



**APEX ENGLISH · A2 BUSINESS**

# **Unit A2-5B**

## **Navigating a new city as a business traveller**

Business travel

## UNIT A2-5B

# Navigating a new city as a business traveller

Business travel · A2+ · 55-65 min · Business English



*“The traveller sees what he sees. The tourist sees what he has come to see.”*

— — G. K. Chesterton

## Objectives

- Ask for and give directions, transport advice and local tips using polite modals (could / would / shall).
- Understand a realistic conversation between a visitor and a local colleague giving practical guidance.
- Write a short professional welcome message (90-110 words) to a visiting colleague, with clear logistics.

## Class Book

## Warm-up · Quick starter

Solo · about you · 3 min

*Think about the last new city you visited for work. Answer these 3 questions in your head.*

- How did you get from the airport to the hotel?

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- What is one thing that surprised you about the local transport?
  - If a colleague visited YOUR city tomorrow, what is the FIRST thing you'd tell them?
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## Lead-in · Discussion: locals vs. apps

Discuss · pairs · 6 min

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*In pairs, discuss these three questions. Give a reason for each answer.*

## Reading · Small talk, big shortcuts

10 min

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Any experienced business traveller will tell you the same thing. The apps on your phone are useful — but they will never beat a five-minute conversation with a local colleague on your first morning.

Maps show you the fastest route. What they don't show you is the safest street at eleven at night, the metro station that is closed for repairs, or the pharmacy near the office that speaks English. That kind of information lives in people, not in software.

The problem is that many visitors don't ask. Some are afraid to look unprofessional; others assume that a two-minute conversation isn't worth the interruption. Both are mistakes. In most cultures, being asked for local advice is a compliment, not a burden — and the person you ask will almost always feel closer to you afterwards.

There is, of course, a right way to ask. 'Could you tell me...?' works better than 'Where is...?'. Offering to buy a coffee for a five-minute chat works even better. And thanking the person specifically — 'thanks for saving me twenty minutes' — turns a small favour into the start of a real professional relationship.

The traveller who arrives with a map and a phone survives. The traveller who arrives with good questions builds a network.

### Comprehension check

1. The main message of the text is that...

- ☐ **A.** map apps are always wrong
- ☐ **B.** local human advice adds value that apps can't replace
- ☐ **C.** business travellers should avoid asking questions
- ☐ **D.** hotels should offer better maps

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**2.** According to the text, many visitors don't ask locals for advice because...

- ☐ **A.** they can't speak the language
- ☐ **B.** they are afraid it will look unprofessional or be a burden
- ☐ **C.** they don't have time
- ☐ **D.** they prefer to be alone

**3.** The article suggests that a polite request like 'Could you tell me...?' is...

- ☐ **A.** too formal to be useful
- ☐ **B.** more effective than a direct question
- ☐ **C.** considered rude in most cultures
- ☐ **D.** only appropriate in emails

**4.** The final paragraph implies that asking good local questions is a way to...

- ☐ **A.** save money on transport
- ☐ **B.** avoid speaking English
- ☐ **C.** build a professional network, not just find directions
- ☐ **D.** get free coffee

### **True, False, or Not Given?**

*Base your answer only on the text.*

**1.** The text says map apps are useless for business travellers.

- ☐ **A.** True
- ☐ **B.** False
- ☐ **C.** Not Given

**2.** According to the article, offering coffee in exchange for a chat is a good tactic.

- ☐ **A.** True
- ☐ **B.** False
- ☐ **C.** Not Given

**3.** The text gives statistics about how often visitors get lost.

- ☐ **A.** True
- ☐ **B.** False
- ☐ **C.** Not Given

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4. Thanking someone specifically strengthens the professional relationship, according to the text.

- ☐ A. True
- ☐ B. False
- ☐ C. Not Given

### Discursive writing · Reflect on the text (120-150 words)

Choose *ONE* question and write a short discursive answer.

1. The article claims that asking a local for advice is 'a compliment, not a burden'. Do you agree? Would this be true in every professional culture? Justify with a concrete example.

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2. Think of a business trip where the difference between 'surviving' and 'succeeding' came down to ONE piece of local advice. What was it, and what did you learn?

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## Vocabulary · Getting around & giving guidance

8 min

### Roles

| Term                | Meaning                                               |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| public transport    | buses, trams, metro — shared services                 |
| rush hour           | the busiest travel times, usually morning and evening |
| a single / a return | a one-way ticket / a round-trip ticket                |
| a landmark          | a famous building or place used to find your way      |
| a shortcut          | a quicker route than the obvious one                  |
| walking distance    | close enough to reach on foot                         |

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| Term                   | Meaning                                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| to grab a taxi         | to catch a taxi quickly                             |
| to head to / for       | to go towards a place                               |
| just around the corner | very close, only seconds away                       |
| to get lost            | to lose your way                                    |
| off the beaten track   | not touristy — quieter, more local                  |
| a heads-up             | a useful warning or piece of information in advance |

## Practice

Complete each sentence with **ONE** word or phrase from the lists above.

1. The office is in \_\_\_ — you don't need a taxi.
2. Try to avoid the metro during \_\_\_ — it's really packed.
3. The bakery you liked is \_\_\_, just past the pharmacy.
4. Quick \_\_\_: the tram is faster than the bus after 5pm.
5. This restaurant is \_\_\_ — very few tourists, all locals.
6. It's late, let's just \_\_\_ back to the hotel.

## Collocations · verbs for getting around

Match each verb with the correct completion.

| Term    | Meaning               |
|---------|-----------------------|
| take    | the metro / a taxi    |
| get     | off at the third stop |
| give    | someone directions    |
| ask for | the way               |
| head    | for the exit          |

## Odd one out — which word doesn't fit?

Choose the word that doesn't belong.

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1. landmark · shortcut · crossroads · invoice

- ☐ A. landmark
- ☐ B. shortcut
- ☐ C. crossroads
- ☐ D. invoice

2. single · return · one-way · warranty

- ☐ A. single
- ☐ B. return
- ☐ C. one-way
- ☐ D. warranty

3. rush hour · off-peak · commute · deadline

- ☐ A. rush hour
- ☐ B. off-peak
- ☐ C. commute
- ☐ D. deadline

## Grammar · Polite modals (could · would · shall · might)

14 min

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### 1. 'Could' and 'would' for polite requests

Could you + verb? — a soft request. · Could you tell me the way to the office?

Would you mind + -ing? — even softer, especially for slightly inconvenient favours. ·

Would you mind checking the address for me?

### 2. 'Shall' and 'would' for offers and suggestions

Shall I...? — offer. · Shall I book a taxi for you?

Would you like...? — offer / suggestion. · Would you like me to walk you there?

### 3. 'Might' and 'could' for possibility

For things that are not certain. · The office might be closed by then. · You could try the tram — it's usually quicker.

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## Exercise A — Complete with a polite modal

*Use could, would, shall or might. More than one answer may be possible.*

1. \_\_\_ you tell me the fastest way to Central Station, please?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The metro \_\_\_ be closed after midnight — better check before.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_ I call you a taxi, or do you prefer to walk?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_ you like me to pick you up at the hotel tomorrow?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. You \_\_\_ try the number 3 tram — it goes straight to the office.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_ you mind waiting five minutes? I need to finish this email.  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## Exercise B — Rewrite as a polite version

*Reformulate each direct sentence into something you'd actually say to a visiting colleague.*

**1.** Tell me how to go to the office.

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**2.** Wait five minutes.

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**3.** I want you to book a taxi.

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**4.** Don't take the metro after 11.

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### Exercise C — Form the question

*Write a natural polite question using a modal.*

1. (you / recommend / a restaurant / near the hotel)

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2. (I / share / a taxi with you / to the airport)

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3. (you / write down / the address / for me)

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4. (I / help / you with / your luggage)

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## Exercise D — Discursive writing (60-80 words)

A junior colleague is visiting your city for the first time next week. Write a short paragraph of practical advice using at least **THREE** different polite modals (could / would / shall / might).

1. Your paragraph:

### Describe the picture



Look at the picture. Imagine a colleague has just arrived from abroad and is standing here. Write 5-6 sentences using polite modals: give directions, offer help and mention one possibility.

Target language: Could you...? / Would you...? · Shall I...? · You might want to... · It could be quicker to... · Would you like me to...?

## Listening · A local colleague briefs a visitor

10 min

Karim (visitor, Voice A) has just arrived at the office in Barcelona. Elena (local colleague, Voice B) gives him a five-minute practical briefing before their first meeting.

### Before you listen

- What logistical information does a visitor usually need on day one?
- What advice would you give a colleague visiting YOUR city for the first time?

### Gist

1. What is the general purpose of Elena's conversation with Karim?

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2. How would you describe her tone?

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### Detail

1. What TWO transport options does Elena recommend to get back to the hotel?

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2. What does Elena warn Karim about specifically?

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3. What does she offer to do for him on Thursday evening?

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### Listen and complete

*Complete each gap with ONE or TWO words.*

1. Elena recommends the number \_\_\_\_ tram for going back to the hotel.

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2. Line 3 of the metro is currently under \_\_\_\_.

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3. After 9pm, she suggests using the \_\_\_\_ Now app for taxis.

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4. For Thursday, she offers to book a \_\_\_\_ near the office.

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### Useful phrases for briefing a visitor

*Match each phrase to its function.*

| Term                                   | Meaning                                      |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Just a quick heads-up...               | flag important information early             |
| Would you like me to...?               | offer a small favour                         |
| You might want to avoid...             | give a soft warning                          |
| If you'd rather, we could...           | propose an alternative                       |
| Let me know how you'd like to play it. | leave the final decision to the other person |

## Speaking · Welcome, guide, recommend

10 min

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*Prepare a short 60-second talk, then run a live role-play.*

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## Writing · Welcome message for a visiting colleague (90-110 words)

10 min (or homework)

A colleague from another office is visiting your city for three days next week. Write a short welcome message that (a) greets them warmly, (b) gives ONE practical transport tip, (c) makes ONE polite offer, and (d) proposes ONE concrete meeting time. Use at least three different polite modals from this unit.

### Workbook

Navigating a new city as a business traveller — Workbook

## 1. Vocabulary in context

Complete each sentence with ONE word or phrase from the box. Two items are extra.

1. The office is in \_\_\_ from the hotel — you don't need transport.
2. Try to avoid the metro during \_\_\_ — it's really packed.
3. Quick \_\_\_: the tram is much faster than the bus after 5pm.
4. This restaurant is completely \_\_\_ — no tourists at all.
5. It's late — let's just \_\_\_ back to the hotel.
6. Use the cathedral as a \_\_\_ — it's visible from everywhere.

## 2. Polite modals · could, would, shall, might

Rewrite each direct sentence in a polite, professional way.

1. Tell me how to go to the office.

2. Wait five minutes.

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3. I want you to book a taxi.

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4. Don't take the metro after 11.

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5. Give me the address in writing.

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6. I help you with your luggage.

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### 3. Which sentence is more natural for a visiting colleague?

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*Choose the more professional / natural option.*

1. You want to warn a visitor about a closed metro line.

☐ A. Metro line 3 is under maintenance right now — you might want to use line 1 instead.

☐ B. Line 3 no good, use 1.

☐ C. Don't take line 3.

2. You want to offer to book a restaurant.

☐ A. Shall I book a table near the office for Thursday evening?

☐ B. I book restaurant Thursday.

☐ C. Restaurant Thursday, yes?

3. You want to soften advice about taxis.

☐ A. Honestly, I'd rather grab a taxi at this hour — the metro takes twice as long.

☐ B. You take taxi, metro slow.

☐ C. Taxi better, metro no.

4. You want to check a preference before deciding.

☐ A. Would you rather walk or take the tram?

☐ B. Walk or tram, which?

☐ C. Choose walk or tram.

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5. You want to give a friendly warning about an area.

- ☐ A. Just a quick heads-up — that street is a bit quiet late at night.
- ☐ B. That street bad night.
- ☐ C. Don't go there at night.

## 4. Find and fix the mistake

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*Each sentence has ONE mistake. Rewrite it correctly.*

1. Could you to tell me the way to the station?

2. Would you mind to wait five minutes?

3. Shall I to book a taxi for you?

4. You might to want to avoid line 3.

5. The office is at walking distance.

6. I will grab a taxi, is late.

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## 5. Listening — a local briefs a visitor

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Nadia (visitor) has just arrived at the office in Lisbon. Tiago (local colleague) gives her a short practical briefing. Listen (or read the transcript) and answer.

1. What TWO transport tips does Tiago give Nadia?

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2. What warning does he give her specifically?

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3. What does Tiago offer to arrange for Thursday?

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4. How would you describe Tiago's tone?

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## 6. Writing — welcome message for a visiting colleague (90-110 words)

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*A colleague from another office is visiting your city for three days. Write a short welcome message that (a) greets them warmly, (b) gives ONE practical transport tip, (c) makes ONE polite offer, and (d) proposes ONE concrete meeting time. Use at least three different polite modals from the unit.*

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## 7. Reading & discursive reflection

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*Re-read the classbook article 'Small talk, big shortcuts'. Then answer in 100–130 words.*

**1.** The article says that asking a local for advice is 'a compliment, not a burden'. In your professional culture, is this always true? Give at least ONE example.

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