



SERIE
Archipelago

Meetings

Maarten Schrevel

Second Edition



Noordhoff Uitgevers



Archipelago

Meetings

Maarten Schrevel

Second edition

Noordhoff Uitgevers Groningen / Houten

Ontwerp omslag: G2K Designers Groningen

Omslagillustratie: iStockphoto

Illustratie p. 82: Bert Cornelius

iStockphoto: p. 10, 22, 48, 64, 80, 88, 92

Noordhoff Uitgevers: p. 33, 73, 85

Eventuele op- en aanmerkingen over deze of andere uitgaven kunt u richten aan:
Noordhoff Uitgevers bv, Afdeling Hoger Onderwijs, Antwoordnummer 13, 9700 VB
Groningen, e-mail: info@noordhoff.nl

1 / 12

© 2011 Noordhoff Uitgevers bv Groningen/Houten, The Netherlands.

Behoudens de in of krachtens de Auteurswet van 1912 gestelde uitzonderingen mag niets uit deze uitgave worden verveelvoudigd, opgeslagen in een geautomatiseerd gegevensbestand of openbaar gemaakt, in enige vorm of op enige wijze, hetzij elektronisch, mechanisch, door fotokopieën, opnamen of enige andere manier, zonder voorafgaande schriftelijke toestemming van de uitgever. Voor zover het maken van reprografische verveelvoudigingen uit deze uitgave is toegestaan op grond van artikel 16h Auteurswet 1912 dient men de daarvoor verschuldigde vergoedingen te voldoen aan Stichting Reprorecht (postbus 3060, 2130 KB Hoofddorp, www.reprorecht.nl). Voor het overnemen van gedeelte(n) uit deze uitgave in bloemlezingen, readers en andere compilatiewerken (artikel 16 Auteurswet 1912) kan men zich wenden tot Stichting PRO (Stichting Publicatie- en Reproductierechten Organisatie, postbus 3060, 2130 KB Hoofddorp, www.stichting-pro.nl).

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

ISBN (ebook) 978-90-01-84927-6

ISBN 978-90-01-79491-0

NUR 113

General preface

The *Archipelago* series of English textbooks is in the first place intended for students studying business skills in Dutch universities of applied sciences. The skills taught, however, are skills students of other types of higher education (for example, schools of agriculture and schools of technology) should also be competent in. After graduation, all these students will find jobs in companies, businesses and institutions. Wherever they go, they will have to be skilled in writing letters, reports and e-mail messages and they will have to be able to participate in meetings, deliver presentations and communicate effectively. Very many of these graduates will find that English is the medium of communication.

This is why the *Archipelago* series has been developed. For all seven books in the series second editions have been published, and each of them comes with a website containing additional material. Grammar, an important part of the study of any language, is the focus of one of the books. The six other books each deal with one particular form of business communication. Six authors have worked closely together on the series, which consists of the following titles and authors:

- *Grammar*, by Marianne van Vlierden
- *Correspondence*, by Tobi Ringeling
- *Reports*, by Corné Stuij
- *Presentations*, by Arnoud Thüss
- *Dialogues*, by Peter Frambach
- *Reading & Writing*, by Maarten Schrevel
- *Meetings*, also by Maarten Schrevel.

This collaboration has resulted in books that all take a similar approach. Each chapter of each book starts with a case study. This case study may demonstrate a certain practice or provide examples of a particular phenomenon. The rest of the chapter deals with theory, provides examples and has assignment work. All of the chapters offer a lot of vocabulary and expressions relating to the particular skill taught. Each communicative skill is thus approached from various angles. Once students have studied a book completely, they should be highly competent in that particular skill.

The *Archipelago* series can be used in various educational settings. In the lecturer-classroom situation the books can be used as standard textbooks. In project work and problem-based learning, groups of students can work with the books and learn all necessary skills together, supported by their lecturers. In situations where students have to study independently and without the help of lecturers, they will find that the series is suitable for their needs as well. The easy-to-understand English and numerous

assignments (with suggested answers provided on the websites) make the series suitable for any student who is working on his own.

The websites contain a wealth of material. Not only will the users find suggested answers to the assignments there, they will also find more assignments, also with suggested answers. All of the vocabulary listed in the books also appears on the websites, together with Dutch translations. Depending on the particular communicative skill, the various websites contain additional material as well. For example, on the websites dealing with oral skills, there are modules on pronunciation, contracted forms, weak forms and graded speech. All of the websites except *Reading & Writing* and *Meetings* contain a module on communication theory.

The male form of the third person singular is used everywhere in the series, but this should always be read as including the female form.

The authors of the *Archipelago* series would like to thank a number of people for their patience, co-operation and help.

Firstly, as one of the authors, I would like to thank all of the other authors of the *Archipelago* series: we have worked together as a team and in the friendly and co-operative spirit necessary for the job. Although each book is attributed to a single author, some of the other team members also contributed to them. Tobi Ringeling provided the authors of *Presentations*, *Dialogues* and *Meetings* with a module on contracted forms, weak forms and graded speech, and Arnoud Thüss provided the pronunciation module which appears on the websites that accompany these three books. Arnoud Thüss wrote the short 'Searching on the Internet' course which appears on the websites that accompany *Presentations*, *Reports* and *Reading & Writing*. Peter Frambach kindly allowed his very extensive business vocabulary lists to appear on other websites than just his own. Tobi's, Arnoud's and Peter's help is much appreciated, for it has certainly contributed to making the *Archipelago* series better and more complete. I myself contributed the module on communication theory which appears on all websites except my own (the material appears in my books rather than on my websites). Thanks are also due to Arnoud's colleague, Wander Lowie, for his valuable comments on the drafts of the pronunciation course.

Finally, we would like to give our heart-felt thanks to our partners and families for their constant support. We would invite all users of the books to send any comments to us should they feel like doing so.

September 2010
Maarten Schrevel
Author

Preface

Meetings are an essential part of running a company, and they take place at every level. In fact, one big American company estimates it spends about 40 per cent of its employees' time on meetings. However, few people actually like meetings. This dislike is usually caused by participants having little experience in effective participation and having little idea about how they themselves can help turn the meeting into a success. Effective participation begins with a good preparation.

The meetings discussed in this book are meetings you find at all levels in companies, institutions and organisations. Working groups, project groups, departments, committees, boards are all examples of bodies that regularly come together to discuss ways to achieve common goals. When meeting, these groups of people usually work along the lines drawn in these pages.

Contents book

How to work with this book 8

1 Convening the meeting and drawing up the agenda 11

- 1.1 Convening the meeting 13
- 1.2 Agenda 13
- 1.3 The items on the agenda 15
- Summary 21

2 Preparing for and participating in the meeting 23

- 2.1 Preparing for the meeting 26
- 2.2 Participating effectively 27
- 2.3 Observing yourself and others 31
- 2.4 Negotiating 40
- 2.5 Language in meetings 44
- Summary 46

3 Minutes or proceedings 49

- 3.1 Common aspects of minutes 51
- 3.2 Literal vs summarising minutes 51
- 3.3 Resolutions of a meeting 52
- 3.4 Short minutes 52
- 3.5 Extensive minutes 53
- 3.6 Continuous engagement list 55
- 3.7 Taking minutes 55
- Summary 62

4 Order: procedures and processes 65

- 4.1 Order in a meeting 67
- 4.2 Brainstorming and committees 69
- 4.3 The decision-making process 70
- 4.4 Decision-making procedures 71
- 4.5 Voting 73
- 4.6 Presentations at meetings 77
- Summary 78

5 A theory of communication 81

- 5.1 Communication as a system 83
- 5.2 The communication path 84
- Summary 86

6 Cultural differences 89

- 6.1 The British and the Americans 91
- 6.2 The rest of the world 91
- 6.3 Preparing for cultural differences 93
- Summary 94

Final assignment 95

Index 97

About the author 98



Contents website

Assignments and keys

Basic pronunciation course

Contracted forms

Weak forms and graded speech

Useful phrases

How to work with this book

Meetings focuses on how meetings are usually conducted in the Anglo-Saxon world. British and American meetings may have a lot in common, but some of their differences have been highlighted.

Chapter 1 begins with how a meeting is structured. Convening a meeting and setting the agenda are dealt with, as are all of the formalities that usually take place. Some useful phrases for both the chair and the other participants are provided. The unscheduled aspects of a meeting are also dealt with, including where they belong in the general order of the meeting.

Chapter 2 explains how a participant should go about preparing for a meeting and discusses the meeting itself. Good preparation includes knowing what the purpose or purposes of the meeting are, and how they relate to the agenda. These purposes may be to provide information, solve problems or make decisions. Two of the meeting's participants have to prepare particularly well: the chairperson and the secretary, who have special tasks before, during and after the meeting. One such task is drawing up the agenda, another (one done by the secretary), is preparing the minutes.

During the meeting, the participants have a number of tasks in common, and the chairman and the secretary have special tasks. All are responsible for the meeting's progress and all can carry out this task by fruitfully participating. This means, for example, respecting and assisting others and especially the chairman and the secretary, so as to spend the short time available effectively. It also means that participants have to observe each other closely. While spoken language is obviously the main language of meetings, non-verbal language should not be underestimated as an aspect of communication. As with any ongoing interaction, misunderstandings arising from both verbal and non-verbal language may arise. This chapter includes information on negotiations, and on the special language commonly used in meetings.

Chapter 3 discusses the minutes taken during a meeting. These may be of two types: a literal record or a summary. Summarising minutes, frequently written in business situations, can take the form of a record of the meeting's resolutions only, or be more or less extensive in form. This chapter tells you how to go about taking all of these.

Chapter 4 deals with the procedural aspects of a meeting, particularly the decision-making procedures and voting. Observing these procedures is essential for a meeting's successful outcome, and as such is in the interests of all of the participants.

Chapter 5 provides a short exploration of what communication is all about. It deals with sending and receiving messages, communicative purposes, encoding and decoding messages and interference. A unique aspect of meetings of the type that this book deals with is that they usually involve a single sender addressing more than one receiver.

Finally, some cultural differences relating to meetings are discussed in Chapter 6. They range from differences between nations down to differences between the organisational cultures of various companies, though the focus is largely on British and American meeting conventions.

The website that accompanies this book allows you to listen to the language this book deals with. It includes a module on pronunciation and one which gives hints for more fluent speech. All of the assignments in the book have suggestions for how to go about them on the website.

Like all the other books in the *Archipelago* series, *Meetings* is suitable for use in the classroom, for project and problem-based learning, and for self study. The chapters can be studied in a random order. The book offers a complete overview of everything to do with meetings. After studying it, you should be able to competently participate in meetings.

In accordance with present practice, the difficulties posed by references to chairman, chairlady and chairperson have been eliminated in this book by referring to the *chair* in all instances.

On the first page of each chapter the reader will find lists of questions which will be answered in that chapter. In addition he will find navigation terms, which will quickly steer him towards the pages where these terms are discussed. It is hoped that this will help him find information in this book more easily.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Peter Frambach, co-author of the *Archipelago* series, for kindly allowing me to use one of his assignments. It is the basis of the final assignment in this book.



This symbol means that you will find additional material on the website.



Chapter 1

Convening the meeting and drawing up the agenda

All of the participants of a meeting are sent the notification with the preliminary agenda and the documents pertaining to the meeting a couple of days in advance, enabling them to prepare efficiently for the meeting.

The following questions will be answered:

- How is a meeting convened?
- What does an agenda look like?
- What are standard items?
- What are non-standard items?
- How do you order the non-standard items in an agenda?
- What language is common with each of the agenda items?

Electronic notifications 13

Preliminary agenda 13

Order of items 14

Quorum 15

Minutes of the last meeting 16

Mail received 17

Announcements 17

Non-standard items 17

Any other business 19

Unscheduled questions 19

Date and time for the next meeting 20

End of the meeting 20

Case Study

1

DS&P/McN/CS 1642

Notification of the 6th Meeting of the departmental managers of the Sales & Purchases Department

Date 15 December 20..

Time 3.00pm – 5.30pm

Place Room B 3.114

Preliminary Agenda

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Confirmation of the Agenda
- 3 Minutes Meeting 22 November 20..

Please see attached document DS&P/JM/CS m2211.

- 4 Announcements
- 5 Mail Received
- 6 Appointment new Department Chair

During this discussion the meeting will take place behind closed doors.

- 7 Budget next fiscal year

Please see attached document DS&P/JM/CS b1512.

- 8 Company Reorganisation

As has been discussed in the previous meeting, the Board proposes to make 20 per cent of our workforce redundant. We need to consider what this means for our Department, and we need to formulate a point of view on this development in relation to the continuing lack of investments in our company.

- 9 Any Other Business
- 10 Unscheduled Questions
- 11 Date Next Meeting
- 12 End of Meeting

1.1 Convening the meeting

A notification that a meeting is to be convened may take various forms, depending on what is usual in a company. It serves to inform the participants of the date, time and place of the meeting. Usually the preliminary agenda is sent along with the notification.

This notification begins with a reference from which can be deduced that the Department's (DS&P) chair, Ms McNamara (McN) drew up the preliminary agenda, that her secretary Christine Steward (CS) typed it out. The meeting's date is 15 December 20.., and it is the 6th meeting in an unspecified period of time. Information about the time and place of the meeting then follows.

It is fairly common to send such notifications in an e-mail message to all of those expected to attend, especially in organisations with computer networks of their own.

Computer programs like Outlook make it possible to send electronic notifications providing essentially the same information, though offering a greater number of possibilities: prospective participants can indicate whether they can make it to the meeting on the proposed date, they can add comments in their reply, they can be reminded of the meeting shortly before it takes place, and so on. Electronic convocations are not usually combined with the preliminary agenda; instead, the agenda is sent to the participants by separate mail.

Electronic
notifications

Electronic
convocations

1.2 Agenda

The agenda that accompanies the announcement that a meeting is to be held is usually the preliminary agenda. It may be preliminary because the meeting's participants may – depending on the type of meeting and the statutes of the organisation – have the opportunity to comment on it and propose changes to it at the beginning of the meeting. As well as the items which constitute the main business of a particular meeting, it will usually contain some *standard* items.

Preliminary
agenda

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Confirmation of the Agenda
- 3 Minutes Last Meeting
- 4 Announcements
- 5 Mail Received

6-10 Non-standard items: the main business of the meeting

- 11 Any Other Business
- 12 Unscheduled Questions
- 13 Date Next Meeting
- 14 End of Meeting

Some of the standard items may be combined. For example, under *Welcome* the agenda may be confirmed, under *Announcements* the mail received is sometimes also dealt with. Also, *Any Other Business* may include *Unscheduled Questions*.

Standard items
may be
combined

Items may have information attached to them. As mentioned above, the minutes of the previous meeting are usually included with the notification

Order of items

and preliminary agenda. The non-standard items may also include documents that accompany the agenda or else a short description of the matter to be dealt with.

The order of items deserves attention. Usually the lengthier, more important items are placed towards the end of the agenda so that the meeting can deal quickly with the shorter items and spend the rest of the available time discussing the longer items.

There are two exceptions to this rule. First, if the discussion and decision of one item intervenes with another, the other item comes later on the agenda.

Second, if somebody from outside the meeting is invited to attend part of the meeting, for example, because he is an expert, a moment in time is agreed with him. At this moment the expert's item begins. Sometimes such an independent item takes place at the very beginning of the meeting, immediately after Welcome.

ASSIGNMENT 1.1

Form a group of five students and comment on the order of the non-standard items in the agenda shown in the case study. One student should chair the discussion, another should take notes.

ASSIGNMENT 1.2

Below is the agenda of the monthly meeting of the management team of a production department. In a group of five students, propose any improvements you would make to the order of the items. One student should chair the discussion and another take notes.

Agenda:

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Confirmation of the Agenda
- 3 Minutes Meeting 22 October 20..
- 4 Announcements
- 5 Mail Received
- 6 Investment in new computers and software
- 7 Budget next year
- 8 Company reorganisation
In the previous meeting, we discussed the unacceptable 20 per cent reduction of the workforce. However, the Board insists this is necessary in view of our competitive position. How can we cope with this situation?
- 9 Appointment new member of the management team
Although there is only one candidate, the discussion will take place behind closed doors.
- 10 Any Other Business
- 11 Unscheduled Questions
- 12 Date Next Meeting
- 13 End of Meeting

ASSIGNMENT 1.3

Draw up an agenda for the monthly meeting of a production department's management team, including all standard items. Information relating to the following has been received:

Solving problems associated with some immigrant employees – information from the Board relating to new appointments in the company (a representative from the Board will present this information in person at the meeting) – redundancies in the department – complying with new rules and regulations by our American parent company – lack of investment in the production facilities.

After you have drawn up the agenda, compare it to those drawn up by other students (work in a small group).

1.3 The items on the agenda

In this section, each item (whether standard or not) on the agenda is discussed in terms of the usual processes. To the extent that they can be predicted, some standard phrases are given.

1.3.1 Welcome

The chair opens the meeting by greeting the participants, establishing whether there is a quorum and ensuring that those participants who are absent are noted.

A *quorum* is the smallest number of people (e.g. 60%) that must be present for the meeting to continue or for decisions to be made (see also Chapter 4, Section 5 on quorums). Not all meetings require a quorum. If no quorum is present, the meeting or the decision-making process may be postponed to a later date.

Quorum



Useful phrases

For the chair

- Ladies and gentlemen, welcome. I open the 10th meeting of our Department.
- I'd like to extend a special word of welcome to Ms Flora from the Board, who has kindly agreed to inform us about management's restructuring plans.
- I see that we have a quorum, and so we can proceed.
- I see that we don't yet have a quorum, so I propose we wait for another couple of minutes.
- I'm afraid we don't have a quorum, and so we can't proceed. We'll have to convene next Friday at 2pm to discuss the items.
- I'm afraid we don't have a quorum. This means that we can't make any decisions today, though we can go through the whole of the agenda and discuss all of the items. We'll have to reconvene next Friday at 2pm to make decisions.
- Ms McGovern and Mr Roots cannot be present at this meeting and have asked me to apologise. I have received no message from Mr Ross.

1.3.2 Confirming the Agenda

While the preliminary agenda is usually confirmed as being the agenda for the meeting, it may be possible to suggest changes to it, such as adding or removing one of the non-standard items, or changing its order. An item that has not been raised previously is discussed under *Any Other Business* unless it has a bearing on one of the other items to be discussed.

Preliminary agenda



Useful phrases

For the chair

- I'd like to confirm the agenda for this meeting.
- I don't have any items to add to the agenda.
- The following item should be added to the agenda. I suggest we insert it between items 7 and 8, as it may influence our discussion of item 8.
- I would like to propose a change to the agenda: since we have to decide today on whether to invest in the new machine, I suggest we discuss it after item 8, and deal with items 6, 7 and 8 as quickly as possible.
- I suggest we drop item 7, as the information relating to it has not arrived yet.
- I propose that we discuss hiring temporary staff for the summer months under 'Any Other Business'.
- Is there anyone who would like to raise other items?

For the other participants:

- May I propose that we discuss item 9 before item 6, as the decision we need to make in relation to item 9 will influence our discussion of item 6?
- May I suggest that we also discuss the subject of hiring temporary staff for the summer months today?

1.3.3 Minutes / proceedings of the last meeting

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting (usually called *proceedings* in the USA), as written down by the secretary, are usually sent to all participants before the meeting, and are discussed at the next meeting. Every participant should read them carefully and point out any mistakes there may be: the minutes are, after all, an official record, and serve to link one meeting and the next. There is usually also an opportunity to pose questions relating to the minutes.



Useful phrases

For the chair

- I would now like to bring the minutes of the meeting of 10 February to your attention.
- Is there anyone who would like to comment on page 1 of the minutes? Page 2? Page 3?
- The minutes are taken as read, then, and our thanks to the secretary.
- The minutes, with the changes proposed by Mr Roots, are approved, then.
- The minutes are confirmed.

For other participants

- There's a spelling mistake on page 2, item 4, in line 3.
- I'd like to change the order of the two sentences at the bottom of page 2: they'd make much more sense.
- I'm afraid my words have been slightly misinterpreted in relation to item 7.
- It says in line 10, item 6 that I said 'This is not correct'. What I actually said was ...
- The chair agreed on inquiring into the financial effects of the proposals. Can he report any results?
- Can the secretary please tell us about possible new developments in relation to item 9?

1.3.4 Mail Received

The chair or the secretary notifies the meeting of any mail received since the previous meeting. Sometimes it may require discussion. If, in the opinion of those present, this is the case, such mail items cannot be discussed in the present meeting since the agenda has already been confirmed. If discussion is desired, it must take place in the next meeting.

Mail received



Useful phrases

For the chair

- I'd like to bring to your attention that we have received a report concerning ...
- We've received a letter from Mrs Hobson, informing us that ...
- I suggest we authorise the secretary to answer this letter.
- We've mailed the information relating to the proposed merger to you.
- If there is nothing else that has to be mentioned here, I suggest we continue with the 'Announcements'.

For other participants

- Chair, I have the report you have just mentioned in my possession, and I think we should discuss it, as its recommendations have, in my opinion, a bearing on our department. May I suggest we discuss it in our next meeting?

1.3.5 Announcements

Announcements usually involve items that have not been raised before, and it is usually up to the members of the meeting to decide on whether the items require further discussion. Again, if further discussion is required, it should take place in a later meeting. The chair usually makes his announcements first, then other members may be invited to make theirs.

Announcements



Useful phrases

For the chair

- I have an announcement to make concerning ...
- My second announcement is about ...
- Is there anybody who would like to make an announcement?

For other participants

- Thank you, Chair, and yes, I would like to mention that ...
- Yes please, Mr Chairman, I would like to announce that ...

1.3.6 The main business items

The non-standard items are what a meeting really convenes for. These are the items that require discussion. The purpose of the discussion may be to share information, solve problems or make decisions.

Non-standard items

If the purpose is to provide information, the chair may do so, or call on somebody from outside the meeting, or a knowledgeable participant.

Provide information



Useful phrases

For the chair

- I would like to begin by telling you something about ...
- May I start the discussion relating to this item by first informing you of ...
- Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to introduce you to Mr Smith, who has kindly agreed to tell us something about ...
- May I invite our treasurer, Ms Rovers, to tell us about the budgetary situation we'll be discussing today?

For other participants

- Thank you, Chair. It is a pleasure for me to be here and to be able to tell you about recent developments that have taken place. Let me first tell you a bit more about myself and what I do ...
- Thank you, Mr Chairman. The situation we are facing is the following ...

Problem solving

When the purpose is problem solving, a discussion will develop. Discussion techniques and phrases will be discussed in Chapter 2.



Useful phrases

For the chair

- Ladies and gentlemen, I now open the discussion relating to this subject.
- Who would like to start by giving their point of view?
- Ladies and gentlemen, I feel we have enough information on which to base the decision we ultimately have to make. Who can I invite to give an opinion on this subject?

Reaching a decision

The purpose of the discussion is reaching a decision. Either the meeting reaches a solution by *consensus*, which means it continues the discussion until everyone agrees, or it *votes* on the solutions and accepts the one that gains a majority. Reaching consensus and voting procedures are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Depending on the organisation and its procedures, decisions can also be made on the basis of the *authority* vested in the chair.



Useful phrases

For the chair

- I have the impression that we all agree on how we need to solve the problem. I take it then that we do not need to vote on this issue.
- The way I see it is that we have formulated three different solutions, on which we apparently cannot agree. Therefore I propose we put these three solutions to the vote.
- Ladies and gentlemen, I've heard your opinions on this matter and I think I'll now be able to find a solution that I'm sure you'll all find acceptable.

If time permits, organisations may decide to spend more than one meeting gathering information in relation to the issue at hand, solving problems in relation to it and deciding on a course of action.

1.3.7 Any other business (AOB)

Under any other business, items are discussed that were added to the preliminary agenda. If no items were added, there is nothing to discuss. An item is usually only discussed: no decisions relating to it are made. (See also Chapter 4 on Procedures.)

Any other
business

1



Useful phrases

For the chair

- As announced when we established the agenda for today, I would like to open the discussion relating to ...
- I would like to return to the subject of ...
- As you know, we have a new item that requires discussion ...
- As there is nothing new on the agenda, I suggest we run through 'Any Other Business' quickly and spend more time on 'Unscheduled Questions'.

For other participants

- Excuse me please, Chair, I think you are forgetting that we need to discuss an extra item now.

1.3.8 Unscheduled questions

Unscheduled questions offer those taking part in a meeting the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers. These questions and answers should be short: this agenda item is certainly not meant for extensive discussion. If a question provokes a discussion, the chair should immediately propose putting the issue on the agenda of the next meeting. Indeed, participants frequently use this part of a meeting to ask for items to be discussed in the next meeting.

Unscheduled
questions



Useful phrases

For the chair

- Is there anybody who has anything to ask?
- We'll start with questions from those on my right.
- Ladies and gentlemen, I notice that our opinions on this subject vary considerably. I suggest we discuss the matter more fully in our next meeting in two weeks' time.

For other participants

- I'd like to ask the chair if ...
- There's something I'd like to bring to your attention.
- I think we need to discuss the proposed measures in detail. May I suggest we do so in our next meeting?

**Date and time
for the next
meeting**

1.3.9 Date of the next meeting

The date and time for the next meeting needs to be set during the course of the meeting. The chair proposes a date and time; the other members check to see whether this fits into their schedules. Sometimes an organisation will already have planned the dates and times for a series of meetings: for example, the twelve monthly meetings may have been set at the beginning of a year.



Useful phrases

For the chair

- We now have to establish a date for our next meeting. Considering the amount of discussion we are facing, I suggest we meet again quickly, for example, next week Monday at 9am. Is there anyone who disagrees with this?
- Ladies and gentlemen, I propose that we meet again one month from now, on Friday, the 6th of May, 20.., at 2.00pm.
- The next meeting will be held on Friday the 6th of May 20.. at 2.00pm.

For other participants

- Monday morning next week is fine with me, but may I suggest we meet 15 minutes later, at 9.15am?
- I'm afraid I'm tied up on the 6th of May. Could we convene on the 5th instead?
- I can't be here on the 6th of May because I'll be in the United States. Could you please put me down as absent?

**End of the
meeting**

1.3.10 Closing the meeting

The end of the meeting is announced by the chair; he usually thanks everybody for their contributions.



Useful phrases

For the chair

- I now close this meeting. I thank you all very kindly for your contributions.
- Thank you very much for being here and for your contributions.
- This has been a most fruitful meeting. Thank you very much and have a good weekend.

For other participants

- Thank you and goodbye.

ASSIGNMENT 1.4

Can you think of two more useful phrases for each of the above standard items?

Summary

-
- ▶ This chapter has dealt with convening meetings and what the agenda is likely to consist of.
 - Depending on such things as statutory requirements, meetings may drop or combine some of the standard items.
 - Most meetings share the basic structure of a certain number of standard items and a varying number of independent, non-standard items, usually followed by a certain number of standard items rounding off the meeting.
 - It is wise to be familiar with some of the standard phrases used during each of these stages: they will sharpen your awareness of what is going on.
-