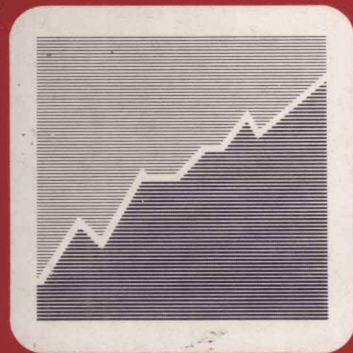


# International Business English

A course in communication skills

Leo Jones and Richard Alexander



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Student



# International Business English

Communication skills  
in English for business purposes

Student's Book

*Leo Jones*

*Richard Alexander*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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# Introduction

## Who is this book for?

- *International Business English* is for business people who need to, or will soon need to, use English in their work. It may also be used by adult students who will be entering the world of business at the end of their course of studies.




## What is 'Business English'?

- Although there is a certain amount of vocabulary that we can describe as special 'business' vocabulary, most so-called business English is simply *English used in business contexts* – it is not a special language. This book provides a wide range of business settings and situations in which you can practise and improve your English, so that you can become more confident, fluent and accurate.

## What does the Student's Book contain?

- Units 1 to 4 introduce the basic business English skills that are essential whatever you're doing in business. These skills will be further practised and expanded in later units. Students who already have practical experience of using English in business may be able to go more rapidly through these early units.
- Units 5 to 14 are based on *integrated activities*. They assume a familiarity with the basic skills introduced and practised in the first four units. Each unit covers a different business situation, and practises a wide range of business skills.
- Unit 15 revises many of the skills introduced and practised in previous units. It takes the form of a simulation with realistic reading, listening and writing tasks, meetings and decision-making.
- Files: if you look at the back of the book (pages 195 to 235), you'll see that there are 116 'Files', which appear to be arranged in random order. In some activities in the book you will be directed to a File at the back of the book. Here you will be given information to act upon or information about the role you will have to play. Your partner will be directed to a different File, so that you each see different information and there is a realistic information gap between you. You will have to react spontaneously to what your partner tells you, or to the information you receive – just as in real life.

## What do the units contain?

- Integrated activities: these include reading, listening and writing tasks as well as discussion, problem-solving and role play. Role play (shown like this: ) is an essential part of the course. Many tasks also involve simulated telephone conversations (). Most parts of the integrated activities are done in pairs or small groups, so that everyone has a chance to participate.
- All *essential* business vocabulary is introduced in context through the texts, instructions and exercises. This essential vocabulary is revised in the Workbook.
- Vocabulary exercises introduce more specialized business vocabulary. Note that every industry (and to some extent, each company or even department) uses a special 'jargon' and such very specialized vocabulary can't be covered.
- Grammar sections revise the main 'problem areas' of English grammar, with exercises based on business situations.
- Functions sections introduce and practise the functional language required in different business situations. In some units this is replaced by a Reading Aloud section, covering pronunciation, stress and intonation difficulties.
- Reading comprehension practice: in every unit reading tasks are integrated within the activities, but in some units there is a separate section, usually leading to a discussion.
-  Listening tasks are integrated within the activities.
- Discussion: in every unit discussion follows naturally from the activities, but in some units there is a separate discussion section.

## What do the Workbook and self-study cassettes contain?

- Follow-up exercises:
  - grammar
  - functions
  - reading aloud (with recorded model readings)
  - essential business vocabulary
- Supplementary exercises:
  - prepositions and prepositional phrases
  - word building
  - writing tasks on letters, telexes, memos, etc
  - listening tasks (based on the self-study cassette)
- An Answer Key with model answers to all exercises.


As you work through the Student's Book and Workbook, always try to relate your own personal knowledge and experience to the activities and exercises you're doing.

We hope you enjoy using *International Business English*!

# 1 Face to face

*An introduction to the skills and techniques required when talking to people in business situations. Meeting and greeting people. Asking questions. Countries and nationalities. Developing relationships.*

## 1.1 First impressions . . .

**A**  Listen to the recording. You'll hear some visitors to an office being greeted and welcomed.

Which of the visitors are greeted in the most friendly and efficient way?  
Which of the visitors are made to feel most welcome?

**B** Work in small groups. Ask your partners these questions:

What do you consider difficult and/or enjoyable about talking to...

- someone you've never met before?
- a superior or someone who could influence your future career?
- someone who is considerably older than you?
- a foreigner? (Perhaps consider several nationalities)
- a member of the public?



**C** What impression do *you* try to give to the people you deal with in business? What impression do you try *not* to give?  
Add some more adjectives to these lists:

I try to be:      *pleasant, sincere, efficient* . . . . .  
I try **not** to be: *unfriendly, shy, aggressive* . . . . .

**D** Find out from your partners *why* they think it's important to give a good first impression when greeting and meeting someone.

What should a receptionist (or the first person a visitor meets) in an office say when they greet a visitor?



## 1.2 Asking questions

**A** Work in pairs. Decide what the *questions* were that led to each of these answers and write them down. Here's an example:

Answer: I'm a receptionist.

Question: *What do you do?*

1. Yes, thanks. I had a very good flight.
2. I'd like to see Mr Perez, if he's in the office.
3. On my last visit I spoke to Ms Meier.
4. It was Mr Grün who recommended this hotel to me.
5. I think I'd like to see round the factory after lunch.
6. No, my husband is travelling with me. I'm meeting him later.
7. We'll probably be staying till Friday morning.
8. No, this is his first visit – he's never been here before.



**B** Imagine that you're having dinner with Mr Singh, a client from India who you get on with very well. He is visiting your country for the first time. Work in pairs and write down *ten* questions you could ask (about his country, firm, impressions of your country, etc). Begin each question differently, like this:

Did...? Are...? Is...? Do...? Does...?  
Have...? Has...? Who...? When...?  
Where...? What...? What kind of...?  
How many...? How much...? How long...?  
Why...?



'Question tags' are often used to check whether we're right or not, as in these examples:

*India is very different from Europe, isn't it?*

*You haven't been round our works, have you?*

*You met Mr Grey yesterday, didn't you?*

**C** Complete these sentences, using question tags:

1. You've met Mr Suzuki, ..... ?
2. It would be best to send them a reminder, ..... ?
3. They don't normally pay up immediately, ..... ?
4. You're waiting to see Miss Weber, ..... ?
5. Mrs de Souza isn't arriving till tomorrow, ..... ?
6. Your new receptionist doesn't speak English, ..... ?
7. It must be quite difficult to sound efficient and friendly towards the end of a long hard day, ..... ?



■ If you find it hard to use 'question tags' accurately, here are some expressions that are easier to use:

*I expect India is very different from Europe?*

*I don't think you've been round our works?*

*I think you spoke to Mr Grey on the phone. Is that right?*



**D** Complete these sentences with information from sentences 1–7:

8. I believe ..... Mr Suzuki?
9. Do you think ..... a reminder?
10. I don't think ..... Is that right?
11. You ..... – that's right, isn't it?
12. As far as I know, Mrs de Souza .....
13. Am I right in saying that ..... ?
14. It ....., don't you think?

---

## 1.3 Do you enjoy your work?




You'll hear four people talking about their work:

1. Listen to each speaker and just answer these questions:  
What is the speaker's job?  
Where does he or she work?
2. Listen to each speaker again and note down your answers to these questions about their work:  
What does each speaker enjoy or find rewarding?  
What does each speaker find annoying or frustrating?
3. Compare your notes with a partner.
4. Ask your partner these questions:  
*Which of the jobs that you have heard about would you most like to do yourself? Why?*  
*Which would you least like to do? Why?*
5. Find out more about your partner's career. Ask about his or her:  
Present job – its rewards and frustrations  
Work experience – previous jobs (or educational courses, if your partner hasn't worked. But do find out about any temporary or part-time jobs your partner has done.)  
Education and training  
Ambitions and prospects for the future
6. When you have both finished, join another pair and tell them what you have discovered about each other.

## 1.4 Have you met . . . ?

Functions

 Listen to the three conversations. You'll hear some people meeting and being introduced to each other.

Here are some useful expressions you can use in such situations:



Good afternoon. May I introduce myself. My name's Alex White and I'm the new...

Good morning, my name's Brown. I've got an appointment with Mr. Green at 11 o'clock.

How do you do. I'm Chris Grey. Pleased to meet you.

Hello, I'm Pat Black. I'll just let Mr Green know you're here.

Ms Smith, I'd like you to meet Mrs Jones. Mrs Jones is from...

Hello, Sandy, have you met Rita Clarke? She's our new...

How do you do. I've been looking forward to meeting you. Hello/Hi! Nice to meet you.

Did you have a good journey? Is this your first visit to...

Mr Evans, have you met Miss Lucas? She's from...

Morning, Eddie. Do you know Jo Gibson, our new...?


Yes, I think we've met before. Good to see you again!

Would you like some coffee?

Yes, we met in..., didn't we? Nice to see you again!

Would you like something to drink?

That's right. Hello again. How are you? Yes, it was last summer, I think. How are things?

 The class is divided into two teams: if you're in the A team, look at File 1 at the back of the book on page 195. If you're in the B team, look at File 7 on page 197.

## 1.5 Around the world

### Vocabulary

**A** What do you call someone who comes from each of these countries? The first two are done for you as examples:

Someone from Scotland is *a Scotsman or Scotswoman*

Someone from Italy is *an Italian*.....

Someone from Wales is .....

Someone from .....

Australia	Canada	the USA	India
Pakistan	Sweden	Norway	Saudi Arabia
France	New Zealand	Japan	Holland



**B** Work in pairs. Make a list of the following:

5 Latin American nations

5 African states

5 countries in the Middle East

5 Asian countries

5 countries in the European Community (EEC)

5 countries in Eastern Europe

**C** When you're ready, join another pair. Ask them to tell you what they would call *a person* from each of the countries on your list. And do they know what *languages* are spoken in each country?

**D** People often have stereotyped ideas about foreigners – and even about people from other regions of their own country . . .

Ask the others in your group to describe 'a typical American', 'a typical English person', and other 'typical' nationalities from the lists you made.


To what extent are such stereotypes helpful and/or dangerous?

---

## 1.6 Developing relationships


**A** Work in groups and ask each other these questions:

- In your own workplace or place of study, who do you call by their first names, and who by their surnames?
- Who do you address at work using the familiar or polite forms of *you* in your language (*du/Sie, tu/vous, tu/lei, tu/Usted*, etc)?
- Are there people who use your first name but who *you* are expected to call by their surnames?
- Would this be any different with British or American people you work with? Or with other nationalities than your own?
- Who do you talk to at work about your family and after-work activities? Who do you meet socially outside work?

**B**  You'll hear five short conversations between people who work in the same firm. Note down your answers to these questions about each conversation:

1. What is the relationship between the speakers?
2. What are their jobs?
3. What are they talking about?


■ A cool, formal relationship often becomes warmer and more friendly as people get to know each other better.


**C**  Imagine that you and the others in the class are taking part in a **management training course**. You meet on Monday mornings. Your teacher will play the role of 'tutor'.

1. This is your first meeting. Introduce yourself to some of the other trainees. Stop talking when the 'tutor' arrives.
2. A week has passed. Talk to the person next to you until the 'tutor' arrives.
3. Now a month has passed. During this time you have got to know the other trainees much better. Talk to the person next to you until the 'tutor' arrives.
4. Now another month has passed and it's the last week of the course. Talk to the person next to you until the 'tutor' arrives.

**D** As you get to know someone you do business with (e.g. a client or supplier), it's useful to find out what your common interests are. Then you can have a social conversation as well as 'talking shop' (talking about business).

1. Work in pairs. Make a list of some general or more personal topics that you can talk about as you get to know someone better. These topics may vary according to the age, sex and importance and nationality of your companion – and your own interests.
2. Discuss your list with another pair.

3.  Form a pair with someone from a different group. Role play a meeting between a client and supplier. Imagine that you only meet twice a year, but you've established a good relationship.

 Here are some useful expressions you can use at the beginning and end of your meeting:



4. Role-play another meeting with a different companion.

## 1.7 It's not just what you say . . .

*Discussion*

**A** Try this quiz with a partner.

- Which is the best definition of a good conversationalist?
  - Someone who always has plenty to say.
  - Someone who has plenty of amusing stories to tell.
  - Someone who will listen carefully to what you have to say.
  - None of these (*give your own definition*).
- If someone just says 'What?' after you've carefully explained something, do you . . .
  - go through the explanation again using different words?
  - feel that you have been wasting your time?
  - feel that you have not been believed?
  - None of these (*give your own definition*).
- If someone always looks you straight in the eye, this means that they are
  - honest
  - rude
  - trying to frighten you
  - being friendly



4. If someone smiles while you're explaining something, this means they are . . .  
a not sincere    b happy    c not listening    d crazy
5. If someone frowns whilst you're explaining something, this means they . . .  
a are angry    b don't understand    c are concentrating  
d have a headache
6. If someone sighs while you're explaining something, this means that they are:  
a bored    b impatient    c unhappy    d suffering from indigestion
7. If a man wearing jeans and no tie comes into your office, do you think he . . .  
a isn't correctly dressed?    b can't be important?    c is quite normal?  
d is someone who has come to fix the electricity or something?
8. If someone shakes your hand very hard and long, this means . . .  
a they are very pleased to see you  
b they are trying to show you that they are sincere  
c they are waiting for you to say something  
d they are reliable and friendly
9. If a Canadian businessman keeps stepping backwards while he's talking to a Mexican businessman, this means . . .  
a he doesn't like Mexicans  
b the Mexican is trying to be too friendly  
c Northern people don't feel comfortable standing as close to another person as Southern people normally do  
d Canadians are less friendly than Mexicans.
10. If you are receiving a business card from a Japanese person, it is more polite to take it with . . .  
a your left hand    b your right hand    c both hands  
d one hand and present your own card with the other
11. If you are meeting an Arab client it is polite to . . .  
a get straight down to business  
b wait until *he* raises the topic of business  
c stick to small talk for the first few minutes  
d ask him to close the door of his office to prevent interruptions.

**B** Now form a larger group and discuss how the impression you may give, especially to a foreigner, can be affected by:

- Your expression (smiling, blinking, frowning, looking someone straight in the eye, looking down, etc)
- The noises you make (sighs, yawns, knocking loudly or softly at a door, clicking a ballpoint pen, etc)
- Body contact (shaking hands, touching, etc)
- Body language (crossing your arms, sitting up straight, etc)
- Your clothes and appearance (hair, make-up, suit, tie, etc)
- What you talk about (politics, business, sport, family, etc)
- Your tone of voice (sounding cool, friendly, familiar, serious, etc)

## 2 Letters, telexes and memos

*How to lay out a business letter and envelope.  
Some 'golden rules' for writing letters, memos,  
telexes etc. Practice in planning and writing  
letters, telexes and memos. Joining sentences.  
Reading names and addresses aloud.*

### 2.1 Speaking and writing

*Discussion*

**A** First, read this memo:

---


**MEMORANDUM**

---

Date: 24/4/–

From: H.G.W. To: Department managers  
Subject: In-service English classes

1. From Monday 8 May English classes will be held in the Training Centre (room 3.17). There will be 2 groups: advanced level (10.30–12.00) and intermediate level (8.30–10.00). Please encourage your staff to attend one of the sessions. All teaching materials will be provided but students will be expected to do homework and preparation outside working hours.
2. Please send me the names of all interested staff by noon on Wednesday 26 May. They will be given an informal oral test during the first week in May so that we can decide which of the classes is best for them.
3. The size of each class will be limited to 12 participants.

**B**  You will hear a conversation on the same subject. What were the differences between the memo and the conversation?

**C** Work in small groups. Ask your partners these questions and make notes on their answers:

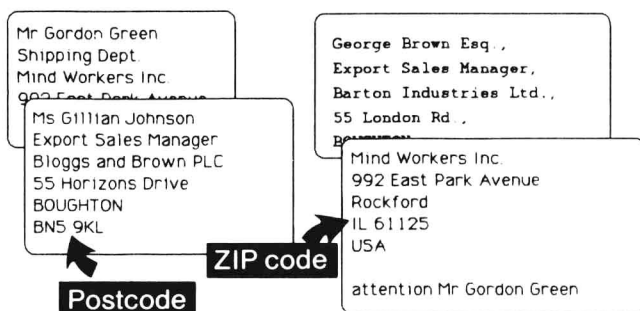
1. What are the advantages of communicating with someone in a face-to-face meeting?
2. And what are the disadvantages of this?
3. What are the advantages of communicating with someone in writing?
4. And what are the disadvantages of this?
5. What does the term 'business English' mean to you?



## 2.2 The right address

Reading aloud

**A** How is the layout of these addresses different from the way addresses are laid out in your country?



**B** Listen to the recording and address each 'envelope' correctly. (Later, you can check your answers in File 77.)

**C** Work in pairs. One of you should look at File 3, the other at 10. Dictate the addresses there to one another: you should spell out the difficult words. Dictate your own address, too.

( Later you can hear them read aloud on the tape.)

## 2.3 Abbreviations

Vocabulary

Complete these sentences by explaining what the abbreviations printed in bold type mean. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1. **Rd.**, **St.** and **Sq.** are short for .....
2. **#24** in the USA and **No. 24** in Britain both mean .....
3. On an envelope the abbreviations **c/o**, **Attn.** and **P.O.B.** mean .....
4. You may see these in a report or textbook: **e.g.** or **eg**, **i.e.** or **ie**, **etc.** or **etc** and **P.T.O.** They stand for .....  
And you may also find these: **cf.** (compare), **do.** (ditto) and **viz.** (namely).
5. A British firm's name may be followed by **plc** or **PLC**, **Ltd**, **Bros** or **& Co.**  
These are short for .....
6. An American firm's name may be followed by **Corp.** or **Inc.**, meaning .....
7. In a printed text you may see these abbreviations: **@ ¥ 3000 each**,  
**© 1989**, **Apple®** and **Macintosh™**. They mean .....
8. At the end of an informal letter, you might add a **P.S.**, in other words a .....
9. At the end of a formal business letter it's common to use the abbreviations **c.c.** and **enc.** or **encl.**, which stand for .....
10. But you'd only see these in *very* old-fashioned correspondence:  
**ult.** (last month), **inst.** (..... month) and **prox.** (..... month)!