



Context: Professionals who travel abroad or collaborate across cultures

Business Travel & Cultural Awareness



The English Hub

Welcome & Objectives

Let's explore how to speak confidently when travelling for business and meeting people from other cultures.

By the end of this lesson, you will:

- Learn key travel vocabulary and expressions
- Use polite language in unfamiliar settings
- Understand cultural differences and avoid common mistakes
- Practise scenarios like hotel check-ins, greetings, and meal etiquette

Vocabulary – Business Travel Essentials

Discuss the following vocabulary with your tutor:

Word	Definition
itinerary	a planned schedule of flights, meetings, events
layover	a stop between two flights
travel insurance	protection in case of trip cancellations or emergencies
check-in (noun)	the process of confirming your presence at a hotel or airport
per diem	daily allowance for expenses on a business trip

Phrases for Airport & Hotel Check-in

It's important to sound clear and polite when speaking to staff during your trip.

Useful expressions:

- “I have a reservation under [Your Name].”
- “Could I get a window seat, please?”
- “I’d like to request early check-in.”
- “Can I get a receipt for the company, please?”
- “Is breakfast included in the rate?”

Task: Practise 2 of these phrases and create a dialogue with your tutor.

Grammar – Present Perfect for Travel Experience

We use the **present perfect** to talk about past experiences that are relevant now:
Examples”

- “I’ve travelled to Germany on business twice.”
- “She’s never had a layover in the Middle East.”
- “We’ve stayed at this hotel before.”

Task: Complete the sentences below using the correct form:

- I _____ (travel) to Singapore for training.
- They _____ (not visit) our HQ yet.
- Have you ever _____ (fly) with British Airways?

Activity – Travel Dialogue Role Play

Role-play one of the following scenarios with your tutor. Think of what phrases/requests you may need to make. Then, swap roles with your tutor:

- You are checking in at a hotel for a conference. (Tutor: hotel receptionist)
- You are asking a colleague for directions to a meeting room. (Tutor: colleague)
- You missed your flight and are speaking to the airline. (Tutor: airline staff)

Tip: Use present perfect + polite expressions

Cultural Awareness – Greeting Etiquette Around the World

Not all greetings are the same. Knowing how to greet respectfully is a sign of professionalism. Have a look at the examples below:

Country	Common Business Greeting
USA, UK	Firm handshake, direct eye contact
Japan	Light bow, formal language
France	Light handshake, occasional kiss on cheek (informal)
UAE	Light handshake (same gender only), right hand only
India	Namaste (palms together) or handshake

Discuss:

What greeting do you use in your culture?

What greeting do you often use in your workplace?



Vocabulary – Cultural Behaviour Terms

Discuss the following terms with your tutor:

Term	Meaning
punctuality	being on time
small talk	light, non-business conversation (weather, sports)
formality	level of politeness or strictness in language
body language	gestures, posture, and eye contact
gift giving	practice of offering a token during meetings

Grammar – Modal Verbs for Cultural Sensitivity

We use **modals** to offer advice respectfully:

Examples:

- “You might want to avoid strong eye contact in some cultures.”
- “You should dress conservatively for that meeting.”

Task: Rephrase the following phrases with polite modals:

- “Don’t give gifts in meetings.”
- “Shake hands with everyone.”
- “Eat quickly.”

Sample answer:

- “You might want to avoid giving gifts during formal meetings.”

Activity – Do or Don't (Cultural Scenarios)

Read each situation. Decide if it's a good idea or best to avoid in an international business context:

- Arriving five minutes late to a meeting in Germany
- Giving your card with both hands in Japan
- Using first names in a UK boardroom
- Talking about politics during lunch in the US
- Asking about the weather in small talk

Discuss why each is appropriate or not

Email Writing – Business Travel Notification

Task: Discuss what you would include and write in a short email to a client or team member, to inform them of your travel:

Include:

- Reason for travel
- Date of arrival
- Suggestion to meet
- Polite close

Your tutor will offer feedback on clarity and tone

Speaking Practice – Talk About a Business Trip

Prompt: Describe the last business trip you took, or imagine you are travelling to Germany for a business meeting to close a deal for your company.

Include:

- Where and why you went
- How you travelled
- What cultural differences you noticed
- One phrase you used or learned

Your tutor will give you feedback on fluency and structure

Activity – Travel Problem Solving

Have a look at the common issues that occur when travelling for business:

Problem	Polite Response
Lost baggage	“Could you help me file a report, please?”
Delayed flight	“Would you know when the next one is scheduled?”
Double-booked hotel room	“Is there an alternative room or nearby option?”
Missed meeting due to traffic	“I apologise — may I reschedule at your convenience?”
Dietary restriction at a work meal	“Would it be possible to request a vegetarian option?”

Task: Choose a problem and create a role play dialogue with your tutor and come up with a response and solution.

Idioms for Travel & Cross-Culture Work

Have a look at some idioms that are often used in travel or meetings:

Idiom	Meaning
“Hit the ground running”	Start immediately with energy
“Red-eye flight”	Overnight flight
“On the same page”	Agree or understand something similarly
“Break the ice”	Start a conversation
“Take a rain check”	Postpone politely

Task: Choose 2 from above and create a sentence with each one.

Pronunciation Practice – Travel-Related Phrases

Repeat the following phrases after your tutor to improve pronunciation and tone:

- “I’d like to confirm my reservation, please.”
- “Would you happen to know where Gate 32 is?”
- “Sorry, I don’t think I received my boarding pass.”
- “Could we book a taxi for 6am?”

Tip: Practise slowly, then with more natural pace

Cultural Misunderstandings – Real Case Discussion

Read the passage below with your tutor:

During a business meeting, Lisa brought a small box of chocolates as a gift for her new client in another country. When she offered it, the client looked uncomfortable and politely refused. Lisa felt confused and a little embarrassed. She later learned that in that culture, offering gifts in formal settings is sometimes seen as inappropriate or too personal.

Discuss:

- What went wrong in this situation?
- How could Lisa have handled it better?
- Has something like this ever happened to you? How did you or would you respond if it ever did?



Role Play – Cross-Cultural Business Lunch

Imagine you're meeting a colleague (tutor) from another country for lunch during a business trip. Role play the scenario out with your tutor.

Include:

- Small talk (weather, hobbies)
- One polite question about their culture
- Offer to meet again
- Use soft tone



Grammar – Future Arrangements (Going to / Present Continuous)

Future arrangements are used to discuss planned travel:

Example:

- “I’m **flying to** Brussels next Monday.”
- “We’re **staying in** a hotel near the HQ.”
- “I’m **going to** attend a two-day summit.”

Task: Complete the sentences below using the correct form:

- I _____ (leave) on the 10th.
- We _____ (stay) near the event location.
- She _____ (visit) three clients during the trip.

Listening Practice – International Meeting

Read out the following dialogue with your tutor:

A: “Have you travelled far?”

B: “Yes, I’ve just arrived from Delhi this morning.”

A: “Wow, I’ve always wanted to visit India. I hope your trip was smooth. Do you need help finding the conference room?”

B: “Oh, I think you will love it there. Yes please, is the conference room on the 2nd floor?”

A: “Indeed! Let me show you how to get there”

Questions:

- What phrases are polite here?
- How do they show cultural awareness?
- What helpful gestures were offered during this interaction?

