



### Too formal for most business meetings

*What problem do all the sentences below share?*

- "Please do come in and make yourself comfortable."
- "I hope our country/ city/ new office meets with your approval."
- "Ladies and gentlemen/ Gentlemen/ Sirs..."
- "If I might have your attention for just a second or two..."
- "I would like to call the meeting to order."
- "On behalf of ..., let me formally welcome you to..."/ "We are absolutely thrilled to welcome you all to..."
- "Before we begin, I would like to take a moment to introduce the people who have graciously agreed to share their time with us today."
- "On my immediate right is ...."
- "I think you have all already had the pleasure of meeting my colleague here John Elton."
- "Apologies have been received from Alex Case and Julie Walters."
- "I hope my attempt to email you all the agenda for this meeting was successful."
- "We have an awful lot to get through today, so if you could possibly keep the timings on the agenda in mind that would be a great help and would be very much appreciated."
- "The chair recognizes Michael Borodin."
- "I would now like to call on Bruce Vain to say a few words."
- "Seconded."/ "I second the motion."
- "While I respect the opinion of my esteemed colleague,..."
- "Mr Chairman/ Madam Chairman,..."
- "If I might be so bold as to attempt to summarize your point,..."
- "I move to accept Mr Smith's proposal."
- "Are there any corrections to the minutes?... If there are no (further) corrections, the minutes stand."
- "The chair rules that the motion is out of order."
- "I propose that we have a vote on the matter."
- "All those in favour say Aye."/ "Those in favour please raise their right hands and say Aye."
- "Those opposed will raise their left hands and say No."
- "The Ayes have it."/ "I proclaim the vote passed."/ "The ayes have it and the motion is adopted/ carried."
- "The noes have it and the motion is lost."

*Apart from when you are trying to be humorous, the language above is too formal/ too polite for most business meetings. Are there any examples which you think you could use in any of your own business meetings?*

*What are the general differences between formal and informal language?*

*Change the phrases above to make them more informal. They don't have to be very informal, just suitable for at least some of your own business meetings.*



### Suggested answers

- "Please do come in and make yourself comfortable." – "Please come in and take a seat"/ "Please sit anywhere you like"
- "I hope...meets with your approval." – "What do you think about... (so far)?"
- "Ladies and gentlemen/ Gentlemen/ Sirs..." – "Hi everyone"
- "If I might have your attention for just a second or two..." – (*cough*)/ "Sorry. Can I...?"
- "I would like to call the meeting to order." – "Right. Shall we get started?"
- "We are absolutely thrilled to welcome you all to..." – "Welcome to..."/ "It's a pleasure to welcome you to..."
- "Before we begin, I would like to take a moment to introduce the people who have graciously agreed to share their time with us today." – "Before we start, I'd like to introduce..."
- "On my immediate right is ...." – "This is..."
- "I think you have all already had the pleasure of meeting my colleague here John Elton." – "I think you all know my colleague John"/ "Is there anyone who hasn't met John?"
- "Apologies have been received from Alex Case and Julie Walters." – "Alex and Julie can't make it because..."/ "Unfortunately, Alex and Julie had to go to..."
- "I hope my attempt to email you all the agenda for this meeting was successful." – "Did you all receive the agenda?"
- "We have an awful lot to get through today, so if you could possibly keep the timings on the agenda in mind that would be a great help and would be very much appreciated." – "There's a lot to get through, so let's try and stick to the timings on the agenda"
- "The chair recognizes Michael Borodin." – "Yes, Michael. Did you want to say something?"
- "I would now like to call on Bruce Vain to say a few words." – "Bruce, can you give your opinion on this?"
- "Seconded."/ "I second the motion." – "I second that."/ "I agree."/ "I support that."
- "While I respect the opinion..." – "I can see your point of view, but..."
- "Mr Chairman/ Madam Chairman,..." – (*The chair's name*)
- "If I might be so bold as to attempt to summarize your point,..." – "So, what you are saying is..."/ "So basically, you think..., right?"
- "I move to accept Mr Smith's proposal." – "I think we should go with John's idea"
- "If there are no (further) corrections, the minutes stand." – "Does anyone have any comment on the minutes of the last meeting?"
- "The chair rules that the motion is out of order." – "I'm afraid that's not the topic of today's meeting"/ "We'll have to talk about that another time (I'm afraid)"
- "I propose that we have a vote on the matter." – "Let's have a vote on it."/ "Shall we decide it with a vote?"/ "Shall we have a show of hands?"
- "All those in favour say Aye." – "How many people agree?"
- "Those opposed will raise their left hands" – "If you don't agree, put up your hands now."
- "The Ayes have it." – "It seems that most people agree, so that's what we will do."
- "The Noes have it and the motion is lost." – "Most people seem to disagree, so we'll have to think of something else."