English for European trade unionists

Level Two

Unit 10
Presentations & Meetings

The ETUI-REHS is financially supported by the European Commission
Looking ahead

In this unit you will look at how to structure and deliver oral presentations, write a summary of a report and discuss procedures and attitudes concerning meetings

Vocabulary

- Some of the vocabulary of meetings

Grammar

- The present perfect tense
How often do you attend meetings?

What type of meetings do you attend?

What part, if any, do you play in meetings?
WORKING WITH SPEAKING 1

Exercise 10.1  Oral Presentations

Look at the following suggestions about what makes a good oral presentation and rank them in their order of importance. Then compare and discuss your ranking with that of a colleague.

a. The speaker uses a PowerPoint presentation (PPT).
b. The speaker has good pronunciation.
c. The talk is well organised into clearly defined sections.
d. The speaker gives an overview of the whole presentation at the beginning.
e. The speaker tells jokes.
f. The speaker gives a summary at the end.

Can you add any other aspects of a good presentation to this list?

WORKING WITH LISTENING 1

Exercise 10.2  Increasing the union profile

Listen to an oral presentation given by the branch secretary of a union who wants to raise the profile or image of the union. Then answer the questions below.

1. Is membership of her organisation increasing or decreasing?
2. What does she say about the attitude of young people?
3. Why does collective action seem to be less important?
4. How many suggestions does she make to improve the image of the union?
5. What could be used to improve publicity?
6. What are the problems with meetings?
7. In what way could the union be more pro-active?
8. What two things does she want to happen after her presentation?

Now listen again and note how the speaker gives emphasis (stress) to certain words (see Unit 7).
With a colleague discuss the following:

- In what way did the speaker give an overview of the presentation at the beginning?
- How does she indicate the different points she wants to make?
- What does she do to conclude her presentation?
- What is your overall opinion of this presentation?
- What mark would you give it on a scale of 1-10?

WORKING WITH SPEAKING 2

Giving oral presentations - the use of pauses

In giving a presentation it is important to remember that the listeners do not necessarily speak and understand English at the same level. It is important to speak clearly with good stress on the key words and to pause from time to time. The pauses vary in length depending on the emphasis you wish to give to particular points in your presentation.


Study the text of an informal presentation about "the mobile phone" and see how the presentation is organised.

- How does the speaker divide the contents of the presentation into different sections?
- How does the speaker try to involve the listener?
- Decide where to place your pauses then practise giving the above presentation remembering to emphasise (stress) the key words.
I’m going to talk briefly about the mobile phone. I’ll say something about the types of phone that are available, then I’ll list some of the advantages and disadvantages of the mobile phone. And finally I’ll present my conclusion. I hope this is OK with everyone?

Well, first of all, the mobile itself. Nowadays we find them everywhere. Most people have one. They have become very sophisticated and it is possible to send and receive text messages and e-mails, take photos, watch videos and play games. Not surprisingly they are extremely popular with young people.

Is this clear so far?

Now what about the advantages and disadvantages?

First of all, the advantages. Obviously it is now so easy to communicate with people all over the world. You can locate people anywhere at any time. You can really keep up to date with the latest news both personal and professional and, of course, it’s very useful in an emergency.

Secondly, the disadvantages. One is the cost. It’s easy to spend a lot of money on phone calls. Another disadvantage is the disturbance the phone can cause. It is especially annoying when people use mobiles in public places, in restaurants and on trains. I’m sure you’ll all have experienced this. Is that right?

Well, in conclusion, I would say there are clearly points for and against the mobile, both pros and cons. However, on balance, I believe that the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. What do you think? I’d welcome any comments and or questions.
WORKING WITH VOCABULARY 1

Exercise 10.3 Some signposts or markers to use in a presentation

Study and practise saying the following phrases: Add any other expressions you could use.

Introducing the presentation.
- I’m going to talk about.............
- I’m going to say something about W, X, Y and Z
- At the end I’ll be happy to answer any questions

Presenting the main points
- First of all
- Secondly,
- Thirdly
- Fourthly
- Next
- And finally

Making reference to particular aspects
- With regard to...
- I’d like to refer to...
- On the one hand.....on the other hand
- For example......
- Another thing to consider is...

Ending the presentation
- In conclusion, I’d like to say/to add that........
- To sum up – I’ve tried to present/explain/describe some aspects of .......
- Now I’d be pleased/I’d be happy to answer any questions
- Thank you very much

Dealing with questions
- That’s an interesting/difficult question....but I think....
- That’s a good point. However, I think.....
- The short answer is...
- To be honest this isn’t something I know about
Exercise 10.4

Prepare and deliver a short talk on something you are especially interested in, for example:

- A hobby
- A good experience
- A visit to another country
- A success at work
- Climate change

Make sure you make good use of markers and pauses

Remember the golden rule:

**KISS**

Keep It Short and Simple!
WORKING WITH VOCABULARY 2

Exercise 10.5  Economics and politics

Study the different uses of these two words.

Economics

economy: the overall financial situation of a country or region.
example: The German economy slowed down in the late 1990’s.
economics: the social science concerned with the production of goods and services.
example: The speaker did not seem to understand economics.
economic: profitable, not resulting in loss or waste of money.
example: It makes economic sense to employ experts.
example: It was an economic decision not a social decision.
economical: not wasting, using carefully.
example: We need to be more economical with our time.
economise: to stop spending as much money as before.
example: The company decided to economise on the use of electricity.
economist: a person who is an expert in the social science of economics.
example: The union decided to consult an economist.

Politics

policy: a plan of action.
example: The Congress approved the new policy.
politics: the art and science of government and administration.
political; relating to government and administration.
example: She is very active in politics; she belongs to the Green Party.
political: relating to government and administration.
example: It was a political decision rather than an economic decision.
politicise: to convert something into a political issue.
example: The Government tried to politicise the union demands.
politician: a person who is active in politics or who acts in a political way.
example: There are politicians in every organisation.
Exercise 10.6    Gap-filling

*Fill in the gaps with one of the words from the above table:*

**Example:** The committee is very *economical*, it does not spend a lot of money.

1. Recent signs indicate that the world ............... is facing a new crisis.
2. Unfortunately the organisation decided to .................on staff.
3. The enterprise is in a bad...............state so it must reduce costs.
4. The Chair said it was a question of ................. We must reconsider the budget.
5. In earlier times, the militant members tried to ............... the movement.
6. Sometimes a union leader needs to be a good ................. in order to be successful.
7. The majority of the members voted in favour of the new............... 
8. As a new delegate I don’t understand the ................. behind this decision.
9. The company directors said that the forecast was prepared by an .................
10. This is a ......................issue and it is not within the competence of the EWC.
WORKING WITH READING 1

Exercise 10.7  A report

Read this report written by the General Secretary of an important trade union organisation. Check the meaning of any words you do not know and then answer the questions below.

Introduction

The last twelve months have been particularly difficult for our organisation because of the overall situation of the world economy. Against this background I want to highlight some aspects of the following topics: membership, organisation, staff, policy and current problems.

Membership

We currently have 1.3 million members across the public sector. The average membership is between 60% and 65% of the workforce which can be considered high in comparison to other sectors of the economy. This year we have experienced a fall of about 2,500 due largely to retirements and redundancies.

Organisation

At national level we held our annual Congress in September. This was attended by 400 delegates together with observers from 25 other national and international organisations. The annual report of the Congress has now been distributed to all regional and branch secretaries. The National Executive met on a monthly basis and in addition held two special meetings to discuss the crisis in the steel industry. The 12 Regional Secretaries continued to perform an excellent service in acting as vital channels of communication within the organisation.

Staff

We currently have 1500 full-time officers who are responsible for collective bargaining and negotiations at local level. They are to be congratulated on carrying out their duties in such difficult circumstances this last year.

Policy

The key policy issues during the year were: discussions on equality of working conditions for part-time workers, and new health and safety regulations.
Current problems
The most difficult problem is privatisation. The Government is planning to privatise further public sectors. We are continuing to campaign to preserve the rights of employees in the new companies.

Conclusion
In spite of the economic and political difficulties faced by our members the organisation has succeeded in preserving good conditions of employment. We expect assistance from the new EU regulations which come into force this year. Membership numbers remain high.

1. How many sections is this report divided into?
2. What are the advantages of dividing it in this way?
3. Is membership increasing or decreasing?
4. Which economic sectors does the organisation cover?
5. How often are national Congresses held?
6. How often did the national Executive meet last year?
7. What was the major difficulty last year?
8. How important is the work of the Regional Secretaries?
9. What policy for part-time workers does the union support?
10. On balance has it been a good or a bad year for the organisation?
WORKING WITH WRITING 1

Exercise 10.8

Prepare a short summary of the above report using bullet points to indicate the key points

Example:

Introduction
- Last 12 months difficult - world economy

Membership
- 1.3m members/public sector
- Union density high 60 - 65%
- 2,500 decrease - largely retirement/redundancy

WORKING WITH SPEAKING 3

Checking understanding

We need to check that people understand what we are saying and we also need to check that we understand what people are saying to us. Sometimes we need to find other ways to explain things. Here are some expressions we can use:

Expressions to check that people understand you
- Is this OK?
- Is this clear?
- Do you understand me?

Expressions to check we understand what people say to us
- So what you mean is .................
- Are you saying that ....................?
- In other words ........................

Expressions to introduce things in another way
- What I want to say is .................
- What I’m trying to say is .................
- What I mean is ........................
Exercise 10.9

Work with a colleague and tell each other about a problem you have at work. Use some of the above expressions to make sure your colleague understands the situation. Your colleague should use some of the above expressions to make sure he/she understands what you are saying.

WORKING WITH LANGUAGE 1

The present perfect tense

The present perfect tense is formed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>have verb</th>
<th>Short form</th>
<th>Past participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>I’ve</td>
<td>organised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>you’ve</td>
<td>attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he/she/it</td>
<td>has</td>
<td>he’s</td>
<td>worked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>we’ve</td>
<td>visited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>you’ve</td>
<td>prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>they’ve</td>
<td>negotiated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: Some verbs have irregular past participles

Examples:

be=been; do=done; have=had; give=given; know=known; meet=met; send=sent; speak=spoken; understand=understood; write=written

See Study guide for further list.

Note 2: Usually the short forms of the verb have are used.

Note 3: Two short forms are possible in the negative form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>have not</th>
<th>haven’t</th>
<th>I’ve not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>have not</td>
<td>haven’t</td>
<td>I’ve not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>have not</td>
<td>haven’t</td>
<td>you’ve not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he/she/it</td>
<td>has not</td>
<td>hasn’t</td>
<td>he’s/she’s/it’s not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
<td>have not</td>
<td>haven’t</td>
<td>We’ve not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>have not</td>
<td>haven’t</td>
<td>you’ve not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>have not</td>
<td>haven’t</td>
<td>they’ve not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note 4: The question form (interrogative). This is formed with the interrogative of the verb have and the past participle:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>have</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>understood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has</td>
<td>he/she/it</td>
<td>started?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have</td>
<td>we/you/they</td>
<td>been?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When to use the present perfect tense:

- The present perfect is used in English to refer to something that began in the past and still continues in the present
  
  **Examples:**
  - Magdalena has lived in Copenhagen for five years (she still lives there).
  - How long have you worked for Siemens? Helmut hasn’t worked there for long (and he is still working there)

- It is used to describe past experiences of life without any specific reference to time.
  
  **Examples:**
  - I have visited many countries so I know about working conditions in these places.
  - Have you participated in many European meetings?
  - Carla has served as rapporteur on many occasions.
  - I’ve forgotten the word in English.
  - Have you met Ivan? I’ve never spoken to him.

- It is also used for recent events with the word just
  
  **Examples:**
  - The Hungarian delegates have just arrived.
  - We’ve just sent an e-mail.
  - I’ve just spoken to the President.
  - The computer has just crashed.

- We do not use the present perfect with finished time
  
  **Compare:**
  - Have you visited Madrid? (any time in the past).
  - I visited Madrid last year (a finished time in the past).
Exercise 10.10
Complete the following sentences using the simple past or the present perfect.

1. ....... you.......... (attend) a union meeting recently? Yes, I .......... (attend) one last Friday.
2. ......... you ..........(finish) the report? Yes I .......... (finish) it an hour ago.
3. ........you.......... (study) English for a long time? No, I........... (start) two years ago.
5. We......... (not meet), have we? Yes, I ..........(meet) you in 2006.

Exercise 10.11  Pavol’s retirement speech
Pavol has just retired. Here is part of a speech he made at a meeting to his colleagues.

Complete the verb phrases with the appropriate short forms of the verb have and the past participle of the verb in brackets. Some verbs are in the negative and interrogative forms.

Well, dear colleagues,

1. As you know I ................. (represent) you all on the Works Committee at our enterprise for fifteen years.
2. I ................. (enjoy) working with you ...
3. ... and I hope I ................. (serve) you well.
4. I ................. (attend) many meetings on your behalf.
5. I ................. (not hesitate) to express my opinion to the management.
6. I ................. always .............. (try) to report any information directly to the members.
7. What ................. I ................. (not do)?
8. Well, I ................. (not have) a holiday in recent years.
9. Union work ................. (dominate) my life for the last thirty years.
10. Now I ................. (complete) my mission and it’s time for a change. Thank you all for your support. I wish you well in the future.
Exercise 10.12  Life experiences

Use the present perfect tense to talk to a colleague about your experiences. Ask each other questions about these experiences.

For example:

- jobs you have had (I’ve worked for... since........)
- visits you have made. (I’ve visited many countries... have you visited...?)
- people you have met
- funny things that have happened to you
- mistakes you have made
- the best things you have ever done
- opportunities you have missed
WORKING WITH VOCABULARY 3

Exercise 10.13 The vocabulary of meetings

With a partner check that you understand the meaning of the following words. Then fill the gaps in the sentences below with the appropriate word from this vocabulary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>agenda</th>
<th>adjournment</th>
<th>chair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>postpone</td>
<td>AOB</td>
<td>apologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quorum</td>
<td>minutes</td>
<td>convene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>item</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The steering committee decided to ............... a special meeting to discuss the problem.
2. There were not sufficient members present to make a ............... for the meeting.
3. So the President ............... the meeting until next week.
4. Some delegates were unable to attend and the secretary announced their ............... for absence.
5. The ............... of the previous meeting were approved by the members.
6. We have a very full ............... for this meeting.
7. The most important ............... to discuss was the new health and safety policy.
8. The union reps asked for an ............... of the meeting for thirty minutes in order to consult an expert.
9. The ............... summarised the discussion for the benefit of all.
10. The question of the social evening was raised under ............... 

*Can you add any more words that relate to the procedure of meetings?*
WORKING WITH SPEAKING 4

Study box:

Speaking at meetings

If you want to speak at a meeting, you can say:
- Excuse me, I’d like to say something....
- Excuse me, I want to add something....
- Excuse me, can I speak now?

To invite people to speak, the Chair of a meeting can say:
- Hans, it’s your turn to speak now
- Katarina, would you like to say something?
- Could we hear the opinion of the Danish delegates?

Note: "To have the word" is Euro-English!

To make suggestions, you can say:
- I suggest that we...
- My suggestion is that you...
- Why don’t we...?

To support a suggestion, you can say:
- I support the idea of (preparing a report)
- I’m in favour of (visiting...)
- I go along with what Carla said.

To report back to a meeting, you can say
- We thought that...
- Our group decided...
- In our opinion...

Exercise 10.14

Using some of the above expressions, discuss in groups how you think you can continue to develop your English language skills. Each group then reports back to a plenary meeting at which the whole group prioritises five key suggestions.
WORKING WITH VOCABULARY 4

Exercise 10.15  Some terms used at (e.g. project) meetings

*Match the terms with their meanings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. accountability</td>
<td>a) What appears to work best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. benchmarking</td>
<td>b) The distribution of relevant information and/or the outcomes of a project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. best practice</td>
<td>c) Having the necessary minimum standards to qualify for the award of a contract or position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. competencies</td>
<td>d) Any person or organisation with an interest in or affected specific legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. coherence</td>
<td>e) Setting the standard by which performance will be judged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. dissemination</td>
<td>f) Logical connection between the various stages in a project and consistency in regard to the achievement of the objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. eligibility</td>
<td>g) Being responsible and answerable to someone for actions that are taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. mainstreaming</td>
<td>h) Euro-jargon for 'powers and responsibilities'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. stakeholder</td>
<td>i) Openness in the way in the way institutions and individuals operate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. transparency</td>
<td>j) Making sure an issue is fully taken into account in all polices. For example, environmental implications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise 10.16  Acronyms and abbreviations found in documents

Select the correct meaning for the following acronyms and abbreviations - there may be more than one answer!

1  WTO
   a) World Trade Organisation
   b) Workers’ Trade Organisation
   c) World Transport Organisation

2  EU
   a) European Unit
   b) European Uniform
   c) European Union

3  ILO
   a) Internal Labour Organisation
   b) International Labour Organisation
   c) International Labour Office

4  EWC
   a) European Workers Council
   b) European Women’s Council
   c) European Works Council

5  TUC
   a) Trade Union Council
   b) Trade Union Congress
   c) Trade Union Confederation

6  ETUC
   a) European Trade Union Congress
   b) Eastern Trade Union Collective
   c) European Trade Union Confederation

7  ETUI
   a) European Trade Union Institute
   b) European Transport Unification Initiative
   c) European Trade Union Incentives

8  REHS
   a) Revised Health and Safety Rules
   b) Research, Education, Health and Safety
   c) Retraining, Helping, Serving
9 PM
a) Past master
b) Post meridiem
c) Prime Minister

10 PTO
a) Please take over
b) Professional training officer
c) Please turn over

11 IMF
a) International Monetary Federation
b) Internal Market Forum
c) International Monetary Fund

12 CEO
a) Corporate Executive Officer
b) Company Executive Officer
c) Chief Executive Officer

13 GNP
a) Gross National Product
b) Gross National Production
c) Great National Product

14 NGO
a) No Go Organisation
b) Non-Governing Order
c) Non-Governmental Organisation

15 H&S
a) Health & Security
b) Health & Safety
c) Healthy & Secure

16 EMU
a) European Mobility Unit
b) European metal workers
c) European Monetary Union

17 AOB
a) All our businesses
b) Any other business
c) American or British
18 e.g.
  a) for example
  b) end game
  c) exempli gratia

19 v.v.
  a) opposite way around
  b) very vulgar
  c) vice versa

20 PC
  a) Police constable
  b) Personal computer
  c) Politically correct

WORKING WITH SPEAKING 5

Exercise 10.17  Attitudes towards meetings

Here are some words that can be used to describe people’s attitudes towards meetings. Separate these words into positive and negative attitudes and then use them to discuss your own experiences of meetings. Add any further words to the list.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a real step forward</td>
<td>beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demoralising</td>
<td>encouraging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a waste of time</td>
<td>frustrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constructive</td>
<td>boring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


WORKING WITH WRITING 2

E-mails

Exercise 10.18

1. Prepare an e-mail to send to a colleague inviting him/her to attend a meeting. Prepare a typical agenda for a meeting to attach to your message.

2. Prepare an e-mail to say that you are not able to attend the meeting (give a reason) and to ask if it is alright to send a deputy.

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

A presentation

To give you the opportunity to use some of the vocabulary and language strategies that you develop during this training course, you are asked to prepare and deliver a short presentation on a topic agreed with your tutor.

*Your presentation should take between 5 and 10 minutes to be followed by questions from the audience. You should use appropriate visual aids.*

(see the advice given on page 6 of the Introductory unit -Language learning strategies).

Examples of topics include:

- My trade union organisation
- The impact of EU enlargement on your country
- Trade unions and environment policy
- Work and family responsibilities
- Economic problems
- Transport policy
- The pension system
- Communicating union information
Activity 2
A group discussion
In small groups of three or four people, discuss a topic agreed with your tutor (e.g. privatisation, globalisation, global warming, use of new technologies etc). Your colleagues will listen and report back on your use of the vocabulary and language strategies you have learned during this training course. You have 15 minutes to prepare for the discussion which should last for about 10 minutes.

Activity 3
A meeting with a visiting delegation (role-play)
Groups A and B as outlined below have 30 minutes in pre-meetings before meeting each other for no more than 45 minutes to discuss their business.

Group A
You are going to welcome a visiting delegation from the Education department of ETUI-REHS. They are interested in organizing an English language course in this training centre.

Prepare to answer questions about the facilities you can arrange for them (for example, seminar rooms, computer facilities, bedrooms, meals, leisure facilities and possible study visits).

Choose a chairperson for your group and decide who is responsible for each facility. Each member of the group needs to take responsibility for at least one of the above topics. Begin the activity by welcoming your visitors and introducing yourselves.

Group B
You are members of visiting delegation from the Education department of ETUI-REHS. You are interested in organising an English language course in this training centre.

Prepare to ask questions about the facilities you need (for example, seminar rooms, computer facilities, bedrooms, meals, leisure facilities and possible study visits).

Choose a chairperson for your group and decide who is responsible for each facility. Each member of the group needs to take responsibility for at least one of the above topics. Begin the activity by introducing yourselves and explaining why you are making this visit.
Looking back

**In this unit you**

- have studied the present perfect tense
- have studied oral presentations and written reports
- learned some of the vocabulary of meetings

**You should now be able to**

- give a short presentation
- write a brief report
- take part in a meeting