Teleconference and videoconference functional language
What are the functions of each of the pairs of sentences below?
"The one with the heading Personnel in bold"
"Do you all have it (on the screen) in front of you now?"

"Sorry. Alex. I'd like to come in here if I may."
"Sorry, could I just jump in for a second?"

"Who was it who said…?"
"Was that you, John?"

"Any reactions?"
"I think maybe Dan has something to add."

"Sorry, could I just confirm something?"
"Sorry, I didn't catch the last / first part."

"There's a bit of a delay/ echo."
"Can you move the microphone?"

"You're out of focus"
"You're quite jerky"

"Let's take five, shall we?"
"Shall we take a comfort break?"

"Let's first check who is with us."
"There are two Akiras, so please call me Aki and him Akira."

"Richard has just come back in."
"Don't hang up, I'll be just a second."

Match these headings to the sections above:
● Taking a break
● Dealing with names
● Trying to interrupt someone
● Making sure everyone has a chance to speak
● Talking about documents
● Checking what someone means
● Checking who said something
● Talking about the sound
● Talking about the image
● Leaving the room

Brainstorm at least two more phrases for each of the sections above.

Check your answers with the next page. Did you have any which are not there?

Suggested answers
Talking about documents
"…the one with the heading Personnel in bold."
"Do you all have it (on the screen) in front of you now?"
"Can you all have a look at the beginning/ middle/ end of the document/ page/ table?"
"…the first/ second/ next/ next to last/ last bullet point/ sentence/ graph."
"The top/ bottom row/ paragraph/ sentence"
"The second row/ figure/ word/ column from the bottom/ top/ left/ right."
"It's about halfway down the page. Can you all see it?"
"That's the one. There are seven bullet points. Look at the second to last one."
"I've used italics for the bits I want to check with you all."
"If you open up (the document called) Appendix Two…"

Try to interrupt someone
"Sorry. Alex. I'd like to come in here if I may."
"Sorry, could I just jump in for a second?"
"This is Alex. Can I say something?"
"Alex speaking. Can I mention something here?"
"Sorry, it's Alex. May I add something here?"
"Sorry to interrupt you. It's Alex."
"Alex. Can I just say something here?"
"Sorry to interrupt but could I just ask a quick question?"
"This is Alex again"

Check who said something
"Who was it who said…?"
"Was that you, John?"
"Sorry. Who was that just speaking?"
"Sorry, can you say your name before you speak?"
"Would I be right in thinking that was… (speaking)?"

Make sure everyone has a chance to speak
"Any reactions?"
"I think maybe Dan has something to add."
"Anything else, anyone?"
"Alex?"
"Shall we go round the group and get everyone's opinion before opening up the discussion?"
"Perhaps you could start, Egbert."
"Thanks Egbert. Harry?"
"Charlie, do you have anything that you'd like to add?"
"I'd also like to hear Steven's opinion on this."
"Thank you Dan. Takeshi, you wanted to say something, I think.
"Ideas, anyone?"
"Mr Schmidt, would you like to say something?"

Check what someone means
"Sorry, could I just confirm something?"
"Sorry, I didn't catch the last / first part."
"Sorry, could you say that again, please?"
"Sorry, could you repeat the part about the sales figures?"
"Do you mean…?"

Talking about the sound
"There's a bit of a delay/ echo."
"Can you move the microphone?"
"I can't hear you very well"
"Really? I can hear you fine"
"I'll check the microphone"
"Sorry about that. I'll speak a little louder."
"Have you checked the speaker and microphone settings?"
"Can you hear me?"

Talking about the image
"You're out of focus"
"You're quite jerky"
"Your image has frozen"
"We'll just have to continue without the video"
"We'll get the camera fixed and then reschedule"
"I'll try and continue without the video while my colleague tries to sort it out"
"The screen is (still) blank."
"There's a delay on the video"
"Is the picture okay?"
"I can't see the people at the sides of the table."

Take a break
"Let's take five, shall we?"
"Shall we take a comfort break?"
"Can I suggest that we take a five minute break here?"
"How about a short break at this point, so that we can stretch our legs?"
"I think a few people are finding it difficult to concentrate."

Dealing with names
"Let's first check who is with us."
"There are two Akiras, so please call me Aki and him Akira."
"I'll just go round the table so you know who's here."
"This is my colleague…"
"Shall we (all) introduce ourselves first?"
"I'll call out your names (one by one)"
"Could you acknowledge when you hear your name?"
"Perhaps we should start by saying who is here."
"First of all, should we use first or last names?"
"Can everyone say how they'd like to be addressed?"

Leaving the room

"Richard has just come back in."

"Don't hang up, I'll be just a second."

"Hi, this is Miguel. I'm back."

"I just need to get some papers. I'll be back in a couple of minutes."

"Does anyone have to leave early?"

"Juan has to leave now, but we can just carry on without him."

"I just have to step out of the room and see someone. I'll phone you back in two minutes."

"Sorry about that. Shall we carry on?"

Choose eight to ten useful phrases for you from the list above and copy them onto blank paper. Roleplay a teleconference or videoconference and use as many of the phrases during it as you can.

Do the same with these phrases:

OK, so we're just waiting for *(name)*
I think we should just start (without him/ her)/ Let's go ahead and get the meeting started and hopefully he'll join us later
(name), could you first of all just fill us in on what's going on?
Excuse me, *(name)* has joined.
(name) (Are you) still there?
That's it (for now)
I suggest we schedule another conference call for (day and time).
Okay, thanks everyone.