

Handling questions in a meeting

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL
Upper-intermediate

NUMBER
EN_BE_3409X

LANGUAGE
English

lingoda

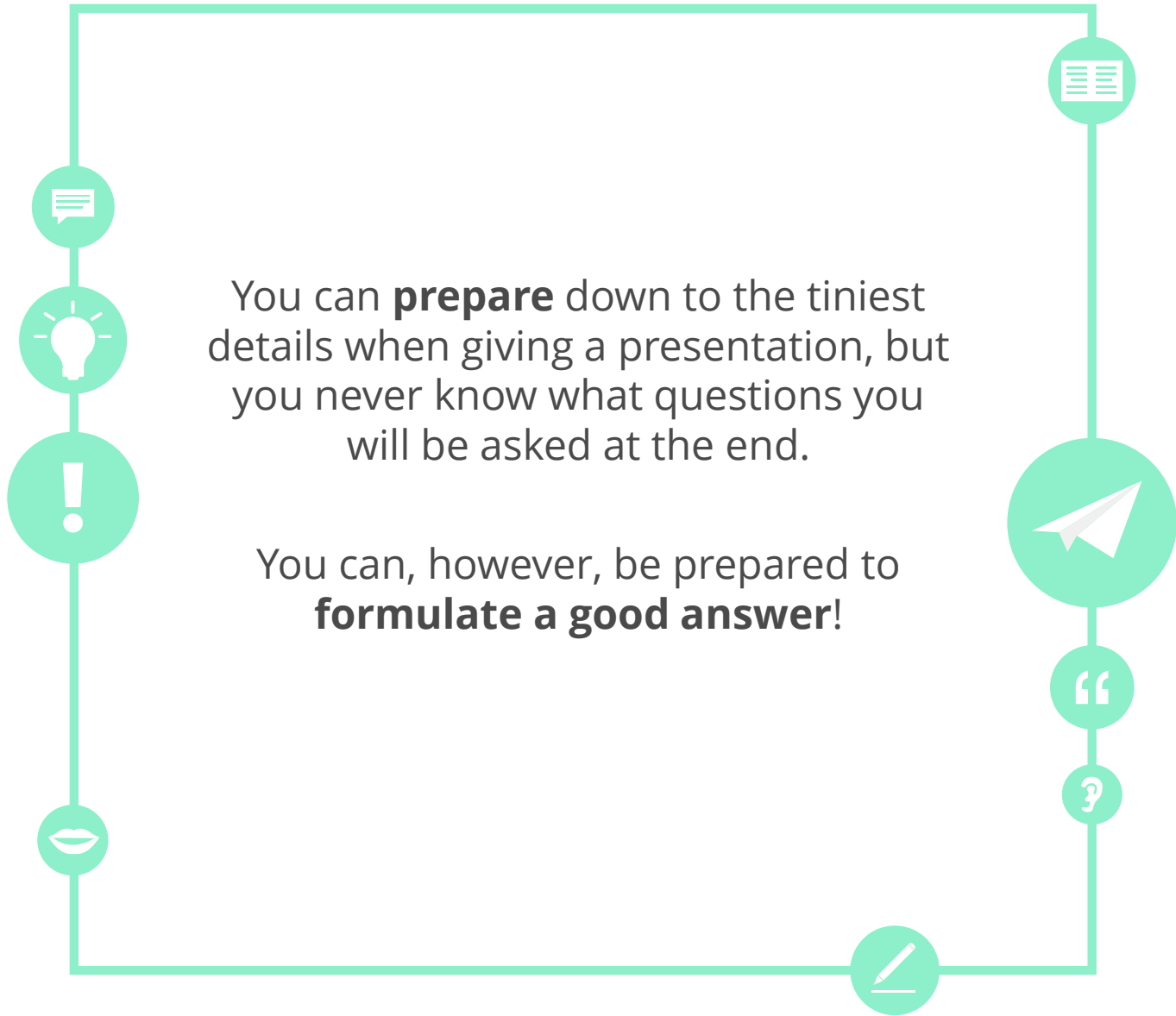




Goals

- Can recognize and understand phrases for dealing with difficult questions
- Can express myself clearly in a discussion while anticipating and preparing for questions





You can **prepare** down to the tiniest details when giving a presentation, but you never know what questions you will be asked at the end.

You can, however, be prepared to **formulate a good answer!**



Preview and warm-up

- There are many situations in which you might be **put on the spot** by a question: perhaps in a meeting, during a presentation or at a conference. This can often be **nerve-wracking!**



How does **answering questions** in a business setting make you feel?



Answering questions

**How does
answering
questions in a
business setting
make you feel?**



**How do you
prepare for
answering
questions?**



Preparing for questions

- Imagine you are giving a presentation or about to have a job interview. You have no idea what you'll be asked, right? Not entirely! You can **prepare yourself** by **brainstorming** what questions you could be asked.
- Ask yourself: **what does my audience care about?**

■ Let's say you're giving a presentation about a potential **emerging market** you think your team should explore.

There would likely be questions like:

- What **resources** would be required to enter the market?
- Which **competitors** are exploring this market?
- What would the **ROI** be if you entered this market?
- What **background research** have you done?



Inviting questions

- You finished a presentation or a brief talk – congratulations! Now it is time to **invite questions**, which means allowing the audience to ask you anything.
- You can do this using the phrases below.

- Are there any questions you'd like to ask?
- Does anyone have any questions?
- If you have a question, please raise your hand.
- I'm now happy to take questions.
- Any questions?





Responding to questions

- Take a deep breath! You don't have to answer straight away. Make sure you've heard and **understood** the question clearly. If not...

Could you please repeat that?

- In a noisy room or when the question is confusing.

I didn't quite catch that.

- When you don't understand or couldn't hear perfectly.

Can you please speak up/slow down?

- When a speaker is not speaking clearly.

- You can also make sure you've understood a question by **repeating** it back to the person asking or by **rephrasing** it:
 - Thanks for your question! So you want to know what exactly our profit was in June, right?



Useful phrases for dealing with questions



I'd like to **refer back to something** I discussed in my presentation.

I may have been a bit unclear. **I'll go over it again.**



You're curious about our intern programme, is that correct? To **illustrate the point**, I'd like to share Anita's story.

To rephrase in layman's terms, expanding into the American market could be a big money-maker.





Match the response to the question

Find the response that best answers (or begins to answer) questions 1-4.

1. I didn't really understand what you meant in your financial analysis.

a. Yes, of course. I'll refer back to the flow chart showing potential markets on page one.

2. Can you describe the potential impact of changing the hiring process?

b. To rephrase what I said in the financial section, the numbers aren't good.

3. We're considering expanding our social media presence. What strategies did your team use to increase your impact?

c. Yes, sure. To illustrate that point, I'd like to share numbers from last year's new hire survey.

4. Could you explain your plan for expanding into new markets again?

d. Great question. Social media impact is a big topic, so I'm happy to go over that area again.



Ordering questions and responses

With a partner, use the phrases below to discuss your company's new hiring policy.





Dealing with questions

Discuss the following questions.

How do you feel about giving presentations?

Describe a situation in which you've had to answer questions on the spot.

How do you calm your nerves before a presentation?

When was the last time you gave a presentation?



Linking words

- Speaking spontaneously can be a challenge, but using elegant **linking words and phrases** can help you handle questions.

phrase	What does it mean?	example
moreover	in addition to what has been said	Moreover , new staff appreciate the introduction.
furthermore	in addition	Furthermore , we implemented a mentor system.
in other words	to rephrase	In other words , the new fitness plan has been a success.
as a result	as a consequence	A few members of staff left and, as a result , our productivity has declined.



Handling questions with linking words

- Below are some examples that show how you might **respond** to a question or statement using **linking phrases**.

question or statement	response
We hired a statistician to help with data analysis.	Likewise – we hired one three weeks ago.
I'm concerned that having an in-house lawyer – even part time – would be too expensive for us at this time.	You're correct – it is a large cost. Nevertheless , it is certainly worthwhile.
Have you thought about how you will approach the negotiations?	We haven't got that far yet. In any case , the negotiations are not for another six months.



Linking words

- Below are more linking words that can help you handle questions.

despite

Despite the slump in the market, our company made a significant profit this year.

meanwhile

We hired three new solicitors in our London office.
Meanwhile, our Paris office added 10 paralegals.

admittedly

Admittedly, I haven't spoken directly to our potential partners yet.



Fill in the linking word or phrase

1. _____ the challenges of bringing short-term interns into the team, it is worthwhile for both students and for our team in the office.

- a. Nevertheless b. Despite c. Meanwhile d. As a result

2. I know we're adjourning for lunch at 1pm, so I'll finish up before I _____.

- a. rephrase the question b. invite question c. summarise d. run out of time

3. We planned every detail of this marketing campaign and, _____, did extensive market research before launching.

- a. furthermore b. despite c. likewise d. in other words

4. We weren't expecting such an enormous response to this ad campaign. _____ of public enthusiasm, our profits rose by 15%.

- a. Moreover b. Nevertheless c. As a result d. Despite



Fill in the linking words and phrases that fit best

Use these words:
despite, admittedly, furthermore, moreover



I strongly disagree with your assessment of the reasons for staff turnover. _____, my assistant has worked here happily for years! Did you consider other factors?

I administered an anonymous online survey and, _____, I completed exit interviews with 10 departing staff.



Well, _____ the feedback you got about improving company morale, I don't see a real solution to our problem. We can't raise salaries. What can we do?

_____, there isn't much that we can do right now.





Wrapping things up

- You may be able to go on and on about a topic, but at some point you need to **wrap things up**. Below are some phrases to help **keep things moving along**.

I don't want to **run out of time**, so I'd better **stop there**.



If I **go over my time**, Jenna won't have a chance to present her findings, so I'll **stop there**.

- **To summarise**, implementing our new hiring procedure has been a major success and we'd like to expand it to our other offices.
- **Please feel free to email me with any further questions**. Thanks!



Achieving a natural and conversational style

- When answering questions during a presentation, aim to achieve a **natural** and **conversational style**.
- That means **acknowledging the question, using linking phrases**, and **speaking thoughtfully**. Being **friendly** and **open** helps too.
- Below you see two answers to the same question. Note the differences.

What was the biggest challenge?

- **Thanks for your question.** I'd have to say our biggest challenge was dealing with cultural differences. **Admittedly**, we weren't prepared for that. However, we hired some great local staff who were a huge **asset**... I could go on and on about how good they were, but I'd **run out of time**.

What was the biggest challenge?

- Definitely the cultural differences. Next question?



Responding to questions

You gave a presentation on the challenges of opening a new office in Shanghai, China. It is now time for questions.



1

Read the notes on the following slide. They'll provide information about the new office.

2

Prepare for potential questions.

3

Invite questions from the audience. Answer your teacher's questions by speaking spontaneously and naturally.



Read the notes about navigating cultural differences while opening a new office

Initially sent three employees to open our office in Shanghai, China.

One employee had learnt Chinese, the other two had not.

After a slow start, the Shanghai office is doing well.

Navigating cultural norms and language were huge challenges.

We ought to have developed an orientation plan for employees.

Finding local employees who acted as guides and navigators was really helpful.



Brainstorm questions

Prepare to respond to questions by brainstorming what might come your way.

Write down four questions that your teacher might ask you.

What will I be asked?

Why?



A sheet of white lined paper with a spiral binding on the left side. The paper has ten horizontal lines for writing. There are faint, circular icons scattered across the page, including a pencil, a lightbulb, a speech bubble, and a document.



Responding to questions

Respond to the questions that you hear. Use the phrases below to make your responses more natural.





Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





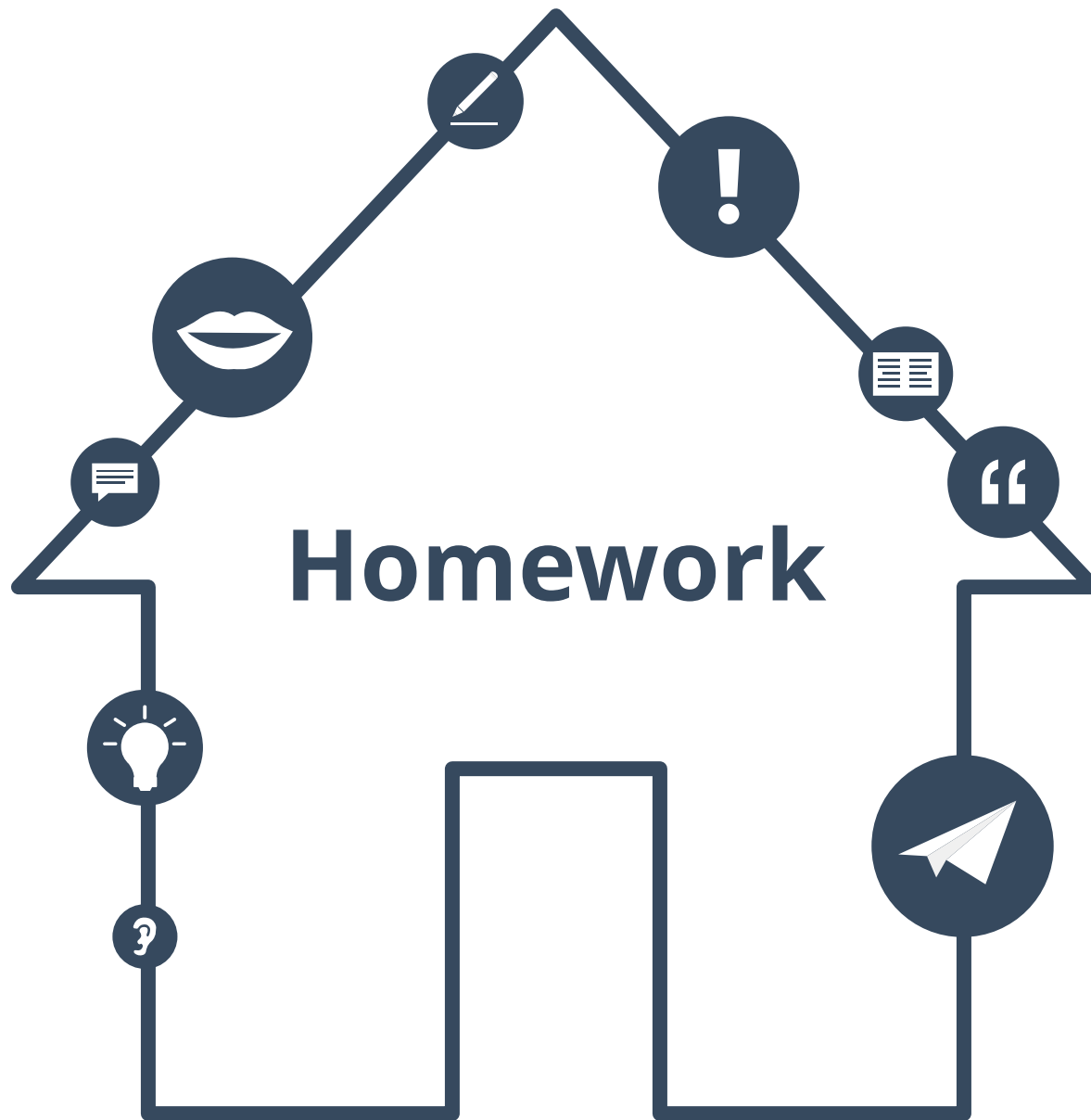
Answer key

Exercise p. 10
1b, 2c, 3d, 4a

Exercise p. 11
1, 5, 3, 6, 4, 2, 7

Exercise p. 16
1b, 2d, 3a, 4c

Exercise p. 17
furthermore/moreover, furthermore/moreover, despite, admittedly





Match the response to the question

A

Yes, to illustrate the point, I'd like to pull up some numbers about our social media impact.

B

Yes, that term might be unfamiliar. To rephrase, it simply means the resources that our employees represent.

C

Yes, I will refer back to the section on the budget and we can discuss it further.

D

I don't want to go over time, since lunch is coming up! If you take a look at your handout, you'll see some possible next steps for the project. I'm happy to discuss after the break as well.

1. What did you mean by the phrase human capital?

2. I know we're finishing soon but can you discuss the next steps?

3. Can you expand on the topic of social media?

4. Have you considered shrinking the budget for this project?



Homework answer key

Exercise p. 27
1b, 2d, 3a, 4c



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