1. **Introductions**

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| •You never get a second chance to make a first impression.'  The tone of a business relationship can be set by an initial introduction. It is important to make a good  impression right from the first handshake.  When meeting businesspeople for the first time, is it better to be formal or informal? If in doubt, advise students to adopt a more formal approach. Here are some points to remember when making business introductions in English-speaking western countries:   * Introduce businesspeople in order of professional rank - the person of highest authority is introduced to others in the group in descending order, depending on their professional position. Gender does not affect the order of introductions. * When possible, stand up when introductions are being made. * If clients are present, they should be introduced first. * The name and title of the person being introduced is followed by the name and title of the other person. It is also helpful to include a small piece of information about each person to start the conversation. * If you are being introduced to someone, shake hands and say Hello (informal) or Pleased to meet you/How do you do (formal), followed by the person's name. * Treat business cards with respect. Take a moment to read them and carefully put them somewhere safe. * Address people by their first names only if they indicate that they want you to.   Of course, in practice we often break these rules - but knowing they exist provides a starting point.  It is also worth remembering that many aspects of etiquette are not universal - cultural norms vary from country to country. What passes for good manners in one country may be frowned on in another. A firm handshake may be appreciated in the USA. the UK and Australia, but a French businessperson is more likely to offer a single, light handshake. In japan it is more usual to bow. Preparation is important in order to avoid culture clash. Doing some background research to get acquainted with local business etiquette and social customs can spare the blushes of both visitor and host and avoid causing offence.  Elementary students may find introducing themselves and others intimidating. Help students to navigate these situations by highlighting key phrases such as those in the Useful language box (see Course Book page 12). Drill pronunciation and intonation and give students plenty of opportunity to use the language with short role-plays. Imagine what you would feel like if you were in a strange city meeting business contacts for the first time, using an unfamiliar language. A few well-practised phrases may help to give enough confidence to make that first impression count. | Introduction is very important in a business relationship. You must make a good impression right from the first handshake.  On the first business is it better to adopt a more formal approach. There are some rules of making business introductions:   * Introduce businesspeople in order of professional rank regardless of gender. * Stand up when introductions are being made. * If clients are present, they should be introduced first. * The name and title of the person being introduced is followed by the name and title of the other person. * If you are being introduced to someone, shake hands and say Hello or Pleased to meet you. * Read business cards carefully and safe them. * Address people by their first names only if they want you to.   We must remember that many aspects of etiquette are not universal. What passes for good manners in one country may be frowned on in another. Preparation is important in order to avoid culture clash.  Elementary students may find introducing themselves and others intimidating. Some key phrases and short role-plays can help them in such situations. A few well-practiced phrases may help to by making the first impression good. |

1. **Work and Leisure**

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| It has never been easy to balance work and leisure. During the late 20th century, the concept of a job for life was largely replaced by the short-term contracts favoured by the enterprise culture. Some found themselves with too much free time on their hands when company restructures led to redundancies. Others saw leisure time shrink and working hours increase in exchange for greater financial rewards The British TUC (Trades Union Congress) estimates that, despite European Union legislation. 4 million people in the UK work more than 48 hours per week, and one in 25 work over 60 hours. It is thought that managers and professional staff work the longest hours.  New technologies have proved a double-edged sword. E-mail, laptops and mobile phones have intensified the pace of work and allow people to be contacted anywhere at any time. A MORI[[1]](#footnote-1) survey carried out for Toshiba of 300 British workers who use laptops found that users worked an average six- day week. Yet 70 per cent agreed that developments in mobile technology offered them more freedom in their working lives, and 64 per cent believed that it made them more productive. However, it was noted that not all employers value performance over presenteeism (this is when people stay at work later than necessary in order to make people think they are working hard). So. those leaving the office on time and taking work home to finish may be less highly valued than those who remain at their desk and do little actual work.  Workforce values in the 21st century do seem to be shifting. Employees are less willing to trade all other aspects of life for purely professional or financial gains. Work-life balance has become a new goal for many. Some flexible working practices, such as flexitime or part-time work, have become well established. In 2003. the British government introduced legislation to encourage people to negotiate more flexible working hours to improve family life.  Teleworking seems like a natural application of modern technology. A recent report\*\* notes that 20 per cent of employees in the UK work from home occasionally. However. 80 per cent of those that do are managers. This suggests that managers may embrace the freedom of homeworking themselves, but still do not trust their employees to be productive outside a traditional work environment. Some people choose to downshift by moving to a less demanding job or decreasing hours and pay in order to enjoy a less pressurised lifestyle and to improve quality of life.  Work remains an integral and. for most of us, essential part of our everyday life. We are arguably armed with more tools and opportunities than ever before to share the time we give to work and the time we give to ourselves and family. Yet getting that balance right remains a difficult task | It has never been easy to balance work and leisure. The concept of a job for life was replaced by the short-term contracts. Some people had too much free time because of redundancies. Others had less leisure time and more working hours. 4 million people in the UK work more than 48 hours per week, and one in 25 works over 60 hours. Managers and professional staff work the longest hours.  New technologies: e-mail, laptops and mobile phones have intensified the pace of work made people contacts easier. Developments in mobile technology offered more freedom in working lives. But not all employers value performance over presenteeism.  Workforce values in the 21st century do seem to be shifting. Employees don’t want to change other aspects of life for purely professional or financial gains. Some flexible working practices, such as flexitime or part-time work, have become well established.  Teleworking seems like a natural application of modern technology. 20 per cent of employees in the UK work from home occasionally. Some people choose downshifting. They move to a less demanding job or decreasing hours and pay to enjoy a less pressurised lifestyle.  Work remains an integral and essential part of our life. We have more opportunities to share the time for work and family. Yet that balance remains a difficult task. |

1. **Problems**

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| Problems are a fact of life. So problem-solving is an essential life skill, both at home and in the office. Many pressurised managers in the modern business world may benefit from training in conflict resolution to resolve disagreements.  It is wise to deal with sensitive matters face to face. Irate e-mails and memos often contain sentiments we would modify if speaking to the person directly. Social psychologist Albert Merabian says that words account for seven per cent of communication, tone 38 per cent and body language 55 per cent.\* These elements are particularly useful in understanding and resolving potential conflict situations, but can be lost in cyber communication.  In a cross-cultural business context, problems can occur due to cultural misconceptions. Trying to enforce one culture's way of doing things can cause bad feelings. It is always a good idea to research possible cultural differences. For example, short, direct meetings are acceptable in Germany, Switzerland and the USA. However, other cultures, such as those in the Middle East and Latin America, are relationship-orientated. Meetings tend to be longer here, as social interaction is a vital part of the business process, and a deal may take more than one meeting to finalise.  Many problems can be traced back to misunderstandings and loss of perspective. If a communication breakdown does occur, it can be helped by:   * active listening Consult people and really listen to what they have to say. * reformulation Repeat back key points to make sure that no misinterpretation has occurred. * focus Concentrate on the problem, not on personalities - separate personal differences from   the situation in hand.  Sometimes it is useful to relearn skills that many children are taught at an early age: be polite, don't shout and respect other people. Problems will still occur, but a peaceful resolution may be easier to find. | Problems are a fact of life. Problem-solving is an essential life skill, both at home and in the office.  It is wise to deal with sensitive matters face to face. Irate e-mails and memos often contain sentiments we would modify if speaking to the person directly. Such elements as words, tone and body language are useful in understanding and resolving potential conflict situations.  Problems can often occur due to cultural misconceptions. It is always a good idea to research possible cultural differences. For example, short meetings are acceptable in Germany and the USA. In the Middle East and Latin America the meetings tend to be longer.  Many problems can be traced back to misunderstandings and loss of perspective. If a communication breakdown does occur, it can be helped by:   * Active listening. Consult people and really listen to what they have to say. * Reformulation. Repeat back key points to make sure that no misinterpretation has occurred. * Focus. Concentrate on the problem, not on personalities.   Sometimes it is useful to relearn the following skills: be polite, don't shout and respect other people. Problems will still occur, but a peaceful resolution may be easier to find. |

1. MORI is the largest independently owned market research company in the UK. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)