Managing conversations

1A Work in small groups. Give examples of your own experiences of meeting people who are different from you. Here are some possible differences to think about.

1 their national culture
2 their age
3 their education
4 the culture of their organisation
5 their work/profession

B Discuss the questions.

1 What is easy or difficult about such encounters?
2 How is it different from meeting friends, colleagues and members of your family? Why?

2A 4.3.1 **Watch the video of Alex and Beata talking about Beata's forthcoming trip to Rio de Janeiro. Answer the questions.**

1 Has Alex ever been to Rio de Janeiro?
2 How well does he know Mateo?
3 What does Alex mean when he says, 'It's difficult to stay on track sometimes'?
4 What preparation has Beata done for the trip?
5 What advice does Alex give Beata? Do you think it is useful advice? Why?

B Watch the video again. Why is Beata worried about the trip?

3A Based on what you have seen so far, how should Beata behave in the meeting with Mateo? As a class, decide which option to watch first.

Option A – Listen to Mateo, but politely try to stay on the topic of the Diabsensor and not be distracted. Stay focused on why she is in Rio.

Option B – Listen to Mateo, show interest in what he is saying and not worry about the Diabsensor. Go with the flow – he is the client, after all.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1 What topics do Beata and Mateo talk about?
2 How does Beata try to turn the discussion towards the Diabsensor?
3 How does Mateo react to these attempts?
4 Alex warned Beata that Mateo likes to multitask (do different tasks at the same time). What example of this do we see?
5 Overall, how well does Beata manage the conversation?

1 What topics do Beata and Mateo talk about?
2 How does Beata show an interest in what Mateo is saying?
3 Does Beata try to turn the discussion towards the Diabsensor?
4 Alex warned Beata that Mateo likes to multitask (do different tasks at the same time). What example of this do we see?
5 Overall, how well does Beata manage the conversation?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

4 **In pairs, discuss what you have learnt from Beata's experience about adapting your communication style.**

1 What is the effect of going with the flow?

2 What is the effect of focusing on the task in hand?

6 **Think about the following questions. Then discuss your answers with a partner.**

1 Compare yourself to Beata in a similar situation. How do you think you would manage?

2 Is 'go with the flow' a useful tip for you when you meet new people? Why / Why not?

Changing the subject and staying on track

7 **Look at these phrases from the video. Decide which are for changing the subject (C) and which are for staying on track (S).**

1 There will be plenty of time for that later.

2 I really think we should get to the ...

3 Is this a good moment to start talking about the ... ?

4 We'll come to that later.

5 That reminds me.

6 We'll get to the ... in a moment.

7 Can we move to ... ?

8 Before I forget, ...

8 **Use words from the phrases in Exercise 7 to complete the dialogue. In pairs, practise reading the dialogue.**

A: So, [1]_____ item 3 on the agenda, the new minibus?

B: Yes, of course. It will be delivered next Monday morning. So we can use it for the trip to the factory on Tuesday.

A: Is [2]_____ factory visit? What's the plan?

B: We'll [3]_____ details of the factory visit [4]_____ .

A: Actually, that [5]_____ , I need to check if my children are being picked up from school today. The bus company is on strike.

B: I'm sure there [6]_____ . Could we first finish discussing the minibus? Then we'll have a break and you can sort out your children's bus.

9A **Work in pairs and discuss one of these topics using phrases from Exercise 7. One person tries to talk about the topic, the other tries to change the subject. After a few minutes, change partners and choose a new topic.**

- Plans for next week
- Organising a surprise birthday party for a friend
- A new smartphone on the market
- A trip abroad

B **Write short dialoques based on your discussions.**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1 Choose the correct option in italics to complete the extract from a meeting.

A: OK. Can we [1]*come / move* to item two on the agenda, updating our website?

B: Is this a [2]*well / good* moment to start talking about the prices for next year?

A: We'll get to the prices in a [3]*moment / time*. Can we first discuss the website and how we need to change it to get more international business? Sally? Can you give us your initial ideas?

C: OK. Well the main reason for the new look is to make it a more interactive website.

B: That [4]*reminds / remembers* me. I spent a couple of hours on some of our competitors' websites yesterday. They are very good.

C: I know. It's good to look at the competition. There will be [5]*much / plenty* of time for that later. However, first we need to look at ours. I think we need to make serious changes to it. It's slow, has very little video and is in only one language.

A: What languages do you think we need, Sally?

C: I'll [6]*go / come* to that later. Let's look at what we want from our website.

A: Before I [7]*forget / move*, marketing are joining us at 12.30 so we've got thirty minutes to finalise our ideas.

B: By the way ... is there a chance to discuss functionality at some stage?

C: There is, but I really think we [8]*should / might* get to that when we know what we want from the site.

B: OK, no problem. But we need to discuss it at some point.

C: We will and I'm aware that it's a problem. OK ... where was I?

The phrases you need ☞

Ask for reactions
What's your view on this, Nadine?
How do you feel about this, Klaus?
Antonio, this is your field. In a few words, can you tell us what you think?
Mike, after we've heard from Rosa can we have your views? I know you have some experience of this problem.

Deal with interruptions
Could you just hang on a moment please?
One at a time, please. First Mirella, then Claude.
Pavol, could you just let Nikola finish? I'll come back to you in a moment.

Keep moving
Perhaps we could get back to the main point?
I'm not sure that's relevant.
Let's leave that aside for the moment.
Can we come back to this later?
I think we should move on now.

Focus the discussion
I think we need to look at this in more detail.
We need to analyze this in a little more depth.

Widen the discussion
Is there anything else we should consider?
What other ways are there to approach this?

Check agreement
Can we go round the table to see if everyone agrees?
Do we all agree on that? Good, that's settled.

Summarize
So, basically, what you're saying is ...
OK, let's go over what we've discussed so far.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

60.1 Cover the opposite page with a piece of paper. Complete the sentences from the opening of a meeting with the pairs of words in the box.

agenda / get through	*background / useful*	*bathroom / hall*
brief / point	*copy / agenda*	*housekeeping / begin*
ill / apologies	*kick / off*	*right / start*
say / words	*straight / item*	*take / minutes*

1 _____, is everybody here? Good, I think we can _____.
2 Unfortunately Anneke is _____ and sends her _____.
3 Just a couple of _____ things before we _____.
4 The _____ is down the _____ on the left.
5 Do you all have a _____ of the _____?
6 Can someone _____ the _____?
7 Would you like to _____ a few _____ about yourself Agnieszka?
8 I've prepared some _____ information that I hope will be _____.
9 You can see from the _____ that we have a lot to _____.
10 I would ask that you keep all contributions _____ and to the _____.
11 OK, let's move _____ to the first _____.
12 Henk, would you like to _____ _____?

60.2 Find a word or phrase from the previous exercise that matches the definitions below.

1 a list of the subjects to be discussed at a meeting _____
2 a written record of the decisions that people make at a formal meeting _____
3 *(phrasal verb)* do; finish dealing with _____
4 one of several things on a list _____
5 *(phrasal verb)* begin _____

60.3 Write *BrE* (British English) or *AmE* (American English) on the right line.

1 bathroom / restroom / washroom _____
2 loo *(informal)* / toilets / gents / ladies / WC _____

60.4 Make phrases to close a meeting by matching an item from each column.

1 I think we	main conclusions.
2 I'd like to sum	the minutes.
3 There are three	can stop there.
4 In terms	fix a date now?
5 Are there	missed anything?
6 Have I	a quick word with you?
7 I think it was a	of action points, …
8 I'll circulate	any other points?
9 Can we	up.
10 Can I just have	very useful meeting.

60.5 Cover the opposite page with a piece of paper. Put the words into order. Write the answers under the correct heading below.

I think in more detail look at this we need to.
Let's for the moment leave aside that.
Could you a moment hang on just please?
Is anything there we should consider else?
One at time, a please.
Can we if everyone agrees go round to see the table?
What ways are there to approach other this?
Let's so far what we've discussed go over.
Can we later to this come back?
We need to depth this in a little more analyze.

Deal with interruptions

1 _____
2 _____

Keep moving

3 _____
4 _____

Focus the discussion

5 *I think we need to look at this in more detail.*
6 _____

Widen the discussion

7 _____
8 _____

Check agreement

9 _____

Summarize

10 _____

60.6 12 Speaking practice: listen and repeat. Repeat each phrase you hear and then listen to check.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

10A **Work in pairs. Read the situation and decide who will be the supplier (S) and who will be the client (C). Go to page 128 (S) or page 131 (C) and read your instructions.**

A supplier is visiting a client to talk about a new app which his/her company has just produced. This app will be very useful for managing a database of business contacts, and is easy to install, simple to use and inexpensive.

B **Hold your meeting. Try to change the subject and stay on track as necessary, using phrases from Exercise 7.**

C **When you have finished, discuss how the meeting went. Was it successful? What was easy and what was difficult? What could you do better?**



Supplier

Your ultimate aim is to sell your company's app. Start by getting your partner to start talking about how he/she manages business contacts. If this is too difficult, try and find out as much as you can about your client and his/her workplace context. Take a few moments to think about the language you need to use.

Client

You are interested in learning about the app, but that will come later. For now, talk about everything except the app. Your aim is to learn as much personal information as you can about your supplier, and find out if he/she can be trusted as a business partner. Try not to talk about yourself too much. Take a few moments to think about the language you need to use.

LIVEWORKSHEETS