Who’s doing what?

Assign tasks, agree deadlines and ask for what you need.

1 Look, ask and reply

Each picture is a separate situation. Make one request. Your partner accepts, checks a detail or asks for more time.

A | Share the workload

You must check 12 orders and email a list of late deliveries by 4 pm today. Ask a colleague to check six orders.

B | Plan the client visit

Ask a colleague to write down everyone’s job and deadline. You need the finished plan by noon today.

C | Check the report

Give a colleague your draft report. Ask them to check the figures and return it by 3 pm today.

D | Agree a deadline

Ask a colleague to prepare the first slide draft. Agree a finish time and decide who will email the team.

Start here: Could you check six orders by 3 pm?
Reply: Sure. Which six? / I can, but could I send them at 3.30?

Language in a minute
Could you check the figures? I’d like you to check the figures.
Take care of / take responsibility for + noun or -ing: take care of booking lunch.
By Friday at 10 am = 10 am on Friday is the latest acceptable time.

2 Make it clear

Improve “Get the presentation ready soon.” Agree: who + exact result + deadline + help needed.

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Get the phrases right

Useful phrases for sharing work and responding to requests.

3 Choose the correct phrase

1. I'd like you to ___ responsibility for coordinating the visit.
   A make / B take / C do

2. Could you ___ care of organising the meeting notes?
   A take / B give / C hold

3. Please ___ sure the report is finished by Friday.
   A do / B make / C have

4. I'm going to ___ this task over to you, if that's all right.
   A pass / B bring / C set

5. Let's ___ the workload between the two teams.
   A handle / B share / C delegate

6. Can you ___ charge of the presentation?
   A get / B take / C put

7. I'll ___ you in charge of organising the client dinner.
   A do / B put / C give

8. Please ___ me know once you've completed the first draft.
   A make / B let / C give

9. We need to ___ someone to lead the project team.
   A appoint / B apply / C approve

10. Could you ___ a plan by Thursday?
    A call up with / B come up with / C go up with

4 Make a request. Get a reply.

Choose four phrases from Exercise 3. Use the jobs below or your own work. Make a request with a deadline. Your partner replies. Change roles.

Check six orders • book lunch • prepare three slides • email a client

Accept: Sure. I'll send it by 3 pm.
Clarify: Do you mean the full report or a summary?
Negotiate: I can do that, but could we move the deadline to Thursday?
Finish: So, you'll ... by ... . Is that right?

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Agree before you start

A client visit: avoid misunderstandings before the work begins.

From: Aisha To: Client visit team
Subject: Friday's visit - who's doing what?

Hi team,
Six visitors arrive on Friday at 10 am. We need a meeting room, a short presentation and a confirmed lunch booking. Please agree who will do each job and when it will be ready.
Thanks,
Aisha

5 Complete the conversation

Use each phrase once. Then read the conversation together.

take care of / by Thursday / let me know / take charge of / come up with / put you in charge

Aisha: We need to get ready for Friday. Ben, could you (1) _____ the presentation?

Ben: Do you mean the slides, or the presentation itself?

Aisha: Both, please. I'd like to (2) _____ of that part of the visit.

Ben: All right. I can prepare the slides, but I need the latest sales figures.

Aisha: I'll send them this afternoon. Could you (3) _____ a first draft by tomorrow?

Ben: Tomorrow is difficult. Could I send it (4) _____ at 10 am instead?

Aisha: That works. Please (5) _____ if anything changes.

Ben: Will do. Who will (6) _____ the room booking?

Aisha: I will. Let's check progress on Thursday at 2 pm.

6 Check the agreement

a. What exactly will Ben do? b. What does he need from Aisha?
c. When is his first draft due? When will they check progress?
d. Which question prevents a misunderstanding?

7 Agree a new plan

Cover the conversation. Use the email to agree your own plan. Ask one question and negotiate one deadline. Finish: "So, I'll ... by ... and you'll ... . Is that right?"

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Save the client visit

Work together. Agree a plan that meets all five deadlines.

8 It is Wednesday, 9 am.

You are planners assigning work to the four colleagues below. In eight minutes, agree who does each job and the exact start and finish times.

Colleague	Available hours and strengths
Aisha	Wednesday 9 am-12 noon. Bookings and logistics.
Ben	Wednesday 1-5 pm; Thursday 9 am-12 noon. Presentations.
Lina	Thursday 9 am-5 pm. Figures.
Omar	Wednesday 9 am-5 pm; Thursday 9 am-12 noon. Writing and checking details.

Job / time needed	Latest finish	Owner + start / finish
Book a room for six / 30 min	Wed, 12 noon	
Check sales figures / 1 hour	Thu, 10 am	
Prepare slides / 2 hours	Thu, 12 noon	
Check finished slides / 30 min	Thu, 3 pm	
Book lunch for six / 30 min	Thu, 12 noon	

Your plan must:
• Give all four colleagues at least one job.
• Fit their available hours, with no overlapping jobs.
• Finish checking figures before slide preparation begins.
• Use a different person to check the finished slides.
Strengths are helpful; anyone may do any job. Each job stays with one person.

Use these to agree: Could you take care of ...? / Would that give you enough time? / Could we pass that task over to ...?

STOP - cover this box until four minutes have passed.
Ben can now work only from 11 am to 12 noon on Thursday. He is still free on Wednesday afternoon. Change your plan, or explain why it still works.

Check and score /10: One point for each job with an owner and valid start/finish times (5). One point each: all deadlines met; hours respected with no overlaps; figures before slides; different slide checker; everyone has a job (5). Explain your plan. Your partner or another group asks two questions.

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Make it work at work

Use the language to talk about your own working life.

9 Ask, answer and follow up

Choose six questions. After each answer, ask “Why?”, “Can you give an example?” or another follow-up question.

1. Which tasks do you enjoy taking responsibility for?
2. What do you prefer to pass over to someone else? Why?
3. What makes a deadline realistic?
4. How do you check that you have understood a task?
5. When is a direct instruction helpful?
6. How can you ask a busy colleague for help?
7. What would you say if you could not meet a deadline?
8. How do you decide who should take charge of a project?
9. What can go wrong when two people share a task?
10. How often should a manager check progress?
11. Which job in the client visit would you choose? Why?
12. What would you change about how tasks are assigned at work?

Before you finish: Assign one small task with an exact deadline. Your partner asks a question or negotiates. Confirm the final agreement.

10 Optional homework

a. Complete the email. Use each word once: care / charge / know / put / take / up.

To: Client visit team Subject: Our agreed tasks

Hi team,
Aisha, could you take (1) _____ of the room booking? Lina, please (2) _____ responsibility for checking the figures. Ben, I’ll (3) _____ you in (4) _____ of the slides. Omar, could you come (5) _____ with two lunch options? Please let me (6) _____ if you need help.

b. Write a 60-80 word email assigning two tasks. Include a clear result and deadline for each, and an offer of help.
Check: Who? What exactly? By when? What help?

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