4. Can You Fill in the Blanks?

direct., let's kick off, I'm not quite finished., Let's get straight into it., I got to drop., run into, small talk, talk over, jump in, interrupt., excuse the background noise., I have a hard stop, participate, we've lost that person, to be frozen, I didn't catch that., you're breaking up., awkward

In this video, we're going to look at some key words and phrases that you absolutely need to know if you're having online meetings in English so that you can _____(1) like a pro. _____(2)

Let's start with _____(3). I think we all know that feeling when you sign into a meeting a couple minutes early and it's just you and one other person there. It can be a little _____(4). So to break the ice and make some polite conversation, you can ask some good open-ended questions. Like, how's everything in New York? What's keeping you busy these days? Do you have any interesting projects on the horizon? Have you been following the... And then name maybe a global event or something important going on in your industry, for example.

If you're the one leading the meeting, you need to say something to signal to the group that it's time to begin. And we usually start this with words like, okay, all right, followed by things like, it looks like everybody's here, so _____(5). Shall we begin? It's two o'clock, so let's get started.

Now, a frustrating part of online meetings is the tendency for people to _____(6) each other, even if they don't necessarily mean to _____(7) So when that happens, you can say something like, my apologies for interrupting. Go ahead, Teresa. Now, if you want to interrupt someone in face-to-face communication, you can do it more subtly with gestures or facial expressions. But in an online setting, you have to be a little more _____(8) It's always best to use the person's first name to get their attention in a polite way. For example, Martina, if I may... Kevin, can I _____(9) here for a second? Sorry to interrupt, but...

Now, if someone interrupts you, you can say, just let me finish my point here. _____(10) Or you can allow them to interrupt you by saying, go ahead.

All right, now, if you're leading a meeting or presenting during a meeting and you need to pause to do something, like to get a file or to share your screen, communicate to the group what you're doing. Don't just go silent. For example, you can say things like, I'm going to share my screen now. Bear with me while I pull up the document. Give me a second. I'm going to check my Wi-Fi connection.

Now, what would an online meeting be without some technical issues? If you _____(11) a problem, you can say, apologies, I'm having some technical difficulties. There seems to be a problem with the connection on my end. When your video doesn't move due to a bad connection, we use the expression _____(12). So we say, for example, the screen is frozen or John, you're frozen.

Of course, during online meetings, we often have audio issues, which make it hard for people to hear each other or even understand what others are saying. So when that happens and you need to ask someone to repeat themselves, you can say things like, _____(13) Can you say that again? Can you speak up a little? We can't hear you. Can you come closer to the microphone? If there's a lot of noise where you are, you can say, _____(14) If someone's microphone is off, you can say, you're on mute or sorry, I was on mute. And when you can only hear parts of what someone is saying

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because the connection is interrupted, we use the expression to break up. So you could say to them, _____(15)
Now, if someone's unexpectedly disconnected from the meeting, we say that _____(16). Did we lose Andrew? You can also ask if the person is still there. Are you there, Carla? If everything's back to normal, then you can say, oh, Andrew's back. Yes, we can hear you now.
If the meeting is taking longer than planned and you need to leave before it's finished, you can say, sorry, _____(17) at two o'clock. I need to go. Or more informally, you can say, sorry, guys, I got to jump or _____(18)
Now, when the meeting is ending, before you sign off, it's good business etiquette to thank everyone and say goodbye. Don't just sign off without saying anything. So you can say, thank you, everyone. Bye. Have a nice weekend. Thanks all. Have a good one. Cheers.

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