

Module 1 — Meetings

Everything worth remembering from this module — read it once, then take the Final Quiz.

Grammar in a nutshell

Past Simple vs Present Perfect

use the present perfect for actions connected to now (no specific time), and the past simple for finished actions at a stated or known time.

Present perfect — form: *have / has + past participle*

When we use the present perfect: *Past actions, no specific time — I have updated the spreadsheet. We have hired two developers. just / already / yet — The client has just called. Have you finished the report yet? recently / lately — We have recently opened a new office. Unfinished time (today, this week, this month) — I have had three meetings today. Experiences (ever / never / before) — Have you ever managed a remote team? How many times (until now) — We have met this supplier twice. for / since (still true now) — I have worked here for ten years. She has been our CEO since 2019. been to vs gone to — She has gone to Berlin (still there) / She has been to Berlin (already back).*

When we use the past simple: *Finished / stated time — We signed the contract last week. I sent the invoice yesterday. With ago — I joined the company two years ago. Giving details after introducing an event — A: I have spoken to the client. B: What did they say?*

Reported Speech

Reported (indirect) speech tells someone what another person said. The verb usually shifts one tense back.

Statements: say vs tell: *Use say (no person) or tell + somebody. The reported verb usually backshifts. → "I am busy." → She said she was busy. / She told me she was busy.*

Backshift: *present → past (work → worked) present perfect / past → past perfect (have done → had done) will → would, can → could, may → might, must → had to*

Reported questions & commands: *Questions: ask + (if/whether or wh-) + subject + verb (no inversion, no do). Commands: tell/ask + somebody + to + base (negative: not to). → "Where is it?" → She asked where it was. / "Wait." → He asked me to wait. 💡 Tip: Time and place words often change too: now→then, today→that day, tomorrow→the next day, here→there.*

Question Tags

Question tags are short questions added to the end of a statement to confirm information or invite agreement (... isn't it?).

The basic rule: *A positive statement takes a negative tag, and a negative statement takes a positive tag. The tag uses the same auxiliary and tense. → You are ready, aren't you? / You aren't ready, are you?*

Choosing the auxiliary: *Use the auxiliary in the sentence; if there isn't one, use do/does/did. → She works here, doesn't she? / You've finished, haven't you? / He can swim, can't he?*

Special cases: *I am... → aren't I? Let's... → shall we? Imperative → will you? There is... → isn't there? everyone / nobody → they 💡 Tip: Falling intonation = you are checking (you expect agreement); rising intonation = a real question.*

Watch out

Remember to backshift the tense.

In reported questions use statement order (no inversion, no do/does/did).

say (no object) vs tell + person.

Positive → negative, negative → positive.

Match the auxiliary and tense.

I'm... → aren't I? (not amn't I).

Vocabulary of the module

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
jargon	special or technical words used by a particular group that are hard for outsiders to understand	"Try to avoid jargon when you talk to clients from other teams."
fluent	able to speak a language smoothly, accurately and naturally	"She is fluent in three languages."
a fluent fool	someone who speaks a language well but doesn't understand the culture behind it	"Don't be a fluent fool — learn the culture, not just the words."
(cultural) awareness	knowledge or understanding of something, here the cultural context	"Cultural awareness helps you avoid misunderstandings in meetings."
proficiency	a high level of skill or ability in using a language	"The job requires a high level of proficiency in English."
a lifeline	something essential that connects a person to opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have	"For many graduates, English is a lifeline to international careers."
offshore	moved to another country, usually to reduce costs	"The company moved part of its production offshore to cut costs."
a labor pool	the available workers in a particular place, seen as a group	"The city has a large labor pool of skilled engineers."

More words from the Reading

WORD	MEANING
field	an area of work or study
non-native	not speaking the language from birth
require	to make something necessary
confusing	hard to understand
awareness	knowing and noticing something

Useful Language — 14 phrases to keep

Proposing an idea

- ▶ "I'd like to suggest that we..." — Soft, professional opener
- ▶ "What if we tried...?" — Casual, invites discussion
- ▶ "One option could be to..." — Presents it as one possibility, not a demand
- ▶ "Have we considered...?" — Polite way to bring up a new idea

Agreeing

- ▶ "That makes sense to me."
- ▶ "I'm on board with that."
- ▶ "Good point — I hadn't thought of that."

Disagreeing politely

- ▶ "I see your point, but I'm not sure that would work because..." — Acknowledge, then disagree
- ▶ "I have a slightly different view..." — Softer than "I disagree"
- ▶ "That's one way to look at it — another option might be..."
- ▶ "Could we also think about...?" — Redirects without rejecting

Asking for clarification

- ▶ "Sorry, could you say that again?"
- ▶ "When you say... what exactly do you mean?"
- ▶ "Just to make sure I understand — are you saying...?"

Ready for the Final Quiz?

Tick what you can do. All of them? You are ready — you need 70%% to pass.

- ☐ I can take part in a meeting: propose ideas, agree and disagree politely, and ask for clarification
- ☐ I can use Past Simple vs Present Perfect, reported speech and question tags accurately
- ☐ I can understand and use key meetings & business vocabulary
- ☐ I can follow native and non-native speakers in international meetings (listening)
- ☐ I can  Reading + comprehension quiz
- ☐ I can  Vocabulary: meetings & business words (flashcards)