

English for Meetings and Teamwork

- Real-time processing and unpredictable turn-taking set meeting English apart
- High-stakes evaluation: colleagues and managers assess every contribution
- What we cover: speaking strategies, ready-to-use language patterns, team communication styles
- Practice through short simulations, scripted patterns, and post-training action plans



Real Barriers for Non-Native Speakers in Meetings

- Real-time processing drains working memory under time pressure
- Native speakers claim the floor in 2-4 seconds; non-natives need more
- Silence is often misread as disengagement or lack of preparation
- Fast speech, accents, idioms, and interruptions create frequent pain points



The Power of Prepared Language Patterns

- Business English relies on reusable language chunks, not new sentences
- Pre-load two or three points tied to each agenda item
- Claim the floor: "I'd like to add something here" or "Could I just add something to that?"
- Good enough, delivered on time, beats perfect but late



Meeting Roles and Essential Phrases

- Chair, facilitator, note-taker, and participant responsibilities
- Opening language: "Let's begin with today's objectives"
- Moving between agenda items: "Let's move on to the next point"
- Balance politeness with efficiency across international teams

PANEL OF VOICES



CHAIR

Sets direction, keeps the meeting on track, and ensures everyone has a voice.



FACILITATOR

Encourages participation, manages discussion, and builds consensus.



NOTE-TAKER

Captures key points, decisions, and action items clearly and accurately.



PARTICIPANT

Shares ideas, listens actively, and respects others' perspectives.



Structuring Meetings with Signposting Language



- ▶ Signposting signals where you're going and buys thinking time
- ▶ "I have two main concerns regarding this project. First..."
- ▶ Summarize progress and reformulate points to confirm understanding
- ▶ Use simple, neutral phrases instead of culturally specific idioms



Asking for and Giving Opinions



Lead with a frame:
"From my perspective..." or
"What I'm seeing on my end is..."



Support opinions with
concrete examples and evidence



Soften disagreement:
"I see it slightly differently..." and
"I think there might be a risk
worth flagging"



Invite others to respond and
check for shared views



Clarification and Polite Interruption



- ▶ **Ask early by name:** “Sorry, [Name], could you repeat the last point? I missed it”
- ▶ **Confirm understanding:** “Just to make sure we're on the same page, are you saying...?”
- ▶ **Interrupt politely:** “Sorry to jump in here, but...” / “Can I ask a quick question on that?”
- ▶ **Asking signals engagement and prevents costly mistakes later**



REPAIR LOOP



Managing Disagreement and Conflict



- Open with partial agreement or genuine questions



- Softeners like 'slightly' keep relationships intact



- Silence may signal discomfort, not agreement



- Use neutral steering language to de-escalate



- Preserve harmony while staying honest



Direct and Indirect Communication Styles

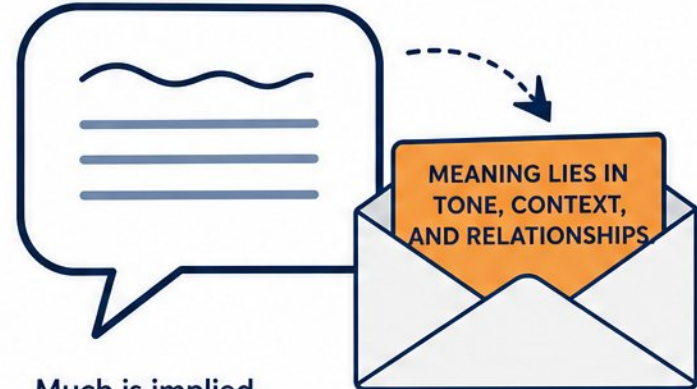
LOW-CONTEXT

I THINK WE
SHOULD CHANGE
THE PLAN.

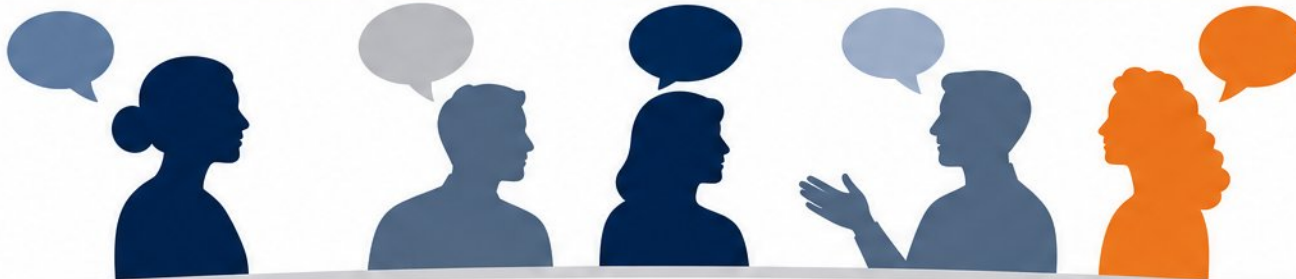
Words are explicit and complete.
Meaning is in the message.

VS.

HIGH-CONTEXT



Much is implied.
Meaning is in the context.



- Low-context: direct, explicit words, open disagreement
- High-context: tone, relationships, implied messages
- Work settings amplify East-West style differences
- Mismatched styles damage trust, feedback, and collaboration

Adapting Across Communication Styles

- Observe how your actual colleagues communicate, not country labels
- Offer multiple contribution channels: written, small groups, follow-ups
- Co-create team norms for directness, silence, and feedback
- Bridge direct content with relational care: "I want to share observations and hear your perspective"
- Give feedback that checks reception, not just delivery



Constructive Feedback and Inclusive Team Language

- Balance clarity and sensitivity in feedback
- Bridge phrase: "I want to share some specific observations and hear your perspective"
- Invite input and share credit to build trust
- Silence may mean respect—not agreement
- Ground feedback in observable behavior



Written Follow-Ups and Team Messaging

- Send concise emails to confirm action items, owners, and deadlines
- In Slack or Teams, brevity can seem abrupt or rude
- Written summaries keep decisions visible and understood
- High-context colleagues benefit from explicit written follow-ups

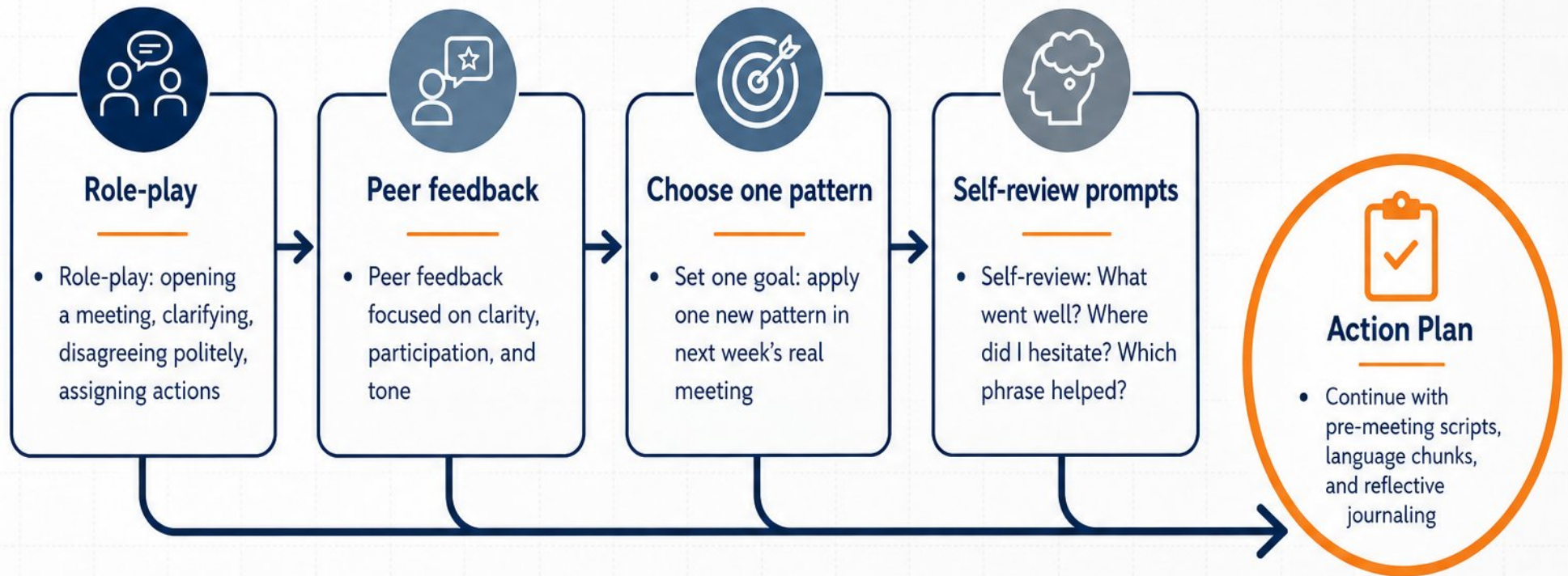


Common Mistakes and Safer Alternatives

- Over-apologising can weaken credibility: use confident alternatives
- Replace vague words like “maybe” with concrete decisions and deadlines
- Avoid overly formal or casual transitions; match the meeting tone
- Don’t mistake silence for agreement—always confirm understanding
- Check that feedback is delivered clearly and received as intended



Practice Scenarios and Action Plan



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