Participating in Meetings
Advanced

Session 6: Interrupting Politely
Learning Objectives

Advanced

In this session, you will:

• Practice polite expressions used to interrupt during a meeting.
• Respond appropriately to interruptions.
• Learn how to join in on a conversation.
Let’s Get Started

Advanced

There are several reasons why someone you might interrupt someone during a meeting. For example, you may need to get someone’s phone number or you might want to give your opinion. The way you respond can also differ. You can choose to allow the interruption or to continue. Put the following interruptions and responses into one of the five categories based on their purpose.

1. Excuse my interruption. I need to speak to Jose.
2. I’m sorry to interrupt, but don’t you think we need to ask Maria?
3. Let me come back to that later.
4. Pardon me. This will just take a second.
5. Excuse me. Could I speak to you for a moment?
6. Just a moment and I’ll get to that.

Promising a Later Response to an Interruption
Interrupting a Meeting for Another Purpose
Interrupting a Meeting to Add Your Opinion
Allowing an Interruption
Continuing after an Interruption
## Expressions for Interruptions

### Advanced

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interrupting for Another Purpose</th>
<th>Interrupting to Join the Conversation</th>
<th>Allowing Interruptions</th>
<th>Continuing after an Interruption</th>
<th>Ignoring or Postponing Interruptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pardon/Excuse my interruption, could/can you (take a phone call)?</td>
<td>Could/Can I say something?</td>
<td>How can I help?</td>
<td>As I was saying, (I think...)</td>
<td>Do you mind if I finish?</td>
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<tr>
<td>(I’m) sorry to interrupt, but (Mr. Anders is on the phone).</td>
<td>Could/Can I add something?</td>
<td>What can I do for you?</td>
<td>To get back to what I was saying, (I think...)</td>
<td>Let me finish my thought.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(I’m) sorry to butt in, but (don’t you think...)</td>
<td>(I’m) sorry to interrupt, but (don’t you think...)</td>
<td>No problem.</td>
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<td>Let me get to that later.</td>
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<td>I’ll address that later.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Windheim Energy Corporation is negotiating with the Gilberto Energy Trust for a contract to make and install 300 wind turbines in the north of Brazil. Provide one word to fill in each blank.

Maria: ... I’m glad you feel like the wind energy project is possible. We certainly understand that 300 wind turbines in one year is a lot to ask, but we feel...

Eduardo: ____________ me, could I interrupt for a moment?

Maria: What can I do for __________, Eduardo?

Eduardo: I’m ____________ to interrupt, but you have an important call on line one.

Maria: Okay. Klaus, Petra, please excuse us for a __________.
Let’s Practice

Advanced

Windheim Energy Corporation is negotiating with the Gilberto Energy Trust for a contract to make and install 300 wind turbines in the north of Brazil. Fill in the blanks in the dialogue using the phrases below.

*Can I jump in*     *Sorry to butt in*     *Of course, go ahead.*     *Do you mind if I finish*

**Petra:** Excuse me. ____________?

**Klaus:** ____________.

**Petra:** Are you sure we can manage a project of this size?

**Klaus:** We’ll figure it out. This is a huge chance for Windheim Energy. Just think of all the contracts we’ll get if we do this right. Companies in Georgia, Morocco...

**Petra:** ____________, but we don’t have enough personnel, and our manufacturing’s already at its limit.

**Klaus:** ____________? A lot of other countries are looking at this project closely. We can do it, trust me.
Let’s Practice

Advanced
Provide a complete phrase to fill in the blanks.

Maria: We feel that Gilberto Energy Trust can give Windheim any help you need to complete the project.

Klaus: Yes, it’s a big project, but if we work together, anything’s possible. Some of my staff think the project is too complicated for just one year. But...

Eduardo: Could I say something?

Klaus: ________________.

Eduardo: We understand that we’re asking for the impossible. That’s why we asked for you guys, Windheim. You have an excellent reputation.

Petra: ________________, but even the best companies have limitations. I think...
Apply It!

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Your coach will pick a situation from the ones given below. Use the target language to choose a good way to interrupt or respond to an interruption.

1. You are an administrative assistant and you need to give your boss an important message.

2. The director is speaking about a marketing campaign. You would like to interrupt to suggest advertising online.

3. You are describing last year’s profit and loss. A colleague interrupts you with a question about marketing.

4. You receive an important text message in a meeting and need to leave.

5. Your boss interrupts you to express her opinion about the new product line.