



**APEX ENGLISH · A2 BUSINESS**

# **Unit A2-6B**

**In the meeting: chairing, contributing, closing**

Running meetings that get to a decision

Student Edition · Classbook + Workbook

## UNIT A2-6B

# In the meeting: chairing, contributing, closing

Running meetings that get to a decision · A2+/B1 · 60–70 min · Business English



*"If you don't have an agenda, you are the agenda."*

— Rule of the busy team

## Objectives

- Chair a short meeting: open, manage turn-taking, redirect politely, close with clear actions.
- Contribute effectively: interrupt, agree, disagree and paraphrase in professional register.
- Write a decision-oriented meeting summary with owners and deadlines.

## Class Book

### Warm-up · Meeting behaviours

Solo · about you · 4 min

*Think for 60 seconds before answering.*

- In your last meeting, who talked the most? Was that the right person?
- When was the last time you interrupted politely? What phrase did you use?

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- What's the most common way meetings end badly in your team?
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## Lead-in · Sort the behaviours

Sort · into two boxes · 6 min

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*Place each behaviour in the box where it belongs. Then compare with a partner.*

**Follow-up:** Which 'red' behaviour is most common in your team? What could a chair do to prevent it?

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## Reading · Chairing is a skill, not a title

10 min

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In most companies, whoever books the meeting ends up chairing it — often without training and often without meaning to. The result is predictable: the loudest people speak, the quietest disengage, and the meeting ends with a vague 'let's regroup next week', which is corporate code for 'nothing was decided'.

Good chairing is not about personality; it is about three small habits repeated with discipline. First, the chair opens with the objective and the hard stop, so everyone knows what success looks like and when it must arrive. Second, the chair actively manages turn-taking, using phrases like 'I'd like to hear from Ana on this' or 'let's park that and come back to it if we have time'. Third, the chair closes with a decision, an owner and a deadline — even if the decision is 'we will decide by Friday'.

None of this requires charisma. What it does require is a small psychological shift: seeing the meeting as a shared piece of work that the chair is temporarily responsible for, rather than a stage where the most senior person performs. Companies that promote this shift tend to have shorter meetings, quieter but more useful ones, and a surprising side effect: junior people start speaking more, because they can see that turn-taking is being managed fairly.

### Comprehension check

1. The main claim of the article is that...

- ☐ A. only senior managers should chair meetings.
- ☐ B. chairing well depends on personality.
- ☐ C. chairing well depends on three learnable habits.
- ☐ D. meetings should be abolished.

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2. According to the text, 'let's regroup next week' usually means...

- ☐ A. a firm decision was reached.
- ☐ B. no decision was reached.
- ☐ C. the meeting was a success.
- ☐ D. someone will send a summary.

3. The 'surprising side effect' of better chairing is that...

- ☐ A. senior managers talk more.
- ☐ B. meetings become longer.
- ☐ C. junior colleagues contribute more.
- ☐ D. meetings are cancelled.

4. The tone of the article is...

- ☐ A. hostile.
- ☐ B. pragmatic and slightly critical.
- ☐ C. purely academic.
- ☐ D. sales-oriented.

### Reading reflection · discursive writing (100–130 words)

Write 100–130 words responding to the prompt below. Use at least ONE example from your workplace.

1. The author argues that 'whoever books the meeting ends up chairing it' is a bad default. In your organisation, how is the chair decided — by seniority, by ownership of the topic, or by habit? What would you change and why?

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## Vocabulary · Chairing & contributing

10 min

### Roles

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| Term              | Meaning                                     |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| chair the meeting | lead and manage the meeting                 |
| keep on track     | stop the discussion from drifting           |
| park a topic      | postpone a topic to discuss later           |
| wrap up           | bring the meeting to a close                |
| action items      | tasks agreed during the meeting with owners |
| next steps        | what happens after the meeting              |

### Smalltalk

| Term                             | Meaning                |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Can I come in here?              | polite interruption    |
| Just to build on that...         | add to someone's point |
| I see it slightly differently    | polite disagreement    |
| So, if I understand correctly... | paraphrase to confirm  |
| Let's park that for now          | postpone a topic       |
| To sum up, we've agreed that...  | close with a decision  |

### Practice

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

1. Sorry to interrupt — can I \_\_\_ here?
2. Interesting point. Just to \_\_\_ on that, we could also try...
3. I \_\_\_ it slightly differently — I think the risk is bigger.
4. So, \_\_\_ I understand correctly, you're saying we should delay by a week?
5. Let's \_\_\_ that for now and come back to it at the end.
6. OK, to \_\_\_ up, we've agreed to launch on the 15th.

### Collocations · meeting language that sounds right

Match each verb with the most natural completion.

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| Term    | Meaning           |
|---------|-------------------|
| chair   | the meeting       |
| raise   | a point           |
| reach   | a decision        |
| take    | the minutes       |
| table   | a proposal        |
| wrap up | with action items |

### Odd one out · register

*One option is too aggressive or informal for a professional meeting.*

**1.** I see it slightly differently. / I disagree, but I see your point. / You're wrong. / I'm not sure I fully agree with that.

- ☐ **A.** I see it slightly differently.
- ☐ **B.** I disagree, but I see your point.
- ☐ **C.** You're wrong.
- ☐ **D.** I'm not sure I fully agree with that.

**2.** Could I come in here? / Sorry to interrupt — a quick point. / Shut up a second. / If I may add something...

- ☐ **A.** Could I come in here?
- ☐ **B.** Sorry to interrupt — a quick point.
- ☐ **C.** Shut up a second.
- ☐ **D.** If I may add something...

**3.** Let's park that for now. / We'll come back to that later. / Whatever, move on. / Let's put a pin in that.

- ☐ **A.** Let's park that for now.
- ☐ **B.** We'll come back to that later.
- ☐ **C.** Whatever, move on.
- ☐ **D.** Let's put a pin in that.

## Grammar · Interruption, agreement, disagreement

14 min

### 1. Polite interruption structures

Can I come in here? · If I may... · Sorry to jump in, but... · Just a quick point on that. — All soften what is essentially a boundary-crossing move.

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## 2. Agreement / partial agreement

Full: I completely agree · That's exactly it. Partial: I see your point, but... · I agree in principle, however... · That's fair, though we should also consider...

## 3. Diplomatic disagreement

Neutralise 'no' with softeners: I'm not entirely sure about that. · I see it slightly differently. · I'd push back a little on that. · Have we considered...? — always attack the idea, never the person.

## 4. Paraphrasing to confirm

So, if I understand correctly, you're saying... · Just to check I've got this right... · What I'm hearing is... — these give you a second to think and prevent misunderstandings.

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## Exercise A — Choose the register

*Choose the option most appropriate for a formal client meeting.*

1. (interrupting) 'Wait — let me finish.' / 'Sorry to jump in, but could I clarify one point?'
  2. (disagreeing) 'You're wrong.' / 'I'm not entirely sure I'd frame it that way.'
  3. (closing) 'OK, done.' / 'To wrap up, we've agreed on three action items.'
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## Exercise B — Rewrite diplomatically

*Same meaning, professional register.*

1. That's a bad idea.

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2. You didn't understand me.

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3. We need to stop talking about this.

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4. Nobody agrees with you.

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## Exercise C — Fix the mistake

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

1. Can I to add something?

2. I am agree with you.

3. Let's to wrap up.

4. If I understanding correctly, you want to delay.

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## Exercise D — Discursive writing (80-100 words)

Write a short paragraph using at least **THREE** of the structures above.

**1.** You are chairing a meeting where two colleagues strongly disagree about a launch date. Describe how you would manage the moment — how you would interrupt, paraphrase both sides, and move the group towards a decision.

### Describe the picture



Look at the picture. Write 4-5 sentences describing what is probably happening **AND** what the chair should do next. Use at least **TWO** structures from this unit (interruption, paraphrase, disagreement, closing).

Target language: Can I come in here? · Just to build on that... · I see it slightly differently... · So, if I understand correctly... · To wrap up, we've agreed...

## Listening · A three-person meeting that almost derails

10 min

Ana (chair), Bruno and Carla discuss whether to launch a product feature on the original date or delay. Notice how Ana keeps the meeting on track.

### Gist

**1.** What is the core disagreement between Bruno and Carla?

**2.** What is Ana's role in the conversation?

### Detail

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1. What phrase does Ana use to paraphrase both sides?

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2. What compromise does Ana propose?

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3. What is the final decision and who owns it?

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4. How does Ana handle the moment when Bruno tries to interrupt Carla?

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### Listen and complete

Fill in ONE or TWO words.

1. Just to \_\_\_ I've got this right, Carla thinks we should delay.

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2. Bruno, let's let Carla \_\_\_ and then come to you.

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3. I see both points, and I'd \_\_\_ back a little on framing it as either/or.

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4. To \_\_\_ up: soft launch on the original date, full launch two weeks later.

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### Speaking · Chair, contribute, close

10 min

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Work in groups of three. Rotate roles across the tasks.

### Writing · Meeting summary email (90-110 words)

8 min (or homework)

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Write the follow-up email for the meeting in the listening (soft launch vs full launch). Include: a one-sentence recap of the decision, action items with owners and deadlines, an invitation to flag anything missing, and a next check-in date. Use at least ONE paraphrase structure ('To confirm...') and ONE polite reminder ('Could you send...').

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## Workbook

In the meeting: chairing, contributing, closing — Workbook

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## 1. Vocabulary in context

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

1. Sorry to interrupt — can I \_\_\_ here?
2. Interesting point. Just to \_\_\_ that, we could also try...
3. Let's \_\_\_ that for now and revisit it at the end.
4. OK, let's \_\_\_ up: what are our action items?
5. Ana will \_\_\_ today's meeting since it's her project.
6. We finished with three clear \_\_\_ and owners for each.

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## 2. Diplomatic reformulation

Rewrite each sentence in a more diplomatic, professional register.

1. That's a bad idea.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. You didn't understand me.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. We need to stop talking about this.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. You're wrong.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Nobody agrees with you.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Shut up, let her finish.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 3. Which sentence is more natural in a professional meeting?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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*Choose the more professional option.*

**1.** You want to interrupt politely.

- ☐ **A.** Wait, listen.
- ☐ **B.** Sorry to jump in, but could I clarify one point?
- ☐ **C.** Stop, my turn.

**2.** You want to paraphrase before disagreeing.

- ☐ **A.** You said wrong.
- ☐ **B.** Just to check I've got this right, you're saying...
- ☐ **C.** Repeat, please.

**3.** You want to close with clear ownership.

- ☐ **A.** OK, done.
- ☐ **B.** To wrap up, Bruno owns the soft launch, Carla the full launch.
- ☐ **C.** Everyone knows what to do, ok?

**4.** You want to disagree with your boss diplomatically.

- ☐ **A.** Absolutely not.
- ☐ **B.** I see your point, but I'd push back a little on that.
- ☐ **C.** That's incorrect.

**5.** You want to postpone a topic.

- ☐ **A.** Not now.
- ☐ **B.** Let's park that and come back to it if we have time.
- ☐ **C.** Later, ok.

## **4. Find and fix the mistake**

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

**1.** Can I to add something?

**2.** I am agree with you.

**3.** Let's to wrap up.

**4.** If I understanding correctly, you want to delay.

**5.** She chair the meeting every Monday.

**6.** We must to reach a decision today.

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## 5. Listening — a three-person meeting that almost derails

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Ana (chair), Bruno and Carla discuss whether to launch a product feature on the original date or delay. Listen (or read the transcript) and answer.

**1.** What is the core disagreement between Bruno and Carla?

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**2.** How does Ana react when Bruno tries to interrupt Carla?

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**3.** What compromise does Ana propose, and why does it work?

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**4.** What are the final action items and owners?

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## 6. Writing — meeting summary email (100-120 words)

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*Write the follow-up email for the meeting above. Include: a one-sentence recap of the decision, action items with owners and deadlines, an invitation to flag anything missing, and a next check-in date. Use at least ONE paraphrase structure ('To confirm...') and ONE polite reminder ('Could you send...').*

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## 7. Reading & discursive reflection

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*Re-read the classbook article 'Chairing is a skill, not a title'. Then answer in 100-130 words.*

**1.** The article argues that the person who books the meeting should not automatically chair it — the owner of the topic should. Do you agree? What could go wrong if this rule were applied strictly in your organisation?

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