support for that idea.
- That makes a lot of sense to me too.

Lexis

To be tasked with-start (stg/sby.) off-per diem-mileage-subsidy-perks-overhaul

transit pass-parking subsidy-employee benefits-policy changes, mileage rate, travel expenses, (compound nouns)- an overhaul-overhaul (v)- direct cuts- an important difference - initial thoughts (adj + n) , a lot to consider, be more specific, the fewer the better, above/below average

Discourse Management

- All right everyone...
- But
- Well...
- As you know...
- All right
- I mean...
- Okay.

Listing

Per diem rates, mileage, transit passes, parking subsidies...

Spoken Features-structural

Body-Head

Maybe we should focus on the travel expenses. The per diem and mileage. And our mileage rate is, what, 55 cents a mile?