

# Language Links

## How to Make Conversation in a Meeting

Sometimes it's hard to create conversation while talking in a group. Boosting your confidence in yourself may help. Take on a friendly disposition, and don't get nervous. Try to talk smoothly, don't stutter, and speak as if having a nice chat with your best friend.

### STEP



**1 Improve your attitude.** Try to be optimistic, smile at all times, and take on a friendly disposition. Control your emotions. Show *good* feelings and mannerisms toward everyone you meet.

**2 Boost your confidence.** Use your manners. A good way to improve your confidence is to say hello to every person you see, even strangers. Wave, smile, or shake hands and become familiar with as many people as you can.

**3 Create a personal meeting for training with you colleagues.** As if they're a few family members or friends, serve tea, and *you* must start up conversation about a reasonable topic. It's a good start if you introduce yourself and others, and talk fluently. Remember everything about politeness and feelings. Be confident and brave and attempt to stand out in the conversation.

**4 When it's time for the real meeting, practice extra hard and drive towards perfection.** When you are ready, don't be shy or nervous!

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## Western (International Meetings) Vs Thai Meetings

### Encouraging Healthy Dissent

Creating awareness is the first step in helping Thais to be more assertive.

Foreigners frequently mention a lack of assertiveness. Thais are perceived as being reluctant to speak up when they disagree, to express their own ideas and make comments, or to challenge ideas. Why don't Thais speak up when they disagree? A Thai anticipates that if the other party takes the remark personally, it may jeopardize their relationship in the future. Should he or she want a favour, it may not be delivered.

Thus Thais act cautiously in order to preserve relationships. Call it a combination of *Krieng*

*Jai* (Consideration / thoughtfulness / obliged to) and *hai kiat* (respect).

There is a process for developing assertiveness, though. As some trainers have discovered, it involves creating awareness; providing assertiveness skills; and reinforcing and motivating the use of these skills.

Creating awareness is the most crucial part because it deals with attitudes and values. Here are some suggestions



1.) Educate the staff that disagreeing, speaking up and challenging other ideas are accepted and expected behaviour in the west.

2.) Disagree politely and reinforce your words without raising your voice. Use Thai values and uphold *sa-ngob* (harmony or peacefulness).

3.) Western culture is developed and has ground rules in which disagreement, debate and discussion is acceptable and welcome.

By Traisuda

Adapted from  
<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Conversation-in-a-Meeting>

# Culture Corner



## Test Your Business Etiquette



Take this quiz and see how you fare in the following business situations.

By Piyaporn

Adapted from <http://www.gradview.com/articles>

1.

**You're at a dinner and champagne is served with the dessert. You simply can't drink champagne yet know the host will be offering a toast. Do you:**

- A) tell the waiter "no champagne"
- B) ask the waiter to pour water into your champagne glass instead
- C) say nothing and allow the champagne to be poured

2.

**You're invited to a reception and the invitation states "7:00 to 9:00 PM."**

**You should arrive:**

- A) at 7:00 PM
- B) between 7:00 PM and 7:30 PM
- C) go early and leave early

3.

**You're talking with a group of four people. Do you make eye contact with:**

- A) just the person to whom you're speaking at the moment?
- B) each of the four, moving your eye contact from one to another?
- C) no one particular person (not looking directly into anyone's eyes)?

4.

**When you greet a visitor in your office, do you:**

- A) say nothing and let her sit where she wishes?
- B) tell her where to sit?
- C) say "Just sit anywhere"

### Answers

1) C. It's more polite not to call attention to the fact that you can't drink champagne.

2) A, B, or C. It's terribly impolite to arrive early.

3) B. Make eye contact with all of the individuals you're talking with.

### Answers

4) B. Indicating where your guest should sit will make her feel more comfortable.

5) A. You've waited 30 minutes. Expect an apology later, though.

6) C. Call and set up another appointment. And don't forget to apologize for your error. Imagine how you'd feel if it was you!

5.

**You're scheduled to meet a business associate for working lunch and you arrive a few minutes early to find a suitable table. 30 minutes later your associate still hasn't arrived. Do you:**

- A) order your lunch and eat?
- B) tell the head waiter you're not staying and give him our card with instructions to present it to your associate to prove you were there?
- C) after 15 minutes call your associate?

6.

**You've forgotten a lunch appointment with a business associate. You feel terrible and know he's furious. Do you:**

- A) write a letter of apology?
- B) keep quiet and hope he forgets about it?
- C) call and set up another appointment?



# Here's the answer



## Using prepositions to describe trends and graphs

**Q1** Which sentence *a* or *b* is correct?

a) There has been an increase **in** the number of people aged over thirty.

b) There has been an increase **of** the number of people aged over thirty.

**Q2** Which sentence *a* or *b* is correct?

a) Between 1990 and 2000 , there was a drop in 15% .

b) Between 1990 and 2000 , there was a drop **of** 15% .

We use a **noun** describing a specific trend or change + **in** + a **word phrase** describing the thing which has changed:

\* a(n) **cut / decline / decrease / drop / fall / increase / reduction / rise**, etc. **in** something

Examples:

There have been dramatic **cuts in** the level of spending on the elderly.

The chart shows a **decline in** the bird population.

\* a(n) **change / growth / improvement / trend / variation**, etc. **in** something

*There have been significant **improvements in** health care.*

*We have seen massive **changes in** people's lifestyles.*



*By Napassawan*

We use a **noun** describing a change or the result of a change + **of** + a **number** showing the size of the change:

\* a(n) **decrease / drop / fall / increase / reduction / rise**, etc. **of** + number

*The statistics show a **reduction of 20% in** energy costs as a result of the government's new measures.*

*The radio station experienced a **fall of 36,000** listeners to a total audience of 2.1 million.*



\* a **high / low / maximum / total /**

*Demand reached a **peak of 45,000** in early March.*



Answers

- 1) a.
- 2) b.



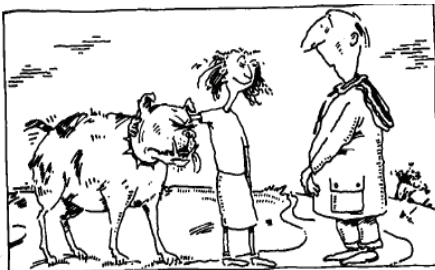
# Bits and Pieces



Can you finish these jokes? Choose the best three lines from the box.

- a. My eyes are terrible.
- b. I can't read.
- c. She's just gone out to lunch.
- d. That isn't my dog.
- e. Shall I call an ambulance?

1. A man was walking in a park when he saw a young girl playing with a large dog. He went up to them and asked the girl



"Does your dog bite?"

"Of course not," said the girl.

The man smiled at the dog and held out his hand, and immediately the dog bit him.

"Ow!" he shouted.

"I thought you said your dog didn't bite!"

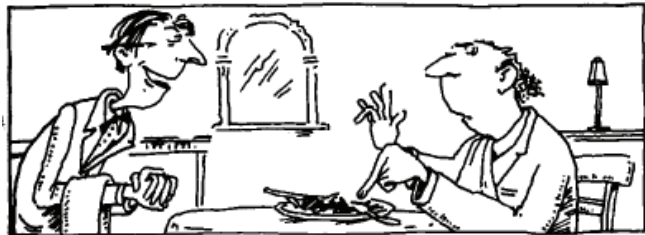
"It doesn't," the girl replied.

"....."



By Pimravee

3. b.  
2. c.  
1. d.



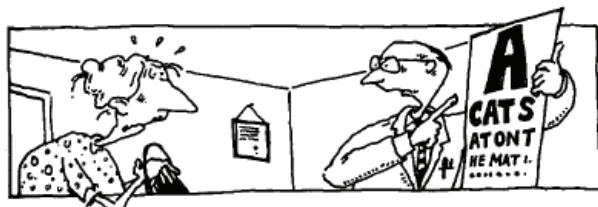
2. A man went to a restaurant and ordered lunch.

When the food came, it was terrible, and the man couldn't eat it. He called the waiter and said

"Waiter, this food's terrible! I want to see the manager!"

"Sorry," the waiter replied.

"....."



3. A woman went to have her eyes tested.

The optician told her to sit down and look at a board which had some letters written on it.

"Now" said the optician, "can you read the top letter?"

"No," replied the woman.

The optician held it closer. "Can you read it now?" he asked.

"No."

He held it closer still. "Can you read it now?"

"No," replied the woman.

"Oh dear," said the optician. "This is serious."

"I know," said the woman.

"....."