

So, you've been invited to participate in a meeting at work, at your community center, to organize a family event,... How can you join in, productively and politely?



For speaking in English, the first thing to figure out is the meeting's *register*, or where it falls on the *formal – informal* range, but gradations are subtle, so which to choose?! Now you'll know!



1.) Draw a line\* between these phrases and the appropriate dish:

a. Group work meetings for upper management levels tend to be...



b. One-on-one work meetings (manager-employee) tend to be...

c. Group work meetings for clerks & sales reps tend to be...

**Think about the levels of formality vs. informality represented by the food, and do this before going ahead!**

\*The boxes "grab" and "drop" the virtual pencil/lines in their upper left hand corners.



**A WORD TO THE WISE:** Even if it's an after-hours drink with peers or an office party during which colleagues relax together, it is NOT a purely social event, and your speech and behavior ***should never relax into totally informal***. Sadly, too, there are always "snakes in the grass" just waiting for others' inappropriate behavior and/or speech to use in office battles; ***forewarned is forearmed***.

2.) Even the informal end of the spectrum has gradations. Draw lines to connect them, correctly:

nicknames  
contractions  
larger  
phrases/clauses  
risky  
naughty  
bathroom  
saucy



OK, I can hear you saying, “Star, that’s awfully sexist and old-fashioned, isn’t it? I mean, so many young and not-so-young women swear a lot and enjoy bathroom humor, too, these days!”

Sadly – **IMNSHO**\* – that’s true, but...as a non-native speaker, you won’t probably have a sure feel for what is appropriate, so just be safe, and avoid extremely informal language, swearing, and vulgar jokes. *IN FACT, we won’t even look at extremely informal language in this task.*

\***IMNSHO** = “In my not so humble opinion.” You’ll also see just “**IMHO**.”

3.) So, you’ve received an invitation to a meeting. You answer (*tick the correct answer*):

WORK: ☐ The date and time are fine; I’ll be there. | ☐ Works for me; see ya’!

F/F\*: ☐ The date and time are fine; I’ll be there. | ☐ Works for me; see ya’!

\*FAMILY & FRIENDS



(*some options, look AFTER answering!*: \_\_\_\_\_)

4.) You have a request. (*tick the correct answer*):

WORK: ☐ Can I open the window? | ☐ May I open the window?

F/F: ☐ Can I open the window? | ☐ May I open the window?



(*some options, look AFTER answering!*: \_\_\_\_\_)

5.) You get this answer. (*tick the correct answer*):

WORK: ☐ Yes, of course / No, please don't. | ☐ Sure, no problem! / Naaah!

F/F: ☐ Yes, of course / No, please don't. | ☐ Sure, no problem! / Naaah!

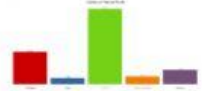


(*some options, look AFTER answering!*: \_\_\_\_\_)

6.) There is a problem to solve. (*tick the correct answer*):

WORK: ☐ The results are unsatisfactory. | ☐ It's not much, is it?!

F/F: ☐ The results are unsatisfactory. | ☐ It's not much, is it?!



(*some options, look AFTER answering!*: \_\_\_\_\_)

7.) What could be a solution? (*tick the correct answer*):

WORK: ☐ Pat, what can we do? | ☐ Patricia, what are our options?

F/F: ☐ Pat, what can we do? | ☐ Patricia, what are our options?



(*some options, look AFTER answering!*: \_\_\_\_\_)

8.) Did you understand? Get clarification (*tick the correct answer*):

WORK: ☐ Would you clarify that, please? | ☐ What did ya' mean?



F/F: \_\_\_\_ Would you clarify that, please? | \_\_\_\_ What did ya' mean?

(some options, look *AFTER* answering!: \_\_\_\_\_)

9.) Interrupt (**but not in real life; it's impolite!**) (*tick the correct answer*):

WORK: \_\_\_\_ If I may say something, I'd like to say.... | \_\_\_\_ But...

F/F: \_\_\_\_ If I may say something, I'd like to say.... | \_\_\_\_ But...

(some options, look *AFTER* answering!: \_\_\_\_\_)

10.) Change the topic (*tick the correct answer*):

WORK: \_\_\_\_ What about...? | \_\_\_\_ I'd like us to talk about....

F/F: \_\_\_\_ What about...? | \_\_\_\_ I'd like us to talk about....

(some options, look *AFTER* answering!: \_\_\_\_\_)

11.) Great idea! You agree (*tick the correct answer*):

WORK: \_\_\_\_ I'm inclined to agree. | \_\_\_\_ You're right!

F/F: \_\_\_\_ I'm inclined to agree. | \_\_\_\_ You're right!

(some options, look *AFTER* answering!: \_\_\_\_\_)





12.) Bad idea! You disagree (*tick the correct answer*):

WORK: \_\_\_\_ I'm not inclined to agree. | \_\_\_\_ You're off base!

F/F: \_\_\_\_ I'm not inclined to agree. | \_\_\_\_ You're off base!



(some options, look *AFTER* answering!: \_\_\_\_\_)

13.) Express your idea (*tick the correct answer*):

WORK: \_\_\_\_ In my opinion, ... | \_\_\_\_ It is my opinion that...

F/F: \_\_\_\_ In my opinion, ... | \_\_\_\_ It is my opinion that...



(some options, look *AFTER* answering!: \_\_\_\_\_)

14.) Justify your idea (*tick the correct answer*):

WORK: \_\_\_\_ Based on the report's data,... | \_\_\_\_ Because I say so, that's why!

F/F: \_\_\_\_ Based on the report's data,... | \_\_\_\_ Because I say so, that's why!



(some options, look *AFTER* answering!: \_\_\_\_\_)

**Yay! Everyone has accepted your proposal, you've now seen typical phases of a meeting, and now it's over! (Do you also need to *LEAD* a meeting? – See that task.)**

**N.B.**, all images are Microsoft Clipart available in the Word program used to create the file.