



APEX ENGLISH · A2 BUSINESS

Unit A2-6A

Setting up a meeting people actually want to attend

Running meetings that get to a decision

Student Edition · Classbook + Workbook

UNIT A2-6A

Setting up a meeting people actually want to attend

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



“A meeting without an objective is just an expensive coffee.”

— Common wisdom in busy teams

Objectives

- Schedule and confirm a business meeting using polite modals, softeners and clear time expressions.
- Draft a concise meeting invitation with objective, agenda points and expected outcome.
- Discuss meeting culture in your industry, defending choices with reasons and examples.

Class Book

Warm-up · Your meeting week

Solo · about you · 4 min

Think for 60 seconds before answering out loud.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

-
- How many meetings did you have last week — and how many were genuinely necessary?
-
- Which meeting in your week has the clearest agenda? Which has the weakest?
-
- If you could cancel ONE recurring meeting tomorrow, which would it be and why?
-

Lead-in · Where does your team stand?

Poll · pick the closest answer · 6 min

For each statement, choose the option that best describes your team today.

Follow-up: Compare your answers with a partner. Where is the biggest gap between what you do and what you should do?

Reading · The 20-minute invitation rule

10 min

There is a simple rule that has quietly reshaped how good teams work: if you can't describe the purpose of a meeting in twenty seconds, don't send the invitation yet. The rule sounds harsh, but the logic is straightforward — every invitation you send is a claim on other people's most limited resource, their attention.

In practice, a well-formed invitation does four things at once. It states an objective in one sentence: not 'catch up on the project', but 'agree on the launch date for phase two'. It lists two or three agenda points with a rough time allocation. It names the decision that will be taken by the end. And it makes clear who really needs to be in the room and who can simply read the notes.

The interesting side effect is not efficiency — it is honesty. Once you force yourself to write the decision line, you often realise there isn't one. In that case, the meeting is really a broadcast, and a short written update is faster and clearer for everyone. Teams that adopt this habit rarely have fewer conversations; they just move most of them out of the calendar and into the tools where they belong.

Comprehension check

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

- ☐ **A.** meetings should always be shorter than 20 minutes.
- ☐ **B.** a good invitation clarifies both the meeting and, sometimes, its very existence.
- ☐ **C.** email is always better than a meeting.
- ☐ **D.** only managers should send meeting invitations.

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2. According to the text, a proper objective sounds like...

- ☐ A. 'Catch up on things.'
- ☐ B. 'Talk about the project.'
- ☐ C. 'Agree on the launch date for phase two.'
- ☐ D. 'General discussion.'

3. The 'interesting side effect' the author mentions is...

- ☐ A. saved calendar space.
- ☐ B. realising some meetings don't actually need to exist.
- ☐ C. shorter emails.
- ☐ D. fewer participants.

4. The tone of the text is best described as...

- ☐ A. academic and neutral.
- ☐ B. critical and slightly ironic, but constructive.
- ☐ C. aggressive.
- ☐ D. purely descriptive.

Reading reflection · discursive writing (100-130 words)

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

1. The article claims that many meetings are really 'broadcasts in disguise' that should be a short written update instead. Do you agree? What would happen in your team if you applied the 20-second rule strictly for one month?

Vocabulary · Scheduling & inviting

10 min

Roles

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Term	Meaning
circulate an agenda	send the agenda to everyone in advance
block time	reserve a slot in your calendar
recurring meeting	a meeting that repeats every week/month
hard stop	a fixed end-time you cannot move
optional attendee	someone invited but not required
reschedule	move a meeting to a different time

Smalltalk

Term	Meaning
Would Thursday work for you?	polite scheduling question
I'm afraid I have a clash	polite way to say there's a conflict
Could we push it to...?	polite request to move a meeting later
Let me get back to you on that	buy time before confirming
Pencil me in	tentatively add me to the invite
I have a hard stop at 4	I must end at exactly 4pm

Practice

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

1. Could you ___ the agenda by Wednesday evening, please?
2. I'd love to join, but I'm afraid I have a ___ at 3pm.
3. I have a ___ at 5 — can we plan to finish by then?
4. This is a ___ meeting; it happens every Monday at 10.
5. You don't need to attend the whole call — you're an ___.
6. Something urgent came up — could we ___ to Friday?

Collocations · sound more natural

Match each verb with the most natural completion.

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Term	Meaning
chair	a meeting
circulate	an agenda
block off	an hour
double-book	a slot
join	by video
wrap up	on time

Odd one out · which register doesn't fit?

One option is too informal or unnatural for a business email.

1. Would you be available on Thursday? / Are you free Thursday? / Wanna meet Thursday? / Could we meet on Thursday?

- ☐ **A.** Would you be available on Thursday?
- ☐ **B.** Are you free Thursday?
- ☐ **C.** Wanna meet Thursday?
- ☐ **D.** Could we meet on Thursday?

2. I'm afraid I have a clash. / Sorry, can't. / I'm not available at that time. / Unfortunately, I have a conflict.

- ☐ **A.** I'm afraid I have a clash.
- ☐ **B.** Sorry, can't.
- ☐ **C.** I'm not available at that time.
- ☐ **D.** Unfortunately, I have a conflict.

3. Could we push it to 4? / Reschedule pls. / Would it be possible to move it to 4? / Any chance we could shift it to 4?

- ☐ **A.** Could we push it to 4?
- ☐ **B.** Reschedule pls.
- ☐ **C.** Would it be possible to move it to 4?
- ☐ **D.** Any chance we could shift it to 4?

Grammar · Polite modals & time prepositions in context

14 min

1. Politeness ladder

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Can you...? (neutral) → Could you...? (polite) → Would you mind + -ing...? (very polite) → I was wondering if you could... (formal, indirect).

2. Time prepositions in scheduling

at + clock time (at 3pm) · on + day/date (on Thursday, on 12 May) · in + month/season/part of day (in June, in the afternoon) · by + deadline (by Friday) · until + continuous time up to a point (until 5pm).

3. Softening bad news

I'm afraid... · Unfortunately... · Would it be possible to...? · Any chance we could...? — these turn a refusal or a request into something acceptable in writing.

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Exercise A — Choose the right preposition

Complete with *at / on / in / by / until*.

1. The client call is ___ 3pm ___ Thursday.

2. Please send the deck ___ end of day.

3. Our budget review is ___ September.

4. I'll be in the office ___ 6pm today.

5. The workshop is scheduled ___ the morning ___ 12 June.

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Exercise B — Rewrite in a more polite register

Same message, better tone. Use modals and softeners from the unit.

1. Send me the agenda.

2. Move the meeting to Friday.

3. I can't come.

4. I want you to join the call.

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Exercise C — Fix the mistake

Each sentence has ONE mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. The meeting is in Thursday at 10.

2. Could you to send the invite, please?

3. Would you mind to reschedule the call?

4. Please send the deck until Friday.

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Exercise D — Discursive writing (80-100 words)

Write a short paragraph using at least **THREE** structures from the unit.

1. Your manager has asked you to organise a 45-minute strategy meeting with two internal stakeholders and one external partner. Describe how you would set it up — timing, participants, agenda circulation, and the polite phrasing you would use.

Describe the picture



Look at the picture. Write 4-5 sentences describing what is happening **AND** what the person is probably thinking. Use at least **TWO** polite modals and **TWO** time prepositions from the unit.

Target language: Could / Would you...? · at + time / on + day / in + month · I was wondering if... · by + deadline · I'm afraid...

Listening · Rescheduling with a client

10 min

Marta (account manager) calls Bruno (client) to move a meeting scheduled for tomorrow. Listen for the reason, the new proposal and Bruno's condition.

Gist

1. Why does Marta call Bruno?

2. Does Bruno agree to reschedule?

Detail

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1. What is Marta's reason for rescheduling?

2. What new time does Marta propose?

3. What condition does Bruno set?

4. How does Marta close the call?

Listen and complete

Fill in ONE or TWO words.

1. I was ___ if we could move tomorrow's call.

2. Would ___ work for you on Friday at 10?

3. I have a hard ___ at 11.

4. Could you ___ the agenda 24 hours in advance?

Speaking · Set it up, defend it, close it

10 min

Work in pairs. Do all three tasks below.

Writing · A meeting invitation email (90-110 words)

8 min (or homework)

Write a meeting invitation to a colleague AND an external client. Include: a clear one-sentence objective, three agenda points with rough timings, a proposed time using correct prepositions, and one polite modal request (e.g., 'Would it be possible to...'). End with a soft deadline for confirmation.

Workbook

Setting up a meeting people want to attend — 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. Could you ___ the agenda by Wednesday evening?
2. I'd love to join, but I'm afraid I have a ___ at 3pm.
3. I have a ___ at 5 — can we plan to finish by then?
4. It's a ___ meeting: every Monday at 10.
5. You don't need to attend the whole call — you're an ___.
6. Something urgent came up — could we ___ to Friday?

2. Polite modals & time prepositions

Rewrite each sentence in a more polite, professional register.

1. Send me the agenda.
2. Move the meeting to Friday.
3. I can't come.
4. The meeting is in Thursday at 10.
5. Please send the deck until Friday.
6. Would you mind to reschedule the call?

3. Which sentence is more natural in a business context?

Choose the more professional option.

1. You want to propose Thursday politely.
 - ☐ A. Wanna meet Thursday?
 - ☐ B. Would Thursday work for you?
 - ☐ C. Meet Thursday, ok?

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2. You want to signal you must end at 4pm.

- ☐ **A.** I stop at 4.
- ☐ **B.** I have a hard stop at 4.
- ☐ **C.** At 4 I go, sorry.

3. You want to invite someone as non-essential.

- ☐ **A.** Come if you want.
- ☐ **B.** I've marked you as an optional attendee.
- ☐ **C.** You are optional, maybe come.

4. You want to buy time before confirming.

- ☐ **A.** Let me get back to you on that.
- ☐ **B.** Wait, later I say.
- ☐ **C.** Ask me in one hour.

5. You want to postpone a meeting politely.

- ☐ **A.** We push, ok?
- ☐ **B.** Any chance we could shift it to next week?
- ☐ **C.** Move it next week.

4. Find and fix the mistake

Each sentence has ONE mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. Could you to send the invite, please?

2. The workshop is on the morning.

3. Would you mind to circulate the agenda?

4. Please send the deck until end of day.

5. I was wondering if you can join the call.

6. We meet at Monday at 10.

5. Listening — rescheduling with a client

Marta (account manager) calls Bruno (client) to move a meeting. Listen (or read the transcript) and answer.

1. Why does Marta call Bruno?

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2. What new time does she propose, and what is Bruno's constraint?

3. What condition does Bruno set for agreeing?

4. What TWO things does Marta commit to at the end?

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

Write a meeting invitation to a colleague AND an external client. Include: a one-sentence objective, three agenda points with rough timings, a proposed time using correct prepositions (at/on/in/by), and one polite modal ('Would it be possible to...' / 'Could you...'). End with a soft deadline for confirmation.

7. Reading & discursive reflection

Re-read the classbook article 'The 20-minute invitation rule'. Then answer in 100-130 words.

1. The text argues that if you can't state a meeting's decision in 20 seconds, it probably shouldn't happen. Is this realistic in your team? What would you keep, and what would you have to adapt?

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class
