

# 3 Meeting in Malta

In this unit we practise:

- ◆ business vocabulary – meetings and telling the time
- ◆ business language – meetings and checking opinion
- ◆ cross-cultural focus – cultural sensitivity and insensitivity
- ◆ business focus – successful meetings
- ◆ simulation – meeting 1 – finding a solution



Aurora Picardi



Walter Armitage



Carlo Rospo



Costas Tsappanis



Alison Fisher



Tony Kallus

## START UP

*'Life is too short for long meetings.'*  
Klaus Klages, businessman

- 1 What does Klaus Klages mean by this? How much time do you spend in meetings in a normal week?
- 2 Here are some ideas for successful meetings. Put them into order of importance (1 = most important, 6 = least important).

Successful meetings need:

- the right people
- enough time
- a comfortable room
- the right information in advance
- biscuits and coffee
- the right equipment (e.g. computers, projector)



- 3 Match the meeting word to the description:

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| 1 agenda               | a coffee, drinks, biscuits                            |
| 2 minutes of meeting   | b Any Other Business = last point on the agenda       |
| 3 chairperson          | c list of points to discuss at a meeting              |
| 4 refreshments         | d machine that projects computer screen onto the wall |
| 5 participants         | e report written after the meeting                    |
| 6 flipchart            | f person in charge of the meeting                     |
| 7 multimedia projector | g board with large sheets of paper                    |
| 8 AOB                  | h people who go to a meeting                          |



4

Listen to the four short conversations and cross (X) the incorrect sentences below.

[http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=1918&filename=Track16\\_Unit3\\_page26\\_activities4and5\\_conversation1.mp3](http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=1918&filename=Track16_Unit3_page26_activities4and5_conversation1.mp3)

Conversation 1

- The plane was late.
- Walter has some Maltese money.
- They are going to walk to the hotel.
- Toni is Aurora's cousin.
- Walter thinks Malta is very large.



[http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=35&filename=Track17\\_Unit3\\_page26\\_activities4\\_5\\_conversation2.mp3](http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=35&filename=Track17_Unit3_page26_activities4_5_conversation2.mp3)



Conversation 2

- Walter starts the meeting in the car.
- Aurora wants to start the meeting later.
- Walter is interested in Maltese architecture.

[http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=36&filename=Track18Unit3\\_page26\\_activities4\\_5\\_conversation3.mp3](http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=36&filename=Track18Unit3_page26_activities4_5_conversation3.mp3)

Conversation 3

- Aurora offers Walter some refreshments.
- Walter gave Toni a tip.
- Walter is worried about eating the local food.
- Carlo is late for the meeting.



[http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=37&filename=Track19Unit3\\_page26\\_activities4\\_and\\_5\\_conversation4.mp3](http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=37&filename=Track19Unit3_page26_activities4_and_5_conversation4.mp3)



Conversation 4

- Pelleas Business Hotels is thinking of buying the Grand Hotel.
- Walter has to write a report about the hotel.
- The hotel is very old-fashioned.
- Business for the last six months has been better.



5

Here are some useful phrases from the four conversations. Listen again, and write down which conversation they come from.

- Did you have a pleasant flight?
- ... did you get the agenda I sent you?
- So, item four.
- ... here's a copy...
- Water would be great. Thanks.
- I have a very specific objective ...
- ... the thing is ...
- ... and we can carry on this discussion later ...
- ... just before we go ...
- ... it's important to remember that ...

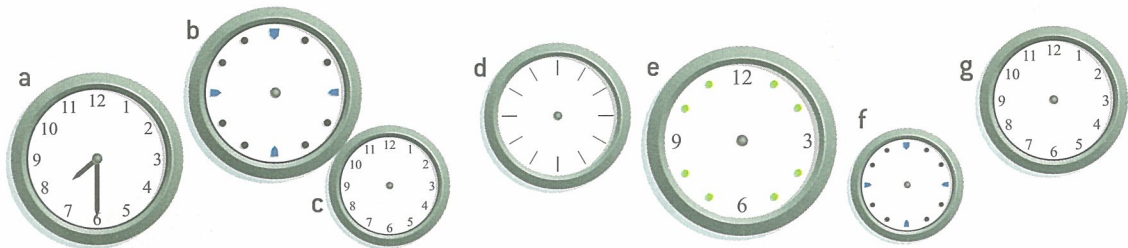
1 Pairwork. Look at the list of daily routines. Draw what time you do these things on to the clocks below and discuss with your partner.

- a get up
- b start work
- c have lunch
- d go home
- e start your English class
- f finish your English class
- g go to bed

I normally get up at half past seven.

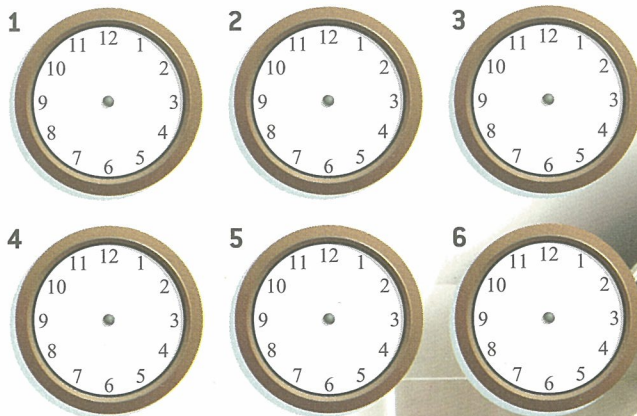
*Hot tip - remember!*

always = 100%  
 normally = 75%  
 sometimes = 50%  
 occasionally = 25%  
 rarely = 10%  
 never = 0%



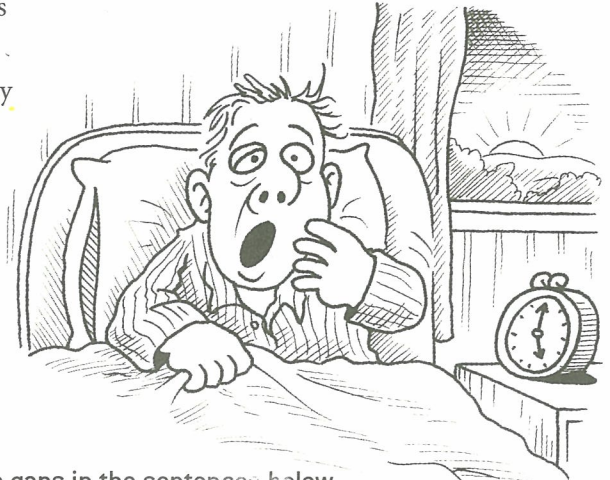
2 A group of six models from 'Vogue' magazine are staying at the hotel for a fashion photo shoot. Carlo wants to check the times for their wake-up calls in the morning. Listen and draw the hands on the clocks for each wake-up time.

[http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=38&filename=Track20\\_Unit3\\_page27\\_activity2.mp3](http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=38&filename=Track20_Unit3_page27_activity2.mp3)



3 Aurora, Walter and Carlo used a lot of expressions to talk about time in their conversations on page 26. Join the two sides together below. Sometimes there is more than one possible answer.

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 a two-year    | a a day / week / month / year / century |
| 2 the last      | b early / late                          |
| 3 about five    | c time                                  |
| 4 every         | d three years                           |
| 5 it's already  | e period                                |
| 6 too           | f Wednesday                             |
| 7 on            | g minutes                               |
| 8 once or twice | h 4.30 p.m.                             |



4 Now write five sentences about yourself using the expressions which you think are most useful to you. You can change the time or the numbers if necessary.

*I always have to get up too early.*

5 Listen to conversation 4 on page 26 again and fill in the gaps in the sentences below.

- 1 'It's too early to make decisions like this.'
- 2 'The hotel isn't ..... well.'
- 3 'But ... it ..... a difference how you view the statistics.'
- 4 'Maybe we could ..... something here.'
- 5 'We don't want to ..... a mistake.'

6 The words *make* and *do* are used in many combinations in English. *Make* is often used for results or products, and *do* is often used for activities or processes.

Write *make* or *do* in front of the words below. Two of them can use both. If you're not sure, ask the teacher.

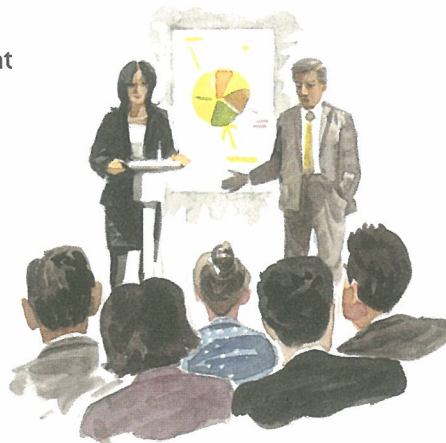
- |                                |                       |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 <u>make</u> ..... a decision | 9 ..... business      |
| 2 ..... a test                 | 10 ..... a phone call |
| 3 ..... love                   | 11 ..... a deal       |
| 4 ..... an exam                | 12 ..... a mistake    |
| 5 ..... a difference           | 13 ..... nothing      |
| 6 ..... a presentation         | 14 ..... an offer     |
| 7 ..... something              | 15 ..... a profit     |
| 8 ..... a point                | 16 ..... a job        |

7 Write three sentences about yourself with *make* and three with *do*. Compare your sentences with other people in your class.

[http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=39&filename=Track21Unit3\\_page29\\_activities\\_1\\_and\\_2.mp3](http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=39&filename=Track21Unit3_page29_activities_1_and_2.mp3)

1 On Monday morning Walter and Aurora call a meeting with all the staff from the Grand Hotel. Listen and circle the points that they talk about. Are the staff worried?

- ◆ selling the hotel
- ◆ bathrooms and plumbing
- ◆ ways to improve the hotel
- ◆ new computer systems
- ◆ the Pelleas sales conference
- ◆ customer service
- ◆ a report
- ◆ staff salaries
- ◆ Walter's job
- ◆ new markets



2 Here are some helpful expressions to use in meetings. Listen again and put the words into the right order.

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1 start so we shall <u>So, shall we start?</u> | 6 reason there's to no  |
| 2 perhaps think I                              | 7 need what we to is do |
| 3 about just what                              | 8 is the point          |
| 4 know to we'd like                            | 9 fact is the           |
| 5 to it's important well                       | 10 we how can           |

3 The international construction company, Bergerbild AG, is planning its next sales conference and the management team are meeting to discuss where to go. Use some of the phrases from exercise 2 above to fill in the gaps:

FRANK: Good. Is everybody here? <sup>1)</sup> What we need to do today is plan our next sales conference. <sup>2)</sup> ..... ? Selina, <sup>3)</sup> ..... it would be a good idea if you told us what you have found out about possible venues. I'm sure <sup>4)</sup> ..... where you plan to take us this year.

SELINA: Of course, Mr Churchill. <sup>5)</sup> ..... make sure that the conference is a success. Our sales people need the motivation. So I'm looking at three possible places: a chateau hotel in the Champagne area in France, a trip on a ship around the Greek islands and a lovely hotel in Malta which ...

SEAN: But <sup>6)</sup> ..... afford this? Sales figures last year were terrible ...

FRANK: Last year was a very bad year for our industry. <sup>7)</sup> ..... our guys did a good job in difficult circumstances. So <sup>8)</sup> ..... letting Selina finish?

4 In the two meetings how did Joseph interrupt Walter, and how did Sean interrupt Selina? What other ways can you interrupt somebody when they are talking? Which way would you use to interrupt a colleague? Which way to interrupt a top manager?

**Hot tip!**  
 Sometimes we need to interrupt people. The simplest way is to use 'But...'. Don't do this too often, however, or your business partners will become angry. It's usually best to let them finish what they want to say before you speak.

5 Look at these two question tags, or 'checking questions':

You're going to sell the Grand, aren't you?



You don't want this hotel to be sold, do you?



How are they different from these questions?

Are you going to sell the hotel?

Do you want this hotel to be sold?

What is the reason for asking a checking question?

What do you notice about the form?

6 Finish these checking questions with a suitable ending. Then listen and check your answers.

Repeat the checking question after the speaker, using the same intonation pattern.

[http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=40&filename=Track22\\_Unit3\\_page30\\_activity6.mp3](http://jeisee.com/tten/text/download/sound/?id=40&filename=Track22_Unit3_page30_activity6.mp3)

- 1 You have checked, haven't you?
- 2 We're not late, .....
- 3 They didn't come, .....
- 4 You will phone, .....
- 5 He sent the email, .....
- 6 She can access the data, .....
- 7 He doesn't know, .....
- 8 He wasn't invited, .....

7 Aurora has some information about Walter already. Turn these ordinary questions into checking questions that she might ask him.

- 1 Are you Scottish? You're Scottish, aren't you?
- 2 Do you live in Boston? You live in Boston, don't you?
- 3 Are you married? .....
- 4 Have you always worked in the UK and America? .....
- 5 Have you never been to continental Europe before? .....
- 6 Can you play golf? .....
- 7 Don't you speak Maltese? .....

8 On the plane over from the US Walter read the interview with Aurora in 'Career Woman' magazine (there was a copy on the plane). Read the interview on page 5 in unit 1 again and, with your partner, write some checking questions that he might ask her.



- 1 Listen to the first three conversations from page 26 again.  
 What does Walter say about the different points below?  
 How do you think somebody from Malta might react to his opinions?

	Walter's opinion	Reaction
Maltese money	<i>He thinks the money looks like Monopoly money.</i>	
Island size		
Buildings		
Food		

- 2 Look at these three descriptions of Walter. Which description fits him best. Why?





- 1 Walter is very rude and unfriendly. He doesn't like Malta because it is small, the buildings are old and the food is strange.
- 2 Walter doesn't know much about Malta, but he is interested in finding out more.
- 3 Walter finds many things strange about Malta. He doesn't realise that his attitude to the country is insensitive and could seem rude to Aurora.

- 3 Walter talks about four things to do with Malta. Think about his background and write down reasons why he might think like this about Malta.

	US / UK background
Money	<i>He is used to everything being in US dollars, a major international currency. He hasn't travelled outside the US and UK, so another currency seems strange.</i>
Island size	
Buildings	
Food	

- 4 Listen to the fourth conversation from page 26. This time Walter's attitude to the food is different.  
 How and why has he changed?

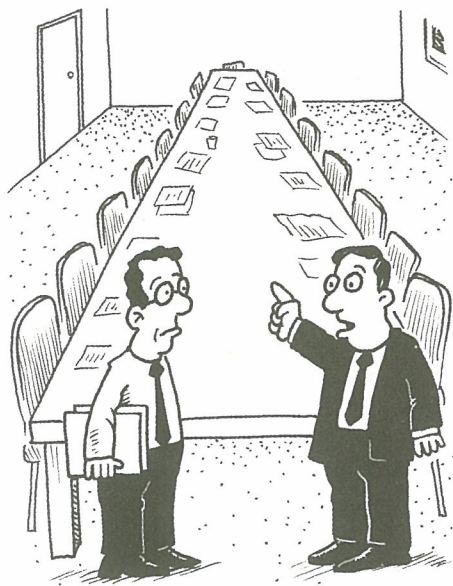
5 Look at the pictures below of scenes that are fairly typical of many Mediterranean cultures. Why might Walter be surprised and how could you explain them to him culturally? Discuss with your partner and then present your explanations to the class.

What Walter sees	Walter's probable reaction	Cultural explanation
	<p>These people are lazy!</p>	<p>In hot countries it makes sense to have a work break at the hottest part of the day.</p>
		
		
		

6 What might surprise Walter if he visited your culture? How would you explain it to him?



- 1 Read this article from 'Career Woman' magazine about holding meetings. Which tip do you find most useful?



'He said we're going to have a very long meeting.'

## Meeting Mania by Purdy Smith

Meetings fill a large part of our working life. If you are organising one how can you make sure that it is as effective as possible? Follow these tips and make your meeting life a little bit easier.

- Tip 1** ✦ Check you really need a meeting. When you are certain about this, only invite the people who can discuss the issues properly. This will save time right from the beginning.
- Tip 2** ✦ Check what you know about these people. Are they meeting for the first time? Are they from different departments, companies or even countries? Do they have different levels of responsibility? Are any of them difficult or likely to cause problems? Will there be any communication problems?
- Tip 3** ✦ Try to keep it small. A group of psychologists recently found that a meeting with seven or fewer people will usually come to an agreement after listening to and discussing each other's views, while a larger group will often just follow the speaker who talks loudest.
- Tip 4** ✦ Think about what time you want to have it. Sometimes the early morning is good because

2

Early morning + people have more energy, but ...  
 - people may arrive late

Late morning + people motivated to finish before lunch, but ...  
 - some people can't think if they are hungry!

Early afternoon + people have time to prepare for the meeting in the morning, but ...  
 - many people sleepy after lunch

Late afternoon + decisions quicker because people want to finish and go home, but ...  
 - quality of decisions not always so good

Here are the journalist's notes about the advantages and disadvantages for Tip 4. With your partner, use them to finish the article.

Tip 4: Sometimes the early morning is good because people are full of energy, but they may ...

- 3 What other tips can you think of to make meetings more effective? Discuss with your partner and present your ideas to the class.



1

**Stage 1**

Divide into two groups, A and B. You work for a manufacturing company in a large European city. The company has around 1,000 office staff and 800 factory workers. Your boss wants you to go to a meeting to discuss two agenda items.

**Stage 2**

**Group A:** read the information on page 123 and prepare for a meeting with **Group B**.

**Group B:** read the information on page 122 and prepare for a meeting with **Group A**.

**Stage 3**

**Group A and B:** hold a meeting and find joint solutions to Item 1 and 2.

**Stage 4**

Write an email to your boss telling him or her what you agreed for both points.

**Meeting Agenda**

June 18th

**Item 1** Car park**Item 2** Office dress policy

## Pauline's Problems

- 1 Read the email which Aurora sent to her best friend, Pauline. Complete the email using words from the box.

won't mistake copy difference  
period agenda pleasant ~~minutes~~



Re. Big mistake!

New Reply Reply All Forward Flag Print Delete Send & Receive Address Book Find

From: a.picardi@pelleas.com  
To: p\_lafayette@yoohoo.com  
Subject: Re. Big mistake!  
Date: March 4th

Dear Pauline,

Yes, I think you are right. Going to sleep in the middle of a meeting when you are sitting next to the boss and are meant to be writing the <sup>1)</sup> **minutes** ..... is not a good idea. And I think you made a <sup>2)</sup> ..... sending that text message to the sales manager. You are lucky you still have a job! You will be more careful at your next meeting, <sup>3)</sup> ..... you?  
Drink lots of coffee if it's boring.

Walter Armitage from headquarters arrived at the weekend. He was born in Scotland but has worked in the US for a long time and he's very American in his business style. Practically the first thing he did when we were driving in the car to the hotel was get out a <sup>4)</sup> ..... of the <sup>5)</sup> ..... that he wanted to discuss. I think he wants to sell the hotel, so the meeting was not very <sup>6)</sup> ..... at first, but at least I made him see that in the last six-month <sup>7)</sup> ....., things have started getting better. I don't know if this report he is writing will make any <sup>8)</sup> ..... if the top management really want to sell us.

Must go as my assistant, Carlo, is flirting with the guests – again!  
I'll write when I have more time.

Love,  
Aurora



**1** Complete the data bank with language that is useful for you.  
The language in columns 1 and 5 should come from the unit.

1 Key word(s)	2 Model sentence	3 Similar (S) or opposite (O)	4 Translation
agenda	There are 10 points on the agenda.		

5 Useful phrases or idioms	6 Translation
What we need to do is ...	

7 When can I use the language or ideas from this unit?