

LINGUA AGENTS

Lesson Summary

THE LANGUAGE OF MEETINGS



Vocabulary

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
the chair / chairperson	the person who leads and manages the meeting	Sarah is the chair today, so she will open the meeting.
participants / attendees	the people who are present at the meeting	There were eight participants at the status update.
to book (a room)	to reserve a space in advance	I booked the conference room for two hours.
a proposal	a formal suggestion put forward for discussion or a vote	She made a proposal to increase the marketing budget.
to postpone	to move something to a later time, not cancel it	We had to postpone the budget discussion to next week.
to vote	to decide something by asking people to say yes or no	The team voted in favour of the new schedule.
to second (a proposal)	to formally support a proposal so it can go to a vote	Mark seconded the proposal before the vote.

a summary	a short overview of the main points or decisions	The chair gave a summary of everything agreed.
the minutes	the official written record of a meeting	Tom sent the minutes to all participants by end of day.
action items	specific tasks each person must complete before the next meeting	Let's confirm everyone's action items before we close.
AOB (any other business)	time at the end of a meeting for topics not on the agenda	Is there any other business before we finish?
a deadline	the final date by which something must be completed	The deadline for the report is this Friday.

Grammar

First Conditional

Use the first conditional for real, possible situations. You are describing something that can actually happen.

Form	If-clause (condition)	Main clause (result)
Structure	If + present simple	will + base form
Example 1	If the team approves the plan,	we will start next Monday.
Example 2	If we don't reach a decision today,	we will schedule another meeting.
Example 3	If there is any other business,	the chair will add it to the agenda.

Note: the if-clause and the main clause can swap positions. 'We will start next Monday if the team approves the plan.' The meaning is the same. When the if-clause comes first, use a comma. When it comes second, no comma is needed.

Second Conditional

Use the second conditional for imaginary or unlikely situations. You are describing something hypothetical, not something you expect to happen.

Form	If-clause (condition)	Main clause (result)
Structure	If + past simple	would + base form
Example 1	If we had more time,	we would discuss all the action items.
Example 2	If I were the chair,	I would always send the minutes the same day.
Example 3	If there were no AOB,	the meeting would finish earlier.

Note: in the second conditional, both 'was' and 'were' are accepted in the if-clause ('if I was' or 'if I were'). 'Were' is more formal and common in written English. In spoken professional English, both are used.

Useful Phrases

Phrase	Use it when...
Shall we vote on that?	you are the chair and want to move a proposal to a decision
I think we'll have to postpone this item.	there is not enough time to finish an agenda item
Is there any other business before we close?	you are closing the meeting and want to give others a chance to raise something
Is everyone clear on their action items?	you want to confirm that everyone knows what they need to do before the next meeting
I'd like to second that proposal.	a participant has made a proposal and you want to formally support it
Let me give a quick summary of what we've agreed.	you are closing the meeting and want to recap the key decisions

Common Confusions

postpone vs cancel

To postpone means to move something to a later time. It will still happen, just not now. To cancel means to stop it entirely. It will not happen at all. In meetings: 'We postponed the discussion' means it will come up next time. 'We cancelled the meeting' means it did not take place and there is no plan to reschedule.

the minutes vs a summary

The minutes are the official written record of a meeting, sent to all participants afterwards. A summary is a short spoken overview given by the chair at the end of the meeting before it closes. Both cover what was discussed and decided, but the minutes are formal and written, while a summary is informal and spoken.

first conditional vs second conditional

Use the first conditional for situations that are real and likely: 'If we finish early, we will have time for AOB.' Use the second conditional for situations that are imaginary or unlikely: 'If I were the chair, I would end every meeting on time.' A quick test: could this actually happen? If yes, use the first. If it is hypothetical or wishful thinking, use the second.

Self-Check

Test yourself without looking at the page. Can you answer these?

1. What is the difference between the minutes and a summary? When does each one happen?

2. Someone has just made a proposal in a meeting. You agree and want to support it. What do you say?
3. The meeting is running over time and one item is left. You are the chair. What do you say to handle it?
4. Complete the sentence using the first conditional: 'If the client approves the proposal, we _____ (start) the project next month.'
5. Complete the sentence using the second conditional: 'If our meetings were shorter, we _____ (have) more time for actual work.'

Answers: 2. 'I'd like to second that proposal.' 3. 'I think we'll have to postpone this item to the next meeting.'
4. will start 5. would have