

## **Business English- Moving on & Changing Topic in Meetings Jigsaw**

### **Instructions for teachers**

*Cut up and give out one pack of cards per group of two to four students (leaving out the headings – the part in bold – for now). Ask students to put the cards together to make different phrases for ending a meeting. Tell them that many different combinations are possible. If they get stuck, tell them that the phrases can fit into a five by five table with phrases with the same function (= with similar meanings) in the same column, then give out the blank grid or the headings to help them finish and/ or start checking their answers.*

*Students check their answers as a class or with the answer key, with the teacher pointing out any things which need to go together like “Let’s..., shall we?” and any things which sound less natural together, but also repeating that most things can go in any order so many different arrangements of the expressions in each column are possible.*

*You could then get them to write the same or similar phrases into a copy of the blank grid as further practice, using the key words to help.*

*Students can then test each other in pairs, by:*

- Reading out all but one phrase with one function and seeing if their partner can come up with the other
- Reading out a row with one part missing for their partner to fill in (with anything that feels natural, not necessarily just the actual phrase that is in that row in the table)
- Helping their partner brainstorm all of the phrases with one function
- Reading out a phrase with a key word missing for their partner to complete
- Reading out a key word and helping their partner make a phrase from it

*For speaking practice, give them a list of possible agenda topics such as the “Possible Meeting Agenda Points” below and ask them to work their way through it as quickly and smoothly as possible, perhaps scoring one point each time they successfully do so. If their partner thinks the transition is too soon and/ or too sudden or they use exactly the same phrase again, they don’t get a point and/ or their partner can make them spend more time on the topic before moving. For more controlled speaking practice, students can deal out the jigsaw cards or “so” cards and discard them if they successfully use phrases with those words during the meeting roleplay. Alternatively, they can cross words off the list of key words as they use them.*

**Moving on/Changing topic phrases jigsaw**  
**Cards to cut up/Suggested answers**

| <b>Transitions language (= smoothly changing topic)</b> | <b>Giving reasons for changing topic</b>         |            | <b>Suggesting changing topic</b>                  | <b>Softening language/ Language to get a response</b> |
|---|--|------------|---|---|
| so  | I think we have covered that                     | <b>,SO</b> | shall we look at the next item on the agenda      | if you don't mind                                     |
| right   | we all seem to be in agreement                   |            | let's have a look at the next topic               | shall we  |
| anyway  | we don't seem to be getting anywhere on that     |            | I think we should talk about the next subject     | don't you think                                       |
| well (then)   | we still have a few more things to discuss       |            | it's time to turn our attention to the next point | if that's okay  |
| okay (then)   | we can talk about this again in the next meeting |            | we can move onto the next point on the agenda     | can't we  |

**Blank grid for moving on/ changing topic phrases**

*Use the blank grid below to help with the jigsaw task.*

| Transitions language (= smoothly changing topic) | Giving reasons for changing topic |  | Suggesting changing topic | Softening language/ Language to get a response |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|
|  |                                   |  |                           |  |
|  |                                   |  |                           |  |
|  |                                   |  |                           |  |
|  |                                   |  |                           |  |
|  |                                   |  |                           |  |

*After you check your answers, take off the cards and without looking at them write in the boxes in the table above with suitable expressions. Other phrases not on the cards are also possible.*

*Use the key words on the next page to help with the task above. Not all the boxes above have key words.*

**Key words for moving on/changing topic**

*Use the words below to help with the brainstorming task above.*

then  
covered  
item  
mind  
agreement  
look  
anywhere  
subject  
discuss  
turn  
okay  
again  
move  
guess

*While you work your way (quickly) through the agenda of a meeting, try to use key words from above, crossing them off as you do so.*

**Changing topic/Moving on in meetings error correction**

*Find and correct one error in each phrase below.*

So, I think we covered that, so shall we look at the next item on the agenda, if you don't mind?

Right, we all seem to be in agreement, so let's have a look the next topic, shall we?

Anyway, we don't seem to be getting anywhere on that, so I think we should talk about the next agenda, don't you think?

Then, we still have a few more things to discuss, so it's time to turn our attention to the next point, if that's okay.

Okay then, we can talk about this again in the next meeting, so we can move on the next point on the agenda, can't we?

**So cards**

Deal out the cards between you. While you roleplay a meeting, you can discard a card if you use a phrase with "so" to smoothly move onto another topic. You must use a phrase that no one has used so far, but even small changes are fine. Your partner can make you take the card back if you repeat a phrase or change topics too suddenly.

|    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|
| SO | SO | SO | SO |
| SO | SO | SO | SO |
| SO | SO | SO | SO |
| SO | SO | SO | SO |
| SO | SO | SO | SO |
| SO | SO | SO | SO |

### **Possible meeting agenda points**

*Hold a meeting on as many of the topics below as you can, smoothly moving on as soon as you agree or it is clear you can't agree. If you feel more discussion is needed, you can stop your partner moving on.*

- Admin(istration)/ Documents/ Paperwork
- Auditing/ Being audited
- Borrowing/ Debt
- Branches/ Subsidiaries
- Changes in the economy
- Competitiveness
- Compliance
- Conflicts, e.g. between partner companies or different departments
- Contract(s)
- Cooperating/ Working together (joint ventures etc)
- Costs
- Customer feedback/ Market research
- Customer support/ Customer service
- Efficiency
- Freelance staff/ Agency staff
- HR/ Personnel (staffing/ recruitment, job satisfaction, staff development, training, etc)
- Investment(s)
- (New) laws/ regulations
- M&A
- Market share
- Marketing (advertising, sponsorships, etc)
- New markets/ Expanding (abroad)
- Outsourcing
- Pay and conditions (performance-related bonuses, overtime, work-life balance, etc)
- Pensions/ Retirement
- (Short-term/ Long-term) planning/ strategy
- PR (= public relations)/ Media relations
- Property/ Premises
- Problems/ Complaints
- Product launch
- Profit (margins)
- Projects (action plans, progress, etc)
- R&D (= research and investment)/ New products/ Innovation
- Reorganisation/ Restructuring/ Downsizing
- (Re-)scheduling
- Social media
- Staff turnover
- Stockmarket/ Shareholders
- Supplies/ Suppliers

- Tax and social security
- Technology (IT etc)

*Ask about any topics above you didn't understand, then do the same again with a new partner, using those topics you needed to ask about if you can.*