



## ESL Podcast 184 – Running a Meeting

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### GLOSSARY

**please be seated** – please sit down; a polite and formal expression

\* When she came into my office for her interview, I said, “Please be seated.”

**please join me in...** – used to introduce someone to a group, or an invitation for a group to do something together with the person speaking to them

\* Please join me in congratulating these three students for winning the prize for the best project in the school.

**I’m afraid that...** – I’m sorry that; used to tell someone bad news in a polite way

\* He was here this morning, but I’m afraid that left before you arrived.

**can’t be with us** – are unable to join us or unable to be present here

\* I’m not sure if we should move ahead if Tam can’t be with us today.

**I’m pleased to welcome** – used to introduce someone to a group of people

\* I’m pleased to welcome Ms. Sharon Lombardi, who is joining our company.

**representatives** – people who work for a company who have the power to speak for their company with others

\* The representatives from Chile plan to vote for this proposal.

**joint venture** – when two companies or groups work together on a project

\* Will there ever be a joint venture between Apple and Microsoft?

**agenda** – a list of things that a group will talk about or discuss in a meeting

\* The meeting began with the speaker telling us about his agenda for the meeting.

**if there are no objections** – used when you are talking to a group and wish to ask if it is okay with everyone to do something; sometimes used to ask if anyone has any more comments before going on to another topic in a meeting

\* I will start the meeting by giving a summary of our last meeting, if there are no objections.



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**in order** – in the correct sequence, one thing following after another

\* The children came up to the front of the class in order, beginning with the youngest.

**to take care of** – to handle; to be responsible for

\* Do you think Jaime can take care of all of the arrangements by himself?

**why don't we move on to...** – used at a meeting to stop discussion on one topic and go to a new topic

\* Now that we're done with old business, why don't we move on to the new items.

**to hand it over to** – to give the opportunity to speak to another person in a meeting; to have someone else talk to the group, often as the leader

\* After I give my introduction, I will hand it over to Damien, who will continue with the meeting.

**to take (someone) through (something)** – to explain something to someone; to go through all of the details of something with someone

\* I don't really understand this contract. Can you take me through it?

**if there are no other issues** – if there are no additional topics or questions

\* We can end this meeting after lunch, if there are no other issues we need to discuss.

**Our next meeting will be...** – used to set up or establish a time for the next meeting

\* Does anyone know when our next meeting will be?

**before we end today** – used right before you are about to end a meeting, usually before the last topic to be discussed; can also mean simply before the meeting ends or finishes

\* We want everyone to complete their forms before we end today.

**productive** – getting a lot of things done in a short amount of time

\* I'm more productive at work after a good night's sleep.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who is attending today's meeting?
    - a) a representative from Garland Corporation
    - b) a representative from Manatect
    - c) a representative from Liviman
  
  2. The meeting begins with
    - a) Olivia taking everyone through the report
    - b) a discussion of the first item on the agenda
    - c) setting a date for the next meeting
- 

### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **please join me in**

The phrase “please join me in,” in this podcast, is used to introduce someone to a group: “Please join me in welcoming the president of Mexico.” The phrase, “join me,” can be used in many situations. For example, if you are eating lunch at a restaurant and one of your friends walk in and you want him to eat with you, you can say, “Join me.” Or, “Join me for lunch.” This is a friendly way of inviting them to sit down and eat with you. We can use this for other types of invitations, such as in this situation, which is a little more formal: “Do you want to join me for a walk around the park?” Informally, you can say, “Do you want to come with me for a walk around the park?”

#### **to hand it over**

In this podcast, the phrase “to hand it over” means to allow someone else the chance to speak to a group. We also use this phrase when you are asking someone to give you something: “You have my pen. Hand it over!” This use of the phrase is usually for people who have taken something from you that you are demanding back from them. It would not be used in a formal setting, because it is not considered a very polite way to ask for something. A polite way of asking for something to be returned to you would be, “Would you mind returning to me...” or “Could I get this back from you when you have a chance?”



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**CULTURE NOTE**

It is important in an American business meeting to be punctual – that is, to arrive on time for the meeting, and not be late. This is especially important if you are the leader of the meeting. A “good” meeting in a U.S. company is one that starts on time, has a very clear list of topics on the agenda to discuss, and has a fixed amount of time for discussion. American businesspeople do not normally see business meetings as social events, where they can take time to get to know other people or talk about their interests. Instead, they try to talk only about the topics and issues on the meeting’s agenda. Americans prefer usually to meet in a private room, and not try to hold discussions at a restaurant or other places outside the company offices.

Sometimes those from other countries interpret or think that Americans are being impolite because they are often so direct when speaking to others. In the U.S., speaking directly about only the most important issues in a meeting is considered a good thing, and it is not meant to be rude or disrespectful. It is common for people to criticize or say “no” to someone’s idea in a meeting, and to bring difficult issues to the discussion even if they cause disagreements. This again is not considered rude in a U.S. business meeting.

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Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – b



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast Number 184, “Running a Meeting.”

This is English as a Second Language Podcast Episode 184. I’m your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

On today’s podcast, we’re going to talk about the vocabulary you use when you are running or taking charge of a meeting. Remember you can get the complete Learning Guide for this podcast that goes with this podcast, has all the vocabulary, additional information, and the complete transcript on our website. Now let’s begin.

[start of story]

Good morning, everyone. I believe we are all here. Please be seated and let’s get started.

Please join me in welcoming Olivia Dansk, from Garland Corporation. I’m afraid that Lionel Wu from Manatect can’t be with us today, but I’m pleased to welcome representatives from both Danforth and Boyent.

We’re here today to discuss the progress of our joint venture project. Have you all received a copy of the agenda? Good. As you can see, there are six items on the agenda. If there are no objections, I suggest we take the items in order. Let’s start with number 1.

.....

I think that takes care of the first item. Why don’t we move on to item number two. I’d like to hand it over to Olivia, who will take us through the report. Olivia?

.....

If there are no other issues to discuss, I’d like to wrap up this meeting. Our next meeting will be on Monday, November 20th. Before we end today, I’d like to thank all of you for coming. This has been a very productive meeting.

[end of story]

In this podcast, we are at a meeting, at a business meeting. And, the person who is speaking is running the meeting. And, the name of the podcast is “Running a



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Meeting.” “To run” means that you are the person who is in charge. You are the boss of the meeting. Well, the meeting begins by me, greeting everyone, saying “Hello, everyone,” “Good morning, everyone.” Notice that everyone is used to refer to all of the people there. Informally, you might say, “Good morning, guys!” but that’s not something you would say in a business meeting. In a business meeting, you would use something like “everyone.” “Everyone, can I have your attention?” or “I would like everyone to sit down so we can begin.” In this case, I say that, I begin by saying that, “Good morning everyone. I believe we are all here” - meaning that I think everyone who is supposed to be at this meeting is here. “Please be seated and let’s get started.” “Please be seated” is a nice way, a polite way, of asking people to sit down. You would not want to say: “Please sit down.” You could, but “please be seated” is nicer, little more polite, little more formal.

Well, the meeting begins with the person running it saying, “Please join me in welcoming Olivia Dansk.” “Please join me in welcoming” is a way that you are telling everyone else in the meeting that they should welcome, say hello to, or at least realize that there is a new person here. “Please join me in welcoming.” The expression “please join me in” is used in other situations as well. “Please join me in singing song number 255 in your book,” if you are in church, for example, and the person in front wanted everyone to sing. They may say, “Please join me in singing.” You can use that in a lot of different circumstances. The verb is always in the -ing form after “in.” Please join me in welcoming, in singing, in running, whatever it is. Olivia Dansk is a person that they are welcoming. She’s from the company called Garland Corp., which is not a real company, just a company we used here.

I go on by saying, “I’m afraid that Lionel Woo from Manatect can’t be with us today.” “I’m afraid that” is again a polite way of saying “unfortunately” or “I’m sorry that.” Someone may ask you, for example, if they can use your car. And, you may say, “Well, no, I’m afraid that I can’t let you use my car. I have to leave now.” So, I’m afraid that is a nice way of telling someone “no” or telling that what they want is not possible. In this case, Lionel Woo from a company called Manatect could not be at the meeting. The expression we used here is, “he can’t be with us.” “To be with (someone)” means to be there, to be present, to be at the meeting. Well, “Mr. Woo can’t be with us, but,” he goes on, “I’m pleased to welcome representatives from both Danforth and Boyent.” “I’m pleased to welcome” is another way of, again, saying hello, welcoming someone, thanking him for being there. “I’m pleased to welcome representatives...” Representatives



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here just mean people who work at that company. These are people who are going to represent the company. They're going to be the ones that will listen and speak for the company.

The meeting continues by the person saying, "We're here today to discuss the progress of our joint venture project." American business meetings usually are, or tried to be very much, but we would say it to the point. "To the point" means here's we going to do, let's do it, and let's leave after we're done. Don't want to spend a lot of time talking about other things. So, it's very common for the person beginning the meeting to tell everyone why they are here. What is the purpose of the meeting? To remind them of the purpose of the meeting. So this person begins by saying, "We're here today to discuss the progress," how well we are doing, "on our joint venture project." A "venture" often means something very similar to a project, a venture is something that you do, something that you are trying to do. Usually, it is a way of trying to make money. In this case, it's called the joint venture because they are different companies working together. "To join" as a verb means "to put together." So, a joint venture would be a business project that different companies work on together, in order to make money.

The meeting continues. "Have you all received a copy of the agenda." The "agenda" is the list of things that they're going to talk about in the meeting. They are usually in order, so number 1, number 2, number 3 - these are the topics of today's meeting. Those are on an agenda. He goes on to say, "As you can see, there are six items on the agenda." An "item" is here the same as there are six things, there are six topics that we are going to talk about. "If there are no objections, I suggest we take the items in order," he says. "If there are no objections..." What we're saying here is: "If it's okay with everyone here." If there are no objections means "I am assuming that everyone agrees with me on what we should do." Of course, if you have an objection, an objection, objections - plural, is when you disagree with someone. When you want to say something against the plan or the idea, that would be an objection.

So, "if there are no objections" means if no one has anything to say that disagrees with me, "I suggest we take the items in order." "To take something in order" means you start with number one, then you go to number 2, then go to number three. The opposite of that is "to take things out of order." And, "out of order" means that you may do number one, then you do number five, then you go back and do number 3, and so forth. Out of order also, that expression also





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means something is broken. So, you may say that your telephone is “out of order” - means its not working, it’s broken.

Well, in this meeting, which is probably the shortest meeting in the history of business, the meeting that we have here is just parts of the meeting. So, after the person says, “I suggest that we take the items in order,” he says “let’s start in number one.” But, you notice when you’re listening that the volume went down, that’s because we’re not giving you the whole meeting. We’re giving you just parts of the meeting, so you can hear the different kinds of vocabulary. When the person starts talking again, after they’ve taken care the item number 1, which we don’t hear, he says, “I think that takes care of the first item.” “To take care of” can have a couple of meanings. Here, it means “to handle,” “to pay attention to,” “to solve.” “I think that takes care of the first item” means “I think we’re done with it,” “I think we’ve talked about what we need to talk about.” To take care of someone can also mean to help them. “I’m taking care of my mother because she is sick.” I go over there. I cook her a meal. I bring her food. I talk to her. I’m taking care of her.

“Why don’t we move on to item number 2?” he says. “Why don’t we move on...” To “move on,” two words, means continue. Why don’t we stop talking about this item and continue on with the next item? Sometimes, we use that expression when someone spending too much time on something. And, your boss might say, “Are you still working on that project? Move on to something else.” There it means stop doing that and start something different. Well, he suggests in our meeting here that we move on to item number 2. He then says, “I’d like to hand it over to Olivia.” “To hand (something) over to (someone)” means that you are going to let them talk or let them be the one who is the leader of the meeting. The one who is going to take care of the next section. So, “he hands it over to Olivia” means Olivia will now talk and not the person running the meeting. He ask Olivia to take us through the report. “To take (someone) through something means to go over with them, means to talk about it in detail, to give them lots of specific information. If someone says, “Let me take you through the plan,” that means they want to talk to you to each part of the plan to give you some information. Well, once again, the meeting, we miss a part of the meeting here because Olivia is now going to talk but we don’t hear to what Olivia has to say. Poor Olivia. Maybe the next dialogue we can hear from Ms. Olivia. The meeting then starts to come to an end. The person says, “if there are no other issues to discuss.” An “issue” here means a topic. If there’s nothing else that anyone wants to discuss. In saying this, he’s really saying to anyone in the meeting, “If you have something





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else you want me to talk about, you want us to talk about, you should let me know. Raise your hand, for example, or tell me right now. It's a good way of ending a meeting. "If there's nothing else," and then you may wait a second to see if anyone says anything. And, if they do, then you can talk about that additional item. He says that "If there are no other issues to discuss, I'd like to wrap up this meeting." "To wrap up" as a verb in this story means to end, to stop. "I'm going to wrap up this meeting" means we're going to conclude this meeting. We're going to stop this meeting. He announces when the next meeting will be. He says, "Our next meeting will be on Monday, November 20th." "Before we end today," meaning before we end our meeting. We're not going to stop yet. I have one more thing. "Before we end today, I'd like to thank all of you for coming. This has been a very productive meeting." "To be productive." "To be productive" means to get all of the work done. To do a lot of work in a short amount of time. That's to be productive. That's something that I am not very good at. I am not very productive.

Now, let's listen to the story, this time, at a native rate of speech.

[start of story]

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[end of story]



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The script for today's podcast was written by Dr. Lucy Tse. That's all we have time for today. From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESLPodcast.

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