

Business English: A Day in the Life

In this lesson, you'll learn how to use conditionals effectively, employ diplomatic language and navigate tricky workplace situations. From exploring "all angles" to acting as a skilled mediator, we'll cover essential strategies for success at work. By the end of this lesson, you'll feel more confident in your ability to communicate effectively in various professional scenarios.



Scenario 1: The Negotiation

We are following Andy around at work today. In this first scenario, Andy is negotiating. How would you complete the dialogue?

Andy: _____ we agreed to change the packaging, how would you feel?

Olivia: Hmm, that'd be very expensive. _____ we explore other options?

Did you guess '**supposing**' and '**could**'? In the first space, you could have also said:

- If
- Assuming
- Suppose

Andy said '**Supposing**', which asks someone to imagine a situation. It can be used instead of 'if' in the **first**, **second** and **third conditionals**. Andy used the second conditional: **supposing + past simple, would + base verb**.



Conditionals are essential when negotiating.

And in the second gap, we had '**Could**'. If you thought the answer was '**Can**', full points, too! However, 'Could' makes the sentence more polite and formal than 'can'. A great business English programme will teach you this kind of functional grammar that you can instantly apply during your working day.

Now, let's look at the whole dialogue with the missing words added.

Andy: Supposing we agreed to change the packaging, how would you feel?

Olivia: Hmm, that'd be very expensive. Could we explore other options?



Scenario 2: The Meeting

Now, we're in a meeting with Andy but it isn't going well. You will see Andy's remarks and two potential replies. Choose the reply that you think works better.

Andy: I'm very disappointed with the number of tickets we sold in the last quarter.

- **Response 1:** There's certainly room for improvement on my side.
- **Response 2:** You have to remember that I told you ticket sales might fall.

What do you think? What if I told you that both are OK?

When something goes wrong or you receive negative feedback, it might be appropriate to **accept the criticism**, like in the first response. But at other times, you might be better off **respectfully defending yourself**. A targeted business English course will teach you both of these skills.



Scenario 3: The Problem

Now, let's see how the meeting might continue. Can you put the words into the correct gaps?

ensure

miscalculated

learning

Max: Unfortunately, we _____ how many people would try to buy tickets at the same time and the website crashed. However, it was a great _____ opportunity for us as a team. We immediately hired people to fix it and to _____ it wouldn't happen again.

You should have put:

Max: Unfortunately, we miscalculated how many people would try to buy tickets at the same time and the website crashed. However, it was a great learning opportunity for us as a team. We immediately hired people to fix it and to ensure it wouldn't happen again.

This is an excellent formula for talking about your challenges or failures at work, which many of us often need to do. The speaker -

- **explained the issue**, then
- **said that they learnt something**
- and finally **explained what they did to fix the issue**.

What do you notice about the language used? A word like '**miscalculate**' is a softer way to talk about a failure than saying, '**We failed to...**' or '**We didn't know...**'.



Scenario 4: The Solution

Now, let's imagine we're still in that meeting trying to come up with a way to sell more tickets. Look at the sentence. Complete the gaps. The first letter of each word is given.

Andy: I'd like to make sure we're considering this from all a____. Does anyone have a different p____ of v____?

Did you say:

Andy: I'd like to make sure we're considering this from all **angles**. Does anyone have a different **point of view**?

'From all angles' is a nice, high-level collocation, and 'point of view' is a phrase I'm sure many of you are familiar with. But what's really special about this text is that Andy is letting people know he's open to hearing from someone who disagrees. This is so important and **it's a big part of creating an inclusive culture at work**.



Scenario 5: The Conflict

Ok, the meeting's over. But Andy has one more stop to make. 2 colleagues have had a disagreement.

Andy: Our goal today is to resolve the conflict in a way that works for you both. I'd like each of you to share your perspective on what's been happening so you can better understand where the other is coming from.

Are these statements true or false?

1. Andy is not involved in the conflict.
2. Andy is going to explain what happened to both parties.

The first one is true! Andy is playing the role of **mediator**, helping his colleagues resolve the conflict. **The second one is false.** Andy wants to hear his colleagues explain in their own words what happened.

Being able to help others work out their differences is an important part of the job for many people. A strong professional English programme will give you the language to do this.



Activity

Choose the correct answer for each question.

- In the lesson, which linguistic features are highlighted as useful in negotiations?
 - conditionals and polite language
 - imperative forms and direct questions
 - past perfect tense and reported speech
- What phrase does Andy use to ensure he's considering an issue completely?
 - from all sides
 - from every perspective
 - from all angles
- In the conflict resolution scenario, what does Andy ask the participants to do?
 - apologise to each other
 - write formal complaints
 - share their perspectives on what happened
- Which is not described as part of the "excellent formula" for talking about challenges at work?
 - minimise the problem
 - state what was learned
 - explain the issue
- What type of conditional is used in Andy's negotiation example?
 - First conditional
 - Second conditional
 - Third conditional
- Which of these is described as making a sentence more polite and formal in business English?
 - Using "can" instead of "could"
 - Using "could" instead of "can"
 - Using the present simple tense
- When discussing a failure at work, which word was used as a softer alternative to "failed" in Andy's conversation?
 - misunderstood
 - overlooked
 - miscalculated
- Which of these is presented as a key skill in the lesson?
 - writing formal emails
 - helping others resolve conflicts
 - giving presentations

Answers:

1 (8 > 7) 9 (6 9 (5 8 (7 > 3) 2 (2 8 (1)

