

Lesson 8: Negotiations

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| Group size: any, also one-to-one |
| Level: pre-intermediate upwards |
| Lesson focus: taking part in a negotiation |
| Language focus: negotiating |
| Materials: a set of Business Top Trumps cards; one copy of the worksheet per student; one copy of the role information cards per two or three students, cut up; one copy of the observation sheet per student |

1 Looking at language

Hand out the worksheet. Students read the sentences in the first two language boxes (or all three, if they are more advanced). In pairs or small groups, students will have to a. complete the sentences (where there are gaps), b. provide a follow-on sentence or comment and c. suggest the kind of negotiation the sentences might be used in. Give them, or elicit, one example answer for each language box before they start.

For example:

Language box 1

- If I came in an hour early tomorrow, would you stay later and lock up the office in the evening?*
- OK. I'll need the keys, then. or Sorry, I can't do that. I have to pick up my kids from school at 3.*
- between two co-workers when one wants to leave early

2 Discussion

Having looked at the sentences in task 1, students should now try to remember the last time they had a negotiation. Get them to talk about it, no matter how big (a large order or contract) or small (who will wash up the coffee cups).

After the situations have been established, get the students to discuss how they feel they handled the negotiation. This is practice for the reflection task that comes later.

3 Negotiations with the Top Trumps cards

Ideally, students should do this activity in groups of three. Two are the negotiating partners and one is the observer. Then, if they are able to carry out all three negotiations, they can each have two goes at negotiating and one at observing. Alternatively, the students can work in pairs, negotiating first and, then, completing the observation

sheet when they have finished. This will make it a reflection task rather than an observation one.

In groups of three, one student will get role information card A plus the corresponding Top Trumps card, a second student will get role information card B plus the corresponding Top Trumps card and the third student will fill out the observation sheet while the other two are holding their negotiation.

Give the students a few minutes to prepare their strategies. If more than one student is playing each role (that is, if you have multiple negotiations going on at the same time), you could get the students who are playing the same roles to sit together and briefly plan their negotiations.

Set a time limit on each negotiation – perhaps ten minutes – but allow a further ten minutes for the students to go through the observation sheet and discuss what happened, how happy they were with their performances and how they could be improved.

Extension: Get the students to look through the cards and decide what further negotiations might take place between any two members of staff. Discuss what both parties might aim for and how they might achieve this. If time allows, use these ideas to carry out further role-plays.

4 Negotiations #2

This is a personalization task in which students can prepare for a negotiation (no matter how large or small) at work in the near future. They should first think of a negotiation they will need to have at work and, then, explain the situation to their partner. They and their partner then act out the negotiation in the form of a role-play. Once they have practised their negotiating skills, they can act out their role-play in front of the class.

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1 Looking at language

Read the language in the boxes and discuss:

- how the sentences could be completed;
- what the follow-on sentence or comment might be;
- in what kind of negotiation you might use these sentences.

Language box 1 – *if* in negotiations

If I ..., would you ...?
If you can ..., then I'll ...
If you did ..., then I could do ...
We could probably ... if you ...
If you would agree to ..., then we could ...
Well, OK, but only if you ...

Language box 2 – agreeing and disagreeing

That would be fine / great / fantastic / manageable.
That sounds fair to me.
Yes, I agree with that.
I'm happy / willing to do that.

I'm afraid I can't agree to that.
Sorry, but that's not possible.
I understand but, unfortunately, ...
Unfortunately, I can't make that decision by myself.

Language box 3 – three ways of getting beyond a deadlock situation

What can we do to move this forward?
How can we get around this problem?

Well, if you said ..., then I think we could ...

Let's come back to that later.
Why don't we move on to the next point.

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2 Discussion

Think about the last time you took part in a negotiation. Was it ...

- ... business-related?
- ... non-business-related?
- ... formal?
- ... informal?

- What was it about?
- Why was it necessary?
- What was the outcome?
- Were you pleased with the way you handled it?

3 Negotiations with the Top Trumps cards

- Students A and B, read your Top Trumps card and your role information card.
- Student C is the observer and should listen carefully, making notes throughout the negotiation.
- Carry out the negotiations.
- Using the observer's notes, reflect and comment on how well you carried out the negotiation.

4 Negotiations #2

Think of a situation in which you will need to negotiate at work. Explain the situation to another student. Then, role play the negotiation with them. Once you've practised, act out your role-play in front of the class.

Negotiation 1 – Philippe and Jolene

Student A Philippe

Philippe is not sleeping well. He's worried about his financial situation and it's beginning to interfere with his work. At his last appraisal, Jolene hinted that he would be in line for a promotion or pay rise this year, neither of which has happened. He's considering applying for a job at a rival company. He doesn't really want to do that but he doesn't know what else to do.



Negotiation 1 – Jolene and Philippe

Student B Jolene

Jolene has the chance to lead an interesting council project that would be beneficial for her political career. The problem is that she'd need Wednesday afternoons off for the next few months so that she could chair the weekly committee meetings. She'd like to pass some of her work on to her deputy but she's not sure whether Philippe is ready to take on more responsibilities. He hasn't been very focused on his work recently and she's noticed that he's made a few mistakes.

Negotiation 2 – Jason and Murat

Student A Jason

Jason's football team are taking part in an international competition in Croatia. He desperately needs a week off so that he can take part but he has already used up his holiday allowance for this year.

Negotiation 2 – Murat and Jason

Student B Murat

He has a large order that needs to be fulfilled but currently two of his team are off sick, one with the flu, the other with a broken arm. There are some arguments going on between his apprentices (he doesn't know what the arguments are about) and the work atmosphere is not as good as it should be.

Negotiation 3 – Valerie and Angela

Student A Valerie

Robert wants to have a paper-free office by the end of the year. Valerie is already struggling with the computer work she has to do at the moment. Robert has asked Valerie to arrange seminars on paper-free work environments for the heads of all the departments. She has no idea how to do this.

Negotiation 3 – Angela and Valerie

Student B Angela

She is feeling tired and would like to work from home until her baby arrives and for at least three days a week after she has had the baby. Even though she could do all her work remotely on her company laptop, she thinks her boss will not agree to her working from home. She wants to go over his head and talk to Robert but she doesn't know how to approach him. Although it's slightly unethical, she's hoping for Valerie's support.

Lesson 8: Negotiations

- How did the negotiating partners appear at the beginning of the negotiation? Were they friendly, annoyed, determined ...?
- Did their attitudes change during the negotiation? What effect did this have on the outcome?
- Were both partners' negotiation aims clear?

| What went well? | What could have gone better? |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
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- What was the outcome of the negotiation? Was it a win-win situation or a stalemate (when no one wins)? Or did one partner get what they wanted and not the other?

| good language used | errors and misunderstandings |
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- Was there anything the negotiating partners wanted to say but did not have the English for?