



**Context:** For professionals who negotiate deadlines, deals, project needs, or budgets, or who must persuade colleagues, clients, or managers

# Negotiation & Persuasion Techniques



The English Hub

# Welcome & Objectives

Let's learn how to negotiate professionally and use English that builds trust.

By the end of this lesson, you will:

- Learn polite language for persuading or disagreeing
- Use structured arguments to support your views
- Make and respond to offers and counter-offers
- Practise common negotiation vocabulary and tone



# What Is Negotiation at Work?

Negotiation isn't just for business deals, it happens every day at work!

Examples of workplace negotiations:

- Timelines and deadlines
- Roles and responsibilities
- Project scope or budget
- Working hours or leave
- Team resources or support

**Discuss:** Have you ever needed to negotiate at work? What was it about?

# Vocabulary – Negotiation Verbs

Discuss the following vocabulary with your tutor:

| Verb       | Meaning                         |
|------------|---------------------------------|
| compromise | agree by giving something up    |
| insist     | strongly maintain your position |
| propose    | suggest something formally      |
| reject     | politely say no                 |
| agree      | say yes to an offer             |

Tip: These are essential in professional discussions.

# Structure – Making Your Case Clearly

A helpful structure for persuasion:

- **State your view** → “I believe...”
- **Support it** → “because...” / “due to...”
- **Offer a benefit** → “This would help us...”
- **Close politely** → “Would that be possible?”

Example:

“I believe we should extend the deadline, because the current timeline is tight. This would help ensure better quality. Would that work for you?”

**Task:** Practise one example with a topic of your choice.

# Grammar Focus – Conditionals in Negotiation

In negotiations, we often talk about actions and their possible results, this is where the first conditional is very useful.

We use the **first conditional** to talk about a **real possibility** in the future, often to offer, warn, or suggest outcomes during negotiations.

## Structure:

**If + present simple, will + base verb**

Example:

“If you approve the design today, we’ll begin production tomorrow.”

**Task:** Complete the sentences below using the correct form:

- If we \_\_\_\_\_ (confirm) the budget now, we \_\_\_\_\_ (start) development this week.
- If they \_\_\_\_\_ (reduce) the cost, we \_\_\_\_\_ (sign) the contract.



# Activity – Persuade Politely

**Task:** Rephrase the blunt statements to polite, persuasive language:

- “We can’t do that.”
- “I need this by Friday.”
- “You're wrong.”

**Example:**

“I want a bigger team.”

Rephrased:

“Would it be possible to increase our team size to meet the workload?”

# Useful Phrases – Agreeing, Disagreeing & Proposing

Discuss the following phrases with your tutor:

| Situation        | Polite Phrase                                                    |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Agreeing         | “That sounds reasonable.” / “I can go with that.”                |
| Disagreeing      | “I’m afraid I see it differently.” / “May I offer another idea?” |
| Making proposals | “Would you consider...?” / “How about if we...?”                 |

**Task:** Create your own polite phrase from each situation.

# Listening Activity – Business Deal

Your tutor will read out the following interaction:

**A:** “We can offer a 10% discount if you increase the order size.”

**B:** “That’s interesting, but our budget is fixed. Could we consider free shipping instead?”

## Questions:

- What’s the proposal?
- What’s the counter-offer?
- Is the tone polite?



# Cultural Tip – Negotiation Styles Vary

Some cultures prefer direct negotiations (e.g. US, Germany), while others prefer indirect styles (e.g. Japan, UK).

In English-speaking settings:

- Be clear but polite
- Use softening phrases
- Build trust, not tension

## **Discuss:**

How is negotiation handled in your country?

Does negotiation happen often in your country?



# Activity – Role Play: Negotiating a Deadline

**Situation:** Imagine you are working with a team member (tutor) who has set a tight deadline. Negotiate the deadline by adding the following to your dialogue:

Goal:

- Request a deadline extension
- Explain your reason
- Offer a benefit
- Keep tone polite

Then, swap roles with your tutor.

# Grammar Focus – Using “Would” for Polite Suggestions

The word “Would” softens your language. Have a look at the examples below:

- “Would you be open to adjusting the timeline?”
- “I’d prefer to meet in person, if possible.”
- “Would it be helpful if I joined the meeting?”

**Task:** Transform these into polite “would” questions:

- “Can you give us more time?”
- “Can I suggest another way?”
- “Can we change the plan?”

# Activity – Choose the Best Response

Select the most polite and professional answer:

“We don’t have budget.”

A) “That’s your problem.”

B) “I understand — perhaps we can find a middle ground.”

“That’s not acceptable.”

A) “Understood. Would a smaller change be an option?”

B) “Fine. Whatever.”

“Can you reduce the cost?”

A) “Absolutely not.”

B) “There may be some flexibility depending on the volume.”



# Vocabulary – Financial Negotiation Terms

Discuss the following terms with your tutor:

| Term           | Meaning                                  |
|----------------|------------------------------------------|
| margin         | difference between cost and sale price   |
| cost-effective | good value for money                     |
| estimate       | an early price calculation               |
| upfront        | payment made before delivery             |
| counter-offer  | a response to a proposal with a new term |

# Activity – Build a Negotiation Sentence

Use these blocks to make a complete, polite sentence:

## **Start:**

- “Would you consider...”
- “If we agreed to...”
- “Perhaps we could...”

## **Middle:**

- “a longer timeline”
- “including delivery”
- “a 5% discount”

## **End:**

- “...would that work for you?”
- “...to meet halfway?”
- “...so both sides benefit?”

**Task:** Now, try to build 2 complete sentences aloud.



# Pronunciation – Speak Calmly Under Pressure

Practise the following phrases with your tutor, to improve pronunciation: slowing down and pausing:

- “Let me explain our position...”
- “Would you be open to that idea?”
- “Here’s what I suggest...”

**Focus:** calm tone + confident pitch

# Group Role Play – Negotiation Challenge

Scenario: Imagine you're a team manager, negotiating with a vendor about a delayed delivery. Produce a dialogue that includes:

- A clear request
- A compromise
- One polite counter-offer
- Final summary

Tutor plays vendor role, student leads the talk. Then, swap roles!



# Common Mistakes in Negotiation Language

Avoid the following mistakes during a negotiation:

- Being too aggressive or forceful
- Saying “you’re wrong” or “no way”
- Using “but” too often — try “however” or “perhaps”

Instead, use phrases like:

- “I see your point...”
- “Let’s look at a solution together.”
- “Would you be open to...”

# Final Task – Workplace Negotiation Practice

**Task:** Situation of your choice. Pick a situation from below and negotiate with your tutor.

Examples:

- Negotiating a promotion
- Changing a project scope
- Asking for more support on a task

**Tip:** remember to use:

- Persuasive structure
- Conditionals
- Softening phrases
- Polite tone

