

# New International Business English

**Updated Edition**

**Communication skills  
in English for business purposes**

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## **Workbook**

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# Contents

Introduction	4
<b>1 Face to face</b>	6
<b>2 Letters, faxes and memos</b>	11
<b>3 On the phone</b>	18
<b>4 Summaries, notes, reports</b>	24
<b>5 Working together</b>	31
<b>6 International trade</b>	38
<b>7 Money matters</b>	45
<b>8 Dealing with problems</b>	52
<b>9 Visitors and travellers</b>	61
<b>10 Marketing</b>	69
<b>11 Meetings</b>	76
<b>12 Processes and operations</b>	83
<b>13 Jobs and careers</b>	90
<b>14 Sales and negotiation</b>	98
<b>15 Revision</b>	105
Answer Key and Transcripts	116
Acknowledgements	144

# 1

## Face to face

**1.1 Dealing with people** *Background information*

**1.2 Around the world** *Vocabulary*

**1.3 Go along and get along** *Reading*

**1.4 Have you met ...?** *Functions & speaking* 

**1.5 Asking questions** *Grammar review*

**1.6 Do it my way** *Reading*

### 1.1 Dealing with people *Background information*

These ‘Background information’ sections will be particularly useful if you don’t have practical experience of working in business, or if you don’t have personal experience of the theme of a particular unit. If you’ve been working in business for some time, we suggest that you read these sections quickly through to revise some of the vocabulary and the ideas.

In business, people have to deal in person with all kinds of people. You may have to use English when talking to different people within your company who don’t speak your language: these may be colleagues or co-workers, superiors or subordinates – who may work with you in your own department, in another part of the building or in another branch. And you may also have to deal in English with people from outside the organization: clients, suppliers, visitors and members of the public. Moreover, these people may be friends, acquaintances or strangers – people of your own age, or people who are younger or older than you. The relationship you have with a person determines the kind of language you use.

This relationship may even affect what you say when you meet people: for example, it’s not appropriate to say ‘*Hi, how are you!*’ when meeting the Managing Director of a large company or to say ‘*Good morning, it’s a great pleasure to meet you*’ when being introduced to a person you’ll be working closely with in the same team.

Remember that people form an impression of you from the way you speak and behave – not just from the way you do your work. People in different countries have different ideas of what sounds friendly, polite or sincere – and of what sounds rude or unfriendly! Good manners in your culture may be considered bad manners in another.

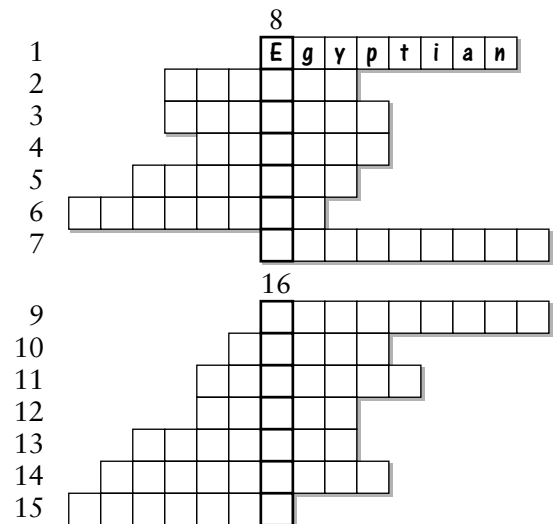
Remember also that your body language, gestures and expression may tell people more about you than the words you use.

## 1.2 Around the world

### Vocabulary

Each of these sentences has a nationality word missing. Add the missing words to the puzzle. Remember to use a Capital Letter. (The first one is done for you as an example.)

- 1 If he comes from Cairo, he must be ....
- 2 If she lives in Paris, she must be ....
- 3 If they live in Brussels, my guess is that they're ....
- 4 If he lives in Warsaw, I expect he's ....
- 5 If she comes from Rome, she's ...., I suppose.
- 6 He works in Tokyo, so I think he's ....
- 7 As she's from Budapest, I presume she's ....
- 8 If he comes from Toronto, he probably speaks ....
- 9 If they live in São Paulo, they're probably ....
- 10 As they live in Athens, I think they're ....
- 11 He lives in Beijing, so presumably he's ....
- 12 Her home town is Amsterdam, so I guess she's ....
- 13 Their head office is in Madrid: they are a .... firm.
- 14 If they work in Kuala Lumpur, I expect they're ....
- 15 He has a house in Istanbul, so he must be ....
- 16 If they come from Edinburgh and Cardiff, they're both ....



## 1.3 Go along and get along

### Reading

Read this article and then answer the questions that follow:

### Go along and get along

**T**HE Japan Society's crash course on how to bridge the chasm between Japanese and American managers forces participants to examine their own cultural assumptions, as well as to learn about the other side. Behaviour which Americans consider trustworthy is often precisely that which Japanese associate with shifty characters – and vice versa.

To Americans, people who pause before replying to a question are

probably dissembling. They expect a trustworthy person to respond directly. The Japanese distrust such fluency. They are impressed by somebody who gives careful thought to a question before making a reply. Most Japanese are comfortable with periods of silence. Americans find silence awkward and like to plug any conversational gaps.

The cherished American characteristics of frankness and openness are

also misunderstood. The Japanese think it is sensible, as well as polite, for a person to be discreet until he is sure that a business acquaintance will keep sensitive information confidential. An American who boasts "I'm my own man" can expect to find his Japanese hosts anxiously counting the chopsticks after a business lunch. As the Japanese see it, individualists are anti-social. Team players are sound.

(from *The Economist*)

Decide whether these statements are true (✓) or false (✗), according to the article.

- 1 American managers learn about the cultural assumptions of the Japanese.
- 2 In the eyes of Americans people who hesitate have something to hide.
- 3 The Japanese are impressed by careful replies.
- 4 Periods of silence bother the Japanese.
- 5 Americans are embarrassed by conversations that stop.
- 6 The Japanese are in favour of working in teams.

**Highlight** any useful vocabulary you'd like to remember in the passage.

## 1.4 Have you met ...?

Functions & speaking 

### A Welcome to Meridian International!

➔ Use the Workbook recording for this exercise.

 You're going to play the role of CHRIS STEINER. Imagine that you've just joined Meridian International and you'll be introduced to various people in the firm. Reply to each person when you hear the « *beep* » sound.

Look at this example and listen to the recording. Your role is printed **in bold type**:

Ted: Well, Jean, I'd like you to meet Chris Steiner. Chris, this is Jean Leroi, he's our export manager.

Mr Leroi: How do you do.

« *beep* »

**YOU: How do you do, Mr Leroi.**

Mr Leroi: Nice to meet you, Chris. How are you?

« *beep* »

**YOU: I'm fine, thanks. It's nice to meet you too.**

➔ You may need to PAUSE THE RECORDING to give yourself enough time to think before you speak.

### B What would you say?

What would you say in these situations? Write down the exact words you'd use. The first is done for you as an example.

- 1 The customer services manager, Mrs Hanson, doesn't know Linda Morris, the new export clerk.

... *Mrs Hanson, I'd like you to meet Linda Morris. She's our new export clerk.* ...

- 2 Your boss says to you, 'This is Tony Watson. He's visiting us from Canada.'

.....

- 3 Tony Watson says, 'Hi. I think you know one of my colleagues: Ann Scott.'

.....

- 4 You've been introduced to someone by name, but later in the conversation you can't remember the person's name.

.....

- 5 You enter an office full of strangers one morning. Someone asks if they can help you.

.....

- 6 A visitor arrives after travelling a long distance to see you.

.....

- 7 Your visitor looks thirsty.

.....

- 8 It's time for you to leave. You look at your watch and realize that it's later than you thought.

.....

## 1.5 Asking questions

### Grammar review

Questions keep a conversation going. Questions help you to find out more information from someone. Questions show someone that you're interested in what they have to say, and enjoy talking to them.

These exercises focus on forming questions correctly, and avoiding mistakes. Check your answers in the Answer Key after you've done each exercise.

**A** Write down the QUESTIONS that led to each of these answers. The first is done for you as an example.

- 1 ... **Are you Mrs Meier?** ..... That's right. Pleased to meet you.
- 2 .....? Yes, thanks, I had a very good flight.
- 3 .....? I'd like to see Mr Perez, if he's in the office.
- 4 .....? On my last visit I spoke to Ms Wong.
- 5 .....? It was Mr Grün who recommended the hotel to me.
- 6 .....? No, my husband is travelling with me. I'm meeting him later.
- 7 .....? We'll probably be staying till Friday morning.
- 8 .....? No, this is his first visit – he's never been here before.

➔ Check your answers before you do the next exercise.

**B** Imagine that you're talking to someone who talks rather unclearly, and that you can't catch some of the information he or she gives you.

Write down the questions you'd ask this person to find out the missing ( ~~~~ ) information.

- |   |              |                         |   |
|---|--------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1 'I work for ~~~~.'                                  | Who          | <b>do you work for?</b> |   |
| 2 'I live in ~~~~.'                                   | Where        | <b>do you live?</b>     |   |
| 3 'I've been working here for ~~~~ years.'            | How          | ~~~~                    | ? |
| 4 'We keep our sales files in the ~~~~ room.'         | Which        | ~~~~                    | ? |
| 5 'We never phone in the morning because ~~~~.'       | Why          | ~~~~                    | ? |
| 6 'I started working for the firm in 19~~~~.'         | When         | ~~~~                    | ? |
| 7 'I'd like a ~~~~ room for two nights, please.'      | What kind of | ~~~~                    | ? |
| 8 'I heard about this product from Mr ~~~~.'          | Who          | ~~~~                    | ? |
| 9 'The complete package costs only \$ ~~~~.'          | How much     | ~~~~                    | ? |
| 10 'They printed ~~~~ thousand copies of the report.' | How many     | ~~~~                    | ? |
| 11 'They asked me to ~~~~ as soon as possible.'       | What         | ~~~~                    | ? |
| 12 'Mrs ~~~~ told me I should get in touch with you.' | Who          | ~~~~                    | ? |

**C** In these sentences the 'question tags' are missing, aren't they? Complete each sentence with a suitable question tag. The first two are done for you as examples.

- 1 They don't normally pay their account late, ... **do they?** ...
- 2 The phone number is 518361, ... **isn't it?** ...
- 3 They'll let us know before the end of the month, .....?
- 4 We can send the catalogues by surface mail, .....?
- 5 They can't provide us with the information we need, .....?
- 6 She isn't in the office today, .....?
- 7 This machine doesn't operate automatically, .....?
- 8 You know a great deal about economics, .....?
- 9 You've studied this subject for some time, .....?
- 10 We shouldn't interrupt the meeting, .....?
- 11 We must confirm this by sending them a fax, .....?
- 12 He hasn't heard that the firm has been taken over, .....?

Read this article and then answer the questions below.

## Management in America

# Do it my way

NEW YORK

Cultural differences between Japanese and American managers have presented the biggest obstacles to Japanese companies investing in America.

A seminar for Japanese executives working in America was attended by 25 men, nearly all of them in identical dark suits. Despite the room's stifling heating system, they resolutely refused to remove their jackets. Their coffee break lasted exactly the scheduled ten minutes. They did not ask any questions until after they had got to know one another a bit better at lunch. They were usually deferential and always polite.

A similar seminar for 25 Americans working for Japanese subsidiaries in America included eight women. Several of the men removed their jackets on entering the room. A ten-minute coffee break stretched beyond 20 minutes. Participants asked

questions and several aggressively contradicted what the speakers had to say.

According to Mr Thomas Lifson of Harvard and Mr Yoshihiro Tsurumi of New York's Baruch College – the two main speakers at both seminars – misunderstandings between Japanese and American managers are possible at nearly every encounter. They can begin at the first recruiting interview. A big American company typically hires people to fill particular slots. Its bosses know that Americans are mobile people, who have a limited commitment to any particular employer or part of the country. As a result, jobs are clearly defined and so are the skills needed to fill them. American firms hire and fire almost at will.

The assumptions (and the expectations) of the Japanese managers of Japanese subsidiaries in America could

hardly be more different. They hire people more for the skills they will acquire after joining the company than for their existing skills.

American managers rely heavily on number-packed memoranda and the like. The Japanese colleagues prefer informal consultations which lead eventually to a consensus. According to Mr Tsurumi, they find comical the sight of American managers in adjacent offices exchanging memos.

Confronted with a dispute between middle managers, most Japanese superiors refuse to become involved, expecting the managers themselves to resolve the issue. The Americans conclude, wrongly, that their Japanese bosses are indecisive or incompetent. Japanese managers do not share the American belief that conflict is inevitable, and sometimes healthy. They want to believe that employees form one big happy family.

(from *The Economist*)

Decide whether these statements are true (✓) or false (✗), according to the article.

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1 This article is about American companies in Japan.                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 At one seminar the Japanese removed their jackets when they got hot.            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 The Japanese did not ask questions until after lunch.                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 At another seminar, some of the Americans were not polite to the speakers.      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Americans and Japanese are likely to misunderstand each other in any situation. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 American employees are very loyal to their companies.                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 Japanese companies are likely to recruit less experienced employees.            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 The Japanese rely less on meetings than the Americans.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 Japanese managers send more memos than their American counterparts.             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 Japanese managers solve problems without involving their boss.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Highlight** any useful vocabulary you'd like to remember in the passage.