

Managing Conversations

Asking a colleague to slow down

- Please slow down for me, you are speaking too fast for my English level.
- (I'm sorry) I didn't catch that, please could you repeat that a little slower.
- (Sorry) Please could you slow down, it's difficult for me to catch everything you are saying.
- (I'm sorry) I'm not a native speaker of English, could you speak a little slower.
- Please could you say that again, you are speaking too fast for me.
- (Sorry but) I'm still learning English, please can you speak a little slower.
- Please could you moderate the pace of your speech for the non-native speakers in the group.
- I'm still improving my English, it would help me if you could speak a little slower.
- (Sorry) I can't follow you at this speed, please can you slow down.

(Apologetic language is optional, but it's a good way of interrupting politely)

Interrupting politely (if you missed something)

- Sorry, could I just stop you for a moment, I didn't catch that.
- Could we just go back a moment, I missed that last point.
- Sarah, would you mind saying that again, I didn't catch it.
- Please could you say that again/ Please say that one more time.
- Matthew, I didn't catch that, please can you say it again.
- Excuse me, the conversation is moving too fast for my English level, please could you say that again.
- Kate, I'd like to make sure I've captured everything, please can you say that again.

(Starting your sentence with the person's name, is a good way of getting their attention)

Interrupting politely (if you would like to join the conversation)

- This sounds interesting, please could I join you?
- Did you mention Japan? Do you live there? (using questions to join in)
- Did I hear you say you work in London? (using questions to join in)
- I'd love to join the conversation, but it's a little difficult for me! Please can you help me join in.

Interrupting politely (if you don't understand)

- Sorry I didn't understand that last point, please can you explain it again.
- Can I just stop you a moment, I didn't understand that, please can you explain it again.
- Please could you explain that in more detail.
- Please could you give me an example.
- Please can I ask you to explain that differently for the non-native speakers in the group.
- The conversation is moving a little fast for me, please could I clarify a few things...
- Please could you say that word/phrase again, I didn't understand it.
- Peter, what does "X" mean, it's not a word/phrase I am familiar with.
- Andrew, is that an Australian phrase? What does it mean?