

Business English- Meeting People- Line-by-line Brainstorming

Cover everything except the first line of the dialogue below. Read what you can see and work together to think of all the possible answers to that phrase. Discuss which is the most likely of those replies, then reveal just the response on the one line below. Do the same with responses to that line, then repeat one line at a time until you reach the end of the dialogue.

Dialogue 1: Unarranged meeting with no previous contact – At an outside conference

Bob: Is this the right place for the seminar on “Attracting Vietnamese Students to Foreign Universities”?

John: Yes, that’s right.

Bob: Great. Thanks. Is this seat free?

John: Yes, I’m pretty sure it is. Please go ahead.

Bob: Thanks. There are lots of people, aren’t there?

John: Yes, there are, aren’t there? It’s usually like this, though. Is this your first time here?

Bob: Yes, it is. How about you? Have you been here before?

John: Yes, this is my third year, actually. So, what brings you here today?

Bob: We have increased our numbers of students from many Asian countries, but for some reason we don’t have many students from Vietnam. What about you?

John: Actually, I'm giving my own talk on another topic this afternoon but I like to attend other people's seminars too. I'm John, by the way, John Smith, from Grande University.

Bob: Pleased to meet you, John. My name's Robert Jones, but please call me Bob.

John: It's a pleasure to meet you too, Bob. Who do you work for?

Bob: I work for the University of High Technology in Manchester, UK. I'm afraid I haven't heard of Grande University. Where is it based?

John: The main campus is in Acapulco, Mexico, but we also have a campus in the Philippines. What do you do, Bob?

Bob: I'm in charge of promotional materials. And you?

John: My role is almost the same as yours, actually. I'd love to speak more about it, but the seminar is going to start, so we'll have to talk another time. Do you have a business card on you?

Bob: Of course. Just a moment while I find one. Ah, here you are.

John: Thanks. And here's mine. It was great to meet you, Bob.

Bob: It was nice to meet you too, John. I look forward to hearing from you.

Perhaps after changing partners, go through the dialogue again and discuss what other phrases could be said in those places.

Dialogue 2: Meeting a visitor who you have had email contact with but never met – Before a workshop at your university

Do the same things with the dialogue below, this time between two people who have never met but have already been in contact and so know quite a lot about each other.

Diane: You must be Jane.

Jane: That's right.

Diane: It's so nice to finally to meet you, Jane. I'm Diane.

Jane: Pleased to meet you too, Diane.

Diane: Thanks for coming all this way. Did you have any trouble finding us?

Jane: No, the map that you sent was very clear, thanks. It's a bit humid, though, isn't it? Is it always like this at this time of year?

Diane: I'm afraid so. How about Moscow? How's the weather there now?

Jane: I'm not sure about today, but it was about 25 degrees C when I left.

Diane: Nice! Well, I'd love to chat more but I guess you have to get to the workshop. Shall I show you the way?

Jane: No, that's fine, thanks. I passed the building on the way here, so I think I can find it.

Diane: Okay, I won't keep you any longer, then. It was great to finally meet you.

Jane: You too. Are you coming to the party tonight?

Diane: Of course. See you there.

Jane: Yes, see you later then. Bye.

Meeting people line by line brainstorming
Brainstorming stage

Without looking above for now, brainstorm at least two suitable phrases into each of the gaps below.

Starting conversations with people who you've never met before

Talking about names

Expressions like "Nice to meet you"

Explaining your work and organisation

Asking about someone's work and organisation

Talking about coming to that place

Talking about the weather

Asking the same question back to someone

Ending the small talk (smoothly and politely)

Talking about business cards

Like “Nice to meet you” at the end of meeting

Talking about future contact between you

Look back at the model dialogues for more phrases, and use those to help come up with more ideas.

Suggested answers

Phrases in italics below are not in the dialogues above but are also suitable. Phrases in italics and brackets with NOT or PROBABLY NOT are almost certainly not suitable for these situations. Many other phrases are possible, so please check if any other phrases that you wrote above with your teacher are also okay.

Starting conversations with people who you've never met before

Is this the right place for...?

Is this seat free?/ Is anyone sitting here?

There are lots of..., aren't there?

It's really..., isn't it?

You must be...

(NOT My name is... X)

Talking about names

I'm (first name), by the way, (full name), from (name of place that you work for).

My name's (full name), but please call me (first name, shortened name or nickname).

You must be (name).

And you are?

Could I ask your name?

(PROBABLY NOT What's your name?)

Expressions like "Nice to meet you"

Pleased to meet you (too), (name).

It's a pleasure to meet you, (name).

It's so nice to finally to meet you, (name).

(PROBABLY NOT How are you?)

(NOT How about you? X)

Explaining your work and organisation

I work for...

The main campus.../ *Our head office...*

We also have a branch/ campus in...

I'm based.../ We are based...

I'm in charge of.../ *I'm responsible for...*

My role is/ involves...

My (main) duties are...

I (have to) deal with...

I (also) take part in...

I'm (also) involved in...

I'm (currently/ presently) working on...

Asking about someone's work and organisation

What do you do?

Who do you work for?

Where is... based?

I'm afraid I haven't heard of... Wh...?

(PROBABLY NOT What's your company's name?)

Talking about coming to that place

Thanks for coming all this way.

Did you have any trouble finding us?/ *Did you have any problems getting here?*

Where have you come from today?

How was your journey?/ How was your flight?

Is this your first time...?

What brings you here today?

Talking about the weather

It's a bit..., isn't it?

Is it always like this at this time of year?

How's the weather in... now?

(NOT It's a fine day X)

Asking the same question back to someone

How about you?/ What about you?/ And you?

Ending the small talk (smoothly and politely)

I'd love to speak more (about...), but.../ I'd love to chat more, but...

I guess you have to...

It's been nice to chat, but...

I know you are very busy, so...

I have to talk to a few more people, so...

I won't keep you any longer then./ *I'll let you get on, then.*

(NOT I have another arrangement X NOT I have to go X)

Talking about business cards

Do you have a business card (on you)?

Shall I give you my business card?

Maybe we should exchange business cards.

Just a moment while I find them/ my business cards.

Here you are.

(And) here's mine.

Like "Nice to meet you" at the end of meeting

It was nice/ great/ a pleasure to meet you (too), (name).

It was great to finally meet you (too).

(NOT Nice to meet you.)

Talking about future contact between you

We'll have to talk another time.

Will you be at the meal/ dinner/ party/ drinks tonight?

See you there./ See you then.

See you later.

I hope we have the chance to meet again soon.

I look forward to hearing from you.

I'll email you next week.