

First contact line by line brainstorming and jigsaw

Look at just the title below, covering the rest of the text with a piece of paper, book, etc. Brainstorm suitable phrases for that situation, choose the most suitable phrase that you brainstormed, then reveal just the hint in the next section to see if you have the right idea. If you had the wrong idea of what was coming next, brainstorm again. Then look at the next section with the wording to see how similar it is to what you guessed. Brainstorm possible responses to that line, then choose which phrase you thought of is most likely to be coming up. Look at the next hint (only) to see if you had the right idea, then brainstorm again if it not similar to your ideas. Then reveal the next line. Continue in the same way, always guessing before revealing, until the end of the worksheet.

Useful phrases for doing the activity

- “(In this situation) I think (s)he will say/ write/ ask/ reply...”
- “I think we should say/ write/ ask/ reply...”
- “Actually, (in this situation) I think it’s more common to say/ write/ ask/ reply...”
- “I think you’re right. Let’s check the hint.”
- “I can’t think of any more ideas. Why don’t we look at the hint?”
- “I have no idea. Shall we look at the hint?”
- “That hint matches what we said, so let’s look at the phrases”
- “That doesn’t match what we brainstormed, so we need to think of more phrases”
- “That’s slightly different to what we said, but I think our phrases are also okay. What is the reply, do you think?”
- “Okay, that seems fine. What comes next, do you think?”

Read out the whole worksheet and then continue communication from there, e.g. finishing the phone call or replying to the email.

Optional: Put cut-up copies of the worksheets into order (like a kind of jigsaw). First split the phrases into face to face, phone and email, then try to put them in order (from the receiver answering the phone to “...”, etc). To check, read them out loud to see if they make sense.

Make a shorter version of the dialogue or email by folding your worksheet or taking away some of the cards from the bottom of the jigsaw, and continue from that point. Other phrases not in the original are fine, as long as they come next naturally and match the situation.

Choose just one line and try to use that in a roleplay conversation, call or email exchange.

Test each other on the phrases:

- Say one line and see if your partner can say the next line
- Say the hint and see if your partner can say something suitable

Choose one hint and do that thing in a roleplay conversation, call or email exchange.

Roleplay the same situations as in the models, with no help this time.

Face to face first – a foreign visitor visiting your office – in the meeting room

The host (double-)checks the name of the visitor

You must be John Smith.

The visitor confirms their name

That's right.

Say something polite for meeting for the first time, then introduce yourself

Pleased to meet you, John. I'm Aki. Aki Suzuki, deputy head of marketing. Samira's train is delayed, so she asked me to meet you.

Say something polite for meeting someone for the first time

Pleased to meet you too, Aki.

Polite phrases to say to visitors, then a small talk question about their journey

Welcome to GT Inc. Thanks for coming all this way. Did you have any trouble finding us?

Say something positive about the journey and something nice about this place

No, the map you sent was very clear, thanks. It's a lovely area – so green!

Respond to the compliment, add info, then ask about visits to this place

Yes, it's quite nice, isn't it? There aren't many places this green here in Tokyo. Is this your first time in Japan?

Answer, add extra info, then ask about the host's relationship with where you are
It's my second time, actually. I went skiing in Hokkaido the year before last, but I've never been to Tokyo before. Are you from around here?
Answer the question, add extra information, then ask a related question back
Well, I was born in Chiba, which isn't far away, and I moved to Tokyo when I was a teenager. Where are you based?
Answer the question, with extra information
My office is in Birmingham, which is England's second city, in the middle of the country, but I'm moving to our headquarters in Sydney at the beginning of the next financial year.
Respond, then smoothly end the small talk (to really start the meeting/ agenda)
Sydney? Lucky you! I envy you! Well, I'd love to chat more but we have to finish this meeting by twelve, so we should probably get down the business, if you don't mind.
Respond positively
Good idea. Let's do that.
Offer drinks
Would you like tea or coffee before we really get started?
Politely say no, then start the meeting
I'm okay, thanks. I just had one. Shall we just get started? As you probably know, what I wanted to talk about today is...

First contact sales phone call with a potential customer

Answer the phone with a greeting, your company, your department, and an offer of help (but don't give your name this time)
Good morning. Hammertech. Purchasing department. How can I help you?
Greeting, then ask to speak to someone
Good morning. Can I speak to Johan Johansson, please?
Confirm that you are that person/ that you are they are asking to speak to
Speaking.
Greeting again, this time with their name, then introduce yourself
Good morning, Mr Johansson. My name is Alex Case. I'm calling from Jaxpot. We supplied you with some CRM software a couple of years ago.
Respond positively and politely check the reason for the phone call
Oh, yes, I remember. How can I help you, Mr Case?
Double-check that they are the right person to help you
Are you the right person to talk to about bidding for your new accounting software contract?
Respond positively
Yes, that's right.
Respond and give the reason for your call
Great. Well, I'm calling to...

First email, to someone who another employee in your company used to deal with

Formal opening greeting, with the right form of their name for that situation
Dear Ms Jones
Opening line with the reason for writing
I'm writing to you in order to introduce myself because I will be in charge of sales in your area from this month. This is due to our merger with DEF Corp.
First sentence of the body – Introduce yourself
My name is Alex Case and I am the new Sales Manager for Southeast England, which includes your area.
Second sentence of the body – Mention other people
Your previous contact person, Jules Holland, asked me to send you his best regards.
Closing line, mentioning future contact (vaguely)
I look forward to doing business with you and hope we have the opportunity to meet soon.
Formal closing greeting
Best regards
Name (in the right form for a first contact email)
Alex Case (Mr)
Automatic email signature
Alex CASE (Mr) Southeast England Sales Manager ABD Limited 23, Enterprise Way...

Written line by line brainstorming stage

Without looking above, write suitable phrases in each gap below. They don't have to make a complete dialogue this time, as long as they match each description and the situation.

Face to face – first contact while visiting someone's office for the first time

The host (double-)checks the name of the visitor
The visitor confirms their name
Say something polite for meeting for the first time, then introduce yourself
Say something polite for meeting someone for the first time
A polite phrase to say to visitors, then a small talk question about their journey
Say something positive about the journey and something nice about this place
Respond to the compliment, then ask about their visits to where you are now

Answer, then ask about their relationship with the place
Answer the question, then ask a related question back
Answer the question, with extra information
Respond, then smoothly end the small talk (to really start the meeting)
Respond positively
Offer drinks
Politely say no, then start the meeting

First contact sales phone call with a potential customer

Answer the phone with a greeting, your company, your department, and an offer of help (but don't give your name this time)
Greeting, then ask to speak to someone
Confirm that you are that person/ that you are they are asking to speak to
Greeting again, this time with their name, then introduce yourself
Respond positively and politely check the reason for the phone call
Double-check that they are the right person to help you
Respond positively
Respond and give the reason for your call

First email, to someone who another employee in your company used to deal with

Formal opening greeting, with the right form of their name for that situation
Opening line with the reason for writing
First sentence of the body – Introduce yourself
Second sentence of the body – Mention other people
Closing line, mentioning future contact (vaguely)
Formal closing greeting
Name (in the right form for a first contact email)
Automatic email signature