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ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS STUDIES

— *CURS PRACTIC* —

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UNIT 1

SOCIALISING IN BUSINESS

The success of your business depends to a great extent on your ability to communicate effectively. Since any kind of business contact involves a special relationship, which is established between you and your partner, it is essential for you to be able to socialise in various contexts, such as: travelling on business, making and accepting invitations, or entertaining a client.

Section A

The First Meeting

A.1. Introductions

I. Read the following situations and introduce yourself accordingly.

1. You are attending a one-week course on Personal Management. It is the first day. You are going to initiate a conversation with a new colleague during the lunch break. Greet the person, introduce yourself and say a few words about yourself.

2. As a Public Relations Officer you are going to welcome a World Bank expert. Introduce yourself and state your position in the company.

Are there any differences between the ways you introduce yourselves in the above situations? Which are the factors that we should take into consideration when addressing somebody? Read the following table which lists the main differences between a formal and an informal style:

Formal Style	Informal Style
Used in a professional setting	Usually used with colleagues, friends and family
No slang	Contains slang words
Pronounce words correctly	Contains shortened versions of words

II. Look at the dialogues below and identify their style: **formal** or **informal**.

a. Hello, I'm May Garner. What's your name?

Hello, May. I'm Charles Fox.

b. Good morning. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Angela West.

Good morning. It is a privilege to meet you. I am Linda Johnson.

c. Hello. Let me introduce myself. I am Max Raynolds.

Pleased to meet you. My name is Jacob Hills.

d. Hi, I'm Jill Watson.

I don't believe we've met. I'm Greg.

e. Hello. What's your name?

Hello, Madam. My name is Mike.

What do you notice about this last dialogue? What could be the relationship between Mike and the lady?

III. Practise the use of formal and informal style by initiating a dialogue in the following situations:

- a. You are at the airport, waiting for a trade delegation from the Middle East. Identify yourself and your company.
- b. As Personnel Manager, you are going to receive a new employee. Greet him and welcome him to the company.
- c. Sue starts a two-week training course in your department today. Introduce yourself and your colleagues.
- d. You take part in a conference where you meet your counterpart in another subsidiary of the bank you work for. You have met several times in the past.
- e. You arrive in the USA to visit your agent, Mike Singh.

A. 2. Initiating a Conversation

After the first introductions, you should start a conversation with your business partner on a general topic. This is called 'the first five minutes' of any business meeting. In other words, in about five minutes you are supposed to establish a personal contact with the other person. Remember to approach a 'safe' topic to which anyone can answer easily. Do not ask: a person's age, birth date, salary, weight, marital status, etc.

I. Here is a list of safe topics. Write two questions for each of the topics.

1. the weather: e. g. It is a lovely day, isn't it?
2. the journey
3. the hotel
4. the city
5. the country

II. Working in pairs, act out a conversation on each of these topics.

III. Re-arrange the sentences below so as to make the conversation between Ben, Carol, and Jim.

B: Nice to meet you Carol

C: Hartford, the capital. How about you, Ben?

J: Have you two met each other?

C: I'm from Connecticut.

C: How do you know Jim?

B: No, we haven't.

B: Nebraska, a place called Bellevue. It's near Omaha.

B: Where are you from, Carol?

J: Ben, this is Carol. Carol, this is Ben

B: Connecticut? Which part?

C: Nice to meet you too, Ben.

B: He is my friend from college.

IV. Work in groups of four. Practice introducing your colleagues to each other. Remember to smile and use handshakes where appropriate.

Section B

After Hours

B.1. Making, Accepting and Declining Invitations

I. Study the following sample phrases. Decide which of them are formal and which are informal.

Making invitations:

- I would like to invite you to a concert next Saturday.
- I was wondering whether you would like to join me for a concert next Saturday.
- Would you like/care to come to a concert next Saturday?
- What/How about going to a concert next Saturday?
- Let's go to a concert next Saturday.

Accepting invitations:

- Thanks for your invitation. I would be most delighted to.
- Thank you. I would really like to.
- Yes, thanks. It's a very good idea.
- Of course, sounds great.
- All right. Let's go.

Declining invitations:

- Thank you for inviting me. Unfortunately, I have other plans for next Saturday. I'm terribly sorry.

- I would really like to, thanks, but I'm going to a wedding next Saturday.
- Thanks for asking, but I'm afraid I'm busy.
- I can't. I have a lot of work to do by Monday.
- Sorry, I'm already tied up.

Hesitating:

- Thank you. I'll check my calendar and inform you by Friday. Will that be all right with you?
- Thanks, but I'm not sure what my plans are. Could I get back to you tomorrow?
- I think I'm busy on Saturday. I'll let you know soon.

How do you phrase your invitations for inviting a business associate to go somewhere, when you know/do not know the person well?

When accepting invitations, you should combine a phrase of thanks with a phrase expressing your acceptance of the invitation. Similarly, when you decline an invitation, especially a formal one, remember to thank the person for inviting you, then decline and give a reason.

II. Which of the following answers is not appropriate?

Would you like to look round the production department on Monday morning?

- a) Sure. What time?
- b) Thanks, that would be helpful.
- c) Why?

If you are free on Friday afternoon, why not come round for a drink?

- a) Thanks. I'd love to, but I have an appointment.
- b) No, I can't
- c) Unfortunately, I'm busy on Friday. What about Saturday?

My wife and I were wondering if you could come over for lunch on Sunday.

- a) Thank you very much. I'd be delighted to.
- b) I'd really like to, but I'm going on a trip this weekend.
- c) I don't go out on Sundays.

If you don't have any plans this afternoon, perhaps you would like me to show you the old part of Bucharest.

- a) Yes, I would.
- b) It's very nice of you. I'd love to. Thank you.
- c) Thanks, but I'm afraid I have already got other plans for this afternoon.

Shall I bring something for dinner tonight?

- a) Thanks, but we've got everything ready.
- b) Why? You don't like my cooking?
- c) You can bring some wine, if you want.

III. Working in pairs, role-play the following situations:

1. **Student A:** You have recently completed a two-month training course and got to know the other participants quite well. Invite one of them for a drink tomorrow afternoon.

Student B: One of your new colleagues is going to ask you to go out. Since the course you have both attended is over, you would like to socialise more. Accept the invitation. Suggest a convenient time for you.

2. **Student A:** You have an interesting business idea that you want to discuss with Mrs. Kathryn Slee, British Advisor to a business agency. Invite her to lunch next week.

Student B: You are Mrs. Kathryn Slee, British Advisor for small businesses. A client wants to invite you for lunch next week. Your agenda is busy, so you do not know if you can make it.

3. **Student A:** You have successfully concluded negotiations with an important business partner. Invite him to an opera performance on Friday evening.

Student B: At the end of some business negotiations, your partner invites you to see an opera performance, but you are not keen on opera. Find a suitable reason and decline the invitation.

B. 2. Entertaining a Client

I. Jane Hill is on business in India. Her company's agent in New Delhi, Mr. Sen, invites her for lunch at a local restaurant. Decide who says the following.

e.g. **Waiter:** Can I get you anything else?

No, but we can order fresh vegetables as a side dish.
Can we have a table for two?

Can you tell me what's in murgh biryani?
Hello, Mrs Hill! How are you doing this afternoon?
There is one free in the corner.
Two sweet lassis, since the lady has never tried them.
Can I get you anything else?
Of course, Mr. Sen.
Thanks. It is a famous restaurant in Delhi.
Certainly, here you are.
No, thanks. I'd like the bill, please.
I recommend murgh byriani.
Here you are. Enjoy your meal.
Very well, thank you. I must congratulate you on choosing an exquisite place.
Do any vegetables come with it?
I'm afraid we don't.
Can I take your order now?
We do use a lot of spices when cooking, indeed.
Do you have a reservation?
I'll go for murgh byriani, then.
Is that table all right with you?
Yes. A murgh byriani and fresh vegetables, for the lady, and a masala dosa for me, please.
Can we see a menu, please?
It's a traditional dish of rice and chicken.
What would you like to drink?
What would you recommend?
The food is excellent. A little too spicy for me, though.

II. Put the phrases above into order so as to recreate the dialogue.

III. Work in groups of five. One of you is a waiter at Saravana Restaurant. The others want to have dinner there. Practise a dialogue with the following script:

Customer 1: Ask for a table.

Waiter: Ask if they have booked.

Customer 1: Respond.

Waiter: Ask if you can take the order.

Customers: Tell the waiter what you would like (starters, main courses and side dishes).

Waiter: Write down the menu. Ask the customers if they want something to drink.

Customers: Order your drinks.

Waiter: Ask the customers if they are enjoying their meal.

Customers: Comment on the meal.

Waiter: Ask if the customers would like desserts.

Customers: Refuse the deserts.

Customers: Ask if you could have the bill.

IV. Write down your dialogue.

Language Focus

Formal/Informal Synonyms

I. Compare these pairs of verbs, paying attention to the difference in the degree of formality between multi-word verbs and single verbs.

Informal Verbs	More Formal Verbs
The director <u>checked up on</u> his accountant.	The director <u>investigated</u> his accountant.
The cost of living <u>went up</u> .	The cost of living <u>increased</u> .
We have to <u>put up with</u> our new colleague.	We have to <u>tolerate</u> our new colleague.
He has <u>asked for</u> a salary raise.	He <u>requested</u> a salary raise.
The government <u>put off</u> the decision.	The government <u>postponed</u> the decision.

II. Replace the informal verbs in italics with the following, more formal verbs: *establish, write, propose, reject, employ, face, complete, dismiss, deceive, discover*. Remember to respect the tense of the verb.

1. The firm's request for further funding was *turned down*.
2. We have to *come up* with a solution to this problem.
3. The director will *meet with* a lot of opposition when he announces his proposal.
4. They have *found out* that the bank has surprising rules when it comes to new customers.
5. The business has recently been *set up*.
6. They are *laying off* 100 workers.
7. We rarely *take on* extra stuff.
8. You must *fill in* this application form.
9. You should *put down* the names of two referees.
10. The inspector was *taken in* by the apparent calm of the employees.

III. Study the sentences below. They are grammatically accurate, but their style is inappropriate. Re-write them in a more formal style by making all the necessary changes. The changes do not refer only to verbs.

1. It's obvious that the working environment is going to get a lot worse.
2. I'm currently free for interview and can't wait to discuss the post in more detail.
3. The director reviewed the report and said that it was great.
4. The Indian economy would like to look after itself, but it's also affected by things that happen outside the country.
5. The historical approach to economics is just not the right way to go about it.
6. The research team said that their techniques were ok, but needed to be further refined.

Writing

Here is the informal text of an email that Rachel sends to Mike. Imagine you send an email to a travel agency. Request similar information and make the necessary changes in order to write a formal message.

To: mike.peters@gmail.com

Subject: Hotel reservation

Hi Mike!

I want to make a hotel reservation, you know, for me and my friends. We're going on holiday to Provence on 3rd June, and I know you went there last year with Ann. I need 3 rooms: 2 doubles and one single with ensuite bathrooms. Do you have any idea how much that would cost us per night? Did you have breakfast included in the price?

Do send me some information soon, please!

Cheers,

Rachel