

B1–B2

intermediate to upper-intermediate

Business Impact 1.2

Modules A, B and C

Stephanie Ashford
Dagmar Taylor
Jason Humphreys
Robert Kirstein



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Authors Stephanie Ashford, Dagmar Taylor, Jason Humphreys, Robert Kirstein
Managing editor Helge Sturmfels
Editor Gillian Bathmaker
Layout and typesetting Anne-Katrin Enderlein, büro freilich
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Business Impact

This innovative modular business English course covers two levels B1-B2 (intermediate to upper-intermediate) and B2-C1 (upper-intermediate to advanced) in six books (print + digital). Each of the six books comprises three modules, A, B and C. All modules are also available as stand-alone digital modules.

All **A Modules** have a strong focus on **personal encounters**, all **B Modules** focus primarily on **day-to-day business** and all **C Modules** focus on **business results**.

Modules can be chosen individually to suit the level, interests and requirements of classes, allowing full flexibility and control in terms of content and progress.

Welcome to **Business Impact 1.2**

Module A: Making conversation & building rapport

Business Impact 1.2.A is the A Module from *Business Impact 1.2*.

This module focuses on **personal encounters in the business world** and will help you handle conversations and social situations in a business context.

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Module B: Phoning, emails, video calls

Business Impact 1.2.B is the B Module from *Business Impact 1.2*.

This module focuses on **day-to-day business** and will help you master phone calls, emails and video calls.

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Welcome to **Business Impact 1.2** **Module C: Successful presentations**

Business Impact 1.2.C is the C Module from *Business Impact 1.2*.

This module focuses on **business results** and will help you become an expert presenter in English.

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Opening *gambits*

Agenda

- › Starting conversations with strangers
- › Joining in & keeping conversations going
- › Responding positively



› Small talk

Start the session by chatting with a partner for a few minutes about a recent sport or cultural event. Find out if your partner watched or attended the same event, and talk about what you enjoyed or didn't enjoy, etc. Your conversation can, of course, move on to topics that come up naturally. Use the following phrases in your conversation.

Wasn't it amazing?

So, what did you do afterwards?

Tip

A quick chat at the beginning of every English class is a great opportunity to practise and improve your small talk skills.

› Down to business

1a Look at the photos above. Assume each of the photos was taken in a business context and think about the following questions.

1. When and in what kind of business context might the photos have been taken?
2. How well do you think the people know each other? What gives you this impression?
3. What might the people be talking about? Give ideas.

1b In pairs. Choose one of the photos and have a short conversation as if you were two of the people in the photo.

2a Do the questionnaire below on your own. Choose all options that apply to you.



*"I'm terrible at making small talk.
Just scan me".*

BUSINESS CONVERSATIONS *in English*

1. Which work-related events do you or might you attend where you need to make conversation with other participants in English?

- a. training course
- b. social get-together, e.g. welcome party
- c. trade fair or exhibition
- d. other (Please specify.)

2. You're at an international welcome event where the common language is English. You don't know anyone. What do you do?

- a. I stand near a group and listen to their conversation until I feel ready to join in.
- b. I go up to a group, introduce myself, and ask if I can join them.
- c. I wait for someone to approach me and introduce themselves to me.
- d. other (Please specify.)

3. Which of the following statements is closest to how you feel about striking up conversations with people in professional settings?

- a. I find it easy. I can always think of something to say and I'm not worried about making mistakes.
- b. I find it challenging because I never know quite what to talk about.
- c. I find it challenging because I'm worried about making mistakes.
- d. other (Please specify.)



Enjoy watching this video clip.

[▶ A.1](#)

2b Compare and discuss your answers in class.

Module A . Session 1

3a What are your three favourite ‘opening lines’ when initiating a conversation in your first language? Write them down, then use an online AI tool to help you work out how to say them in English.

Opening lines in your first language

Equivalent in English

1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

3b Compare your opening lines in class. Note down further examples that you would like to use.

4a You are going to hear four dialogues in which business partners start conversations over lunch. Which of the following topics do you think are most and least likely to come up as conversation starters? What other topics might come up?

› weather | sports | politics | food | jobs | cultural events | work events | what someone is wearing or holding | entertainment | family ‹

A.01-04 4b Now listen to the dialogues. Which of the topics in task 4a actually came up in the conversations? Which other topics came up?

A.01-04 4c Listen again. How do the speakers strike up the conversation in each case?

Dialogue 1: _____

Dialogue 2: _____

Dialogue 3: _____

Dialogue 4: _____

4d Which of the following ‘tactics’ were used in the dialogues to respond and keep the conversation going? Which tactic was used most often?

› agreeing | disagreeing | moving on to another related topic | asking questions | showing interest & enthusiasm ‹

4e Read the audio transcripts of the dialogues in pairs. Identify and note down useful words and / or phrases for each of the tactics in task 4d.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5a Match each of the opening lines below to one or more of the responses. (More than one response is sometimes possible.)

Opening lines

1. I don't think we've met before. I'm ...
2. I'm glad I'm not the only one here wearing *jeans*.
3. It's so *hot and stuffy* in here, isn't it?
4. Is this seat taken? I'd love to join you. Do you mind?
5. I hear you're an expert on *cybersecurity*. I'd love to hear more about it.
6. Can I have a quick look at your *programme*?
7. I really enjoyed your *presentation* this morning.
8. So, how are you finding *this event* so far?

Responses

- a) Feel free!
- b) I know exactly what you mean!
- c) Well, it wasn't quite what I was expecting, but I'm enjoying it anyway.
- d) No, not at all!
- e) Of course not! / Yes, of course!
- f) Pleased to meet you! I'm ...
- g) Really? Is there anything particular you're interested in?
- h) Yes, it's always the same in these *meeting rooms*, isn't it?

5b In pairs. Practise the opening lines and responses in short dialogues. Try and adapt the opening lines and the responses to suit situations you might encounter.

5c If possible, change partners. Look back at your opening lines from task 3a and think of appropriate responses for each one. Use an online AI tool to help you if necessary.

Tip

Add the opening lines and responses to a 'Business conversations' phrase bank.

6 Move around the class changing partners every few minutes. Start a short conversation with each new partner using tactics and phrases you have practised in this session.

› **Review and AOB**

Review what you have learned in this session:

1. Suggest three safe topics that you could talk about to start a conversation.
2. Suggest three responses that show you agree with what someone has said.
3. Suggest a conversation starter and response for joining a conversation that has already started.
4. Come up with a set of '**Three Top Tips** for starting conversations' in English.

› **Final feedback**

What did you find most useful in this session?
Tell the class. Any questions?





BREAKING *the silence*

I don't know about you, but I often find it difficult to strike up a conversation with strangers. Surprisingly, many celebrities and people in the public eye are similarly tongue-tied.

Sometimes it's just a matter of shyness. Many celebrities describe themselves as introverted when they're not performing. Actor Johnny Depp told the interviewer Kjersti Flaa that he is "not the most outgoing of people" and that he feels more comfortable when he can "hide" in a character. Actor Eddie Redmayne admits to blushing easily. Daniel Craig, famous for playing 007, prefers to stay at home. Even Lady Gaga, who was daring enough to go on stage wearing a dress made entirely out of raw meat, told the Daily Star, "People think I'm really confident, but I'm actually quite shy and insecure. I never want to talk to anyone at the big celebrity functions because I don't know anyone and I'm shy and get awkward [...]. That's why wearing a meat dress was so great because it stunk and no one wanted to talk to me".

For Adrian Chiles, a well-known British writer and television and radio presenter, the problem is not the conversation itself, which he says he enjoys, but how to start it. For him, starting a conversation requires a knack that is at

least as important – and challenging – as the art of conversation itself.

Why do people in the public eye find themselves in this predicament? For celebrities and public figures, being recognised often means people come up to talk to them, so they rarely have to start a conversation themselves. As a result, as Adrian Chiles discovered, you eventually lose the knack. Apparently, he was once at a party where nobody recognised him and he found himself at a loss for words. When he tried to strike up a conversation with someone, he claims he opened his mouth and "nothing came out". He just couldn't think of anything to say. Half an hour later someone recognised him and introduced him to someone else. After that, everything was fine and the conversation flowed. But it was an experience that changed him. "I've never forgotten that awful feeling of being lonely in a crowd." Chiles remembers. Since then, he says he tries to start a conversation with a stranger every day, "hoping they don't edge away in alarm". And he always aims to be as open as possible to a conversation "anyone sees fit to start with me." He explains: "The talking is the easy bit. It helps no end, of course, if you're interested in other people, in which case you'll generally bring yourself and others pleasure by asking them about themselves."

Magazine

1 Read the article and decide which idiom would make a good subheading.

- a) No pain, no gain.
- b) Practice makes perfect.
- c) You can't have your cake and eat it.

Tip

Check the meanings of these idioms – and find more – online by entering 'common English idioms' into a search engine.

2 Answer the questions.

- a) What do you find out about the characters of these celebrities in the article?

Johnny Depp: _____

Eddi Redmayne: _____

Daniel Craig: _____

Lady Gaga: _____

- b) Which parts of a conversation does Adrian Chiles find most enjoyable and which most challenging?

- c) Why do celebrities rarely have to start conversations according to the article?

- d) Which experience was life-changing for Adrian Chiles?

- e) Which two things can ensure a conversation is successful, according to Adrian Chiles?

3 Focus on language: Explain the underlined phrases by completing these sentences. Then compare your explanation with the definition in an online dictionary.

- a) A person in the public eye is ...
- b) If you are tongue-tied, you ...
- c) An official function is ...
- d) A knack is something ...
- e) To be at a loss for words means ...
- f) If a person edges away in alarm, they ...
- g) When you see fit to do something, you ...

Business Impact

By practising saying things in different ways, you can increase your vocabulary and become more competent in paraphrasing. This is an important skill when speaking English, especially, when you don't know the exact word for something.

4 Optional extra: What is your experience and advice in terms of starting and holding conversations with people at official functions? Prepare a short talk and be prepared to present your ideas in the next session.