Business Writing
Advanced
Session 4: Asking for Clarification and Confirmation
Learning Objectives

Advanced

In this session, you will:

• Practice common expressions to ask for clarification.
• Ask for confirmation of your understanding.
The coach and the learner role play co-workers Henry and Radha as they talk about a meeting. Answer the question on the next slide.

Henry: That was a long meeting, wasn’t it? I had trouble staying focused after a while.
Radha: Yeah, me too.
Henry: I’m afraid I didn’t take very good notes, and there are some things I’m not clear on. Like choosing a new vendor. I didn’t catch what Paula said.
Radha: She said she’s postponing that.
Henry: Okay. So for now, are we supposed to keep ordering from our current vendor?
Radha: I’m not sure. You’d better email her and double-check.
Henry: Right. And there’s another thing I’d like her to clarify: What did she mean by that phrase “the triple bottom line”?
Radha: I wasn’t sure about that either. Can you ask her in your email?
Henry: Sure. Or we can ask her when we meet tomorrow. We are meeting again tomorrow, right?
Radha: We are?
Henry: I think so! But I’d better confirm that with Paula.
Let’s Discuss
Advanced

Do you ever feel confused about something after attending a meeting, or after reading an email? Perhaps you didn’t fully understand the meaning of a word, or what decision was made, or what the next steps should be. When that happens, it’s time to ask for a clarification. **Share some ways in which you can ask for clarification.**
# Ways to Ask for Clarification and Confirm Your Understanding

## Advanced

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways to Ask for Clarification</th>
<th>Ways to Confirm Your Understanding</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could you please clarify something for me?</td>
<td>As I understand it, . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not understand your point about . . .</td>
<td>If I understood correctly, . . .</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would like to understand what you meant by “. . .”</td>
<td>Could you confirm something for me? I believe (that) . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not clear on what you meant by “. . .”</td>
<td>Just to confirm, . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t catch what you said about . . .</td>
<td>Is that correct?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m sorry, but I’m afraid I didn’t understand what you meant about a possible delay.</td>
<td>Do I have that right?</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Let’s Practice

Advanced

The coach and the learner take turns completing the following requests for clarifications and confirmations. The first four are done for you.

1. In our meeting this morning, I’m afraid I didn’t catch what you said about the timetable. What’s changing?
2. Could you please clarify something for me? I read the Employee Handbook, but I’m not sure I understand company policy regarding leaves of absence.
3. Thanks for your message. There was one thing I didn’t understand. Would you please explain what you meant by “360-degree feedback”?
4. At the start of the meeting, unfortunately, I missed the part about the photocopier. Sorry, but would you mind telling me?
5. You wrote that I’m supposed to monitor my team. I’m afraid ____________________.
6. Would you ____________? You spoke about increasing efforts to retain customers. What specifically do you have in mind?
7. As I understand it, (pause) ...
8. If I understood correctly, (pause) ...
9. Could you confirm something for me? I believe that (pause) ...
10. Just to confirm, (pause) ...
Complete Henry’s email to Paula. She ran the meeting that he and Radha attended in Slide 3.

From: Henry Young
To: Paula Ramone
CC: Radha Sloane
Subject: Following up on today’s meeting

Hi Paula,

I’d like to ask you to clarify a couple of things from this morning’s meeting for Radha and me.

[asking for clarification about the vendor]

[asking for clarification about the phrase "triple bottom line"]

And just to confirm, we’re meeting again tomorrow, same time, same place—is that right?

Thanks, Henry