

Make the next step clear

WE1 | B1-B2 | Adults and older teens | Fictional workplace messages

Priya and Sam are colleagues who know each other. Read each email. What can Sam do after reading it?

1. Read two emails

A | Subject: Presentation

Hi Sam,
Send me the presentation soon. We need it for the demo. Let me know.
Thanks,
Priya

B | Subject: Cedar demo slides needed by 14 October

Hi Sam,
We are preparing for the Cedar client demonstration on Thursday 15 October 2026 at 10:00 London time. Could you send me the final approved slide deck by Wednesday 14 October at 16:00 London time?
Please reply by Monday 12 October at 12:00 London time to confirm whether you can meet that deadline. If you cannot, please tell me when you could send it.
Thanks for your help,
Priya

2. Find the details

For each email, tell your partner:

1. Which file does Priya need, and why?
2. When does Sam need to send the file?
3. What should Sam say in his reply? When should he reply?

Which details are missing from A? Write a short reply asking for them.

3. Choose words you can use

Make a request: Could you send me ... by ...?

Ask for a reply: Please let me know by ... whether ...

Offer another time: I cannot ... Could we ... instead?

Check the plan: Just to confirm, we will ...

Underline useful words in B. Which facts would change in your own email? Does a longer or more formal email always make the next step clearer?

Ask to move a meeting

WE1 | Round 1 | Write to Alex, a colleague you know

Imagine it is Friday 9 October 2026. Read your facts. Do not show this page to Alex. Write your email on this page or in a document.

1. Use these facts

Your meeting: online project planning, Tuesday 13 October 2026, 10:00-11:00 London time.

The problem: a client call now clashes with it.

Your first choice: Thursday 15 October, 14:00-15:00 London time.

The link: the same online link.

Your request: ask if Alex can move the meeting. Ask for a reply by Monday 12 October at 12:00 London time. If Alex cannot attend, ask for another time.

Your backup: you are also free on Thursday 15 October, 15:00-16:00. Ask about your first choice first.

The meeting has not moved yet. You need Alex's agreement.

2. Write your request

Subject: _____

3. Read the reply and improve your email

Send only your email to Alex. Answer any questions about missing details. Ask which part was clear and which part needed more information. Improve your first email. Keep your first proposal in that version; write a new reply to agree a different time.

If you need help: Could we move ... from ... to ...?

The online link would stay the same.

Please reply by ... to let me know whether ...

If that does not work, could you suggest another time?

Read Alex's suggestion. If you can agree, send a short confirmation. Include the date, time, time zone and link. Check that you both have the same plan.

Read and reply to Riya

WE1 | Round 1 | Do not look at Riya's fact sheet

While Riya writes, write a short reply to email A on the shared sheet. Then read Riya's email. Do not use Riya's fact sheet to fill gaps. Imagine it is Friday 9 October 2026.

1. Find what the email tells you

Tell Riya what you understood. Ask about anything that is missing.

Which meeting? Why change it?

What are the old and proposed dates and times?

Which time zone and link?

What should you do next, and by when?

One clear detail: _____

One question, or another detail you understood: _____

2. Read your diary and write a reply

Thursday 15 October 2026:

14:00-15:00 London time: team training. You cannot attend a meeting.

15:00-16:00 London time: free. You can attend online.

If the request is unclear, ask for the missing details first. Once it is clear, explain the clash and offer your available time. Do not say the change is confirmed yet.

3. Help Riya improve the first request

Choose one useful improvement. Riya rewrites the first request. Read it again: is the purpose, proposed change and reply deadline clear now? If it was already clear, suggest a small useful change, or explain why it needs none.

If you need help: Do you mean ...?

Could you confirm the date and time?

I cannot attend ... because ...

Could we meet ... instead?

Thanks, that works for me.

Read Riya's final confirmation. Tell Riya the date, time, time zone and link you understand. Check that your plans match.

Ask for headsets

WE1 | Fresh task | Share only your email with Pat

Imagine it is Monday 19 October 2026. You are writing to Pat, a familiar office colleague. Use these facts to write a new request. Do not show this page to Pat.

1. Read your facts

You need: six working headsets for online training on Thursday 22 October, 09:00-11:00 London time.

Collection: reception, by Wednesday 21 October at 16:00 London time, so you can test them.

Reply: ask Pat to reply by Tuesday 20 October at 12:00 London time, confirming availability and collection arrangements. If six are unavailable, ask how many Pat can supply.

Your backup: you already have two suitable headsets of your own. If Pat can supply four, that is enough. Do not assume Pat has any until Pat replies.

2. Write your email

Subject: _____

3. Read, reply and check

Send your email to Pat. Answer any questions. Read Pat's offer and decide if it works. Reply to confirm how many headsets you will collect, where and when. Explain how you will have enough for the training.

Reply about the headsets

WE1 | Fresh task | Read Noor's email before using these facts

Imagine it is Monday 19 October 2026. You are Noor's office colleague. Read only the email Noor sends. Ask about any missing facts before agreeing arrangements.

1. Check the request

What does Noor need, and why?

How many? When are they needed?

Where and when should collection happen?

When does Noor need a reply?

A detail I understood: _____

A detail I need to check, if any: _____

2. Read your stock note and write a reply

Available: four working headsets. There are no more available for this training session.

Collection: you can leave them at reception on Wednesday 21 October 2026 at 15:00 London time. They will be available there from that time.

Say what you can supply. Offer this collection arrangement and ask whether four will be enough. Do not promise six. Do not assume Noor has agreed.

3. Check the agreement

Read Noor's reply. Tell Noor how many headsets you will provide and the agreed collection place and time. Ask about anything that is still unclear.

Write, reply and agree

WE1 | B1-B2 | Adults and older teens | Core 60 min + later 15 min

Outcome: write a usable request, respond to a real constraint and confirm an agreement. Retains the original model comparison, meeting request, reader response, revision and later headset task. All situations and messages are fictional. No email account or recording is needed.

Share the right pages

Round 1: show page 1 to both. Give only page 2 to Riya and only page 3 to Alex. Keep pages 4-5 for a later lesson and pages 6-7 with the teacher. Use the separate role PDFs online; do not share the full pack with learners. Learners exchange only their emails. Use paper or private documents.

Fresh task: later give page 4 only to Noor and page 5 only to Pat. Swap the writer/reader roles from round 1. Each learner writes a request in one task and a reply in the other. Both need feedback and a later opportunity to practise their weaker role.

A core route: 60 minutes

0-5: elicit requests learners write at work. Agree what a reader needs to know. No actual confidential workplace messages are required.

5-15: compare models without an extra context box giving away missing details. Learners reply to A asking for information. Discuss why B helps its reader act, then notice reusable phrases.

15-25: distribute private Riya/Alex pages. Riya drafts; Alex writes a clarification reply to model A, then prepares diary questions without seeing Riya's facts. Allow quiet drafting time.

25-35: exchange emails, clarify and reply. Alex identifies a success and one useful clarity question. Ask learners to refer to the message, not infer the writer's private facts.

35-45: selective feedback; Riya revises the original request for clarity. The proposed 14:00 slot remains in that revised first request. Alex checks its effect. Use page 7 models only after learners have tried.

45-55: Riya responds to Alex's alternative with a new confirmation. Both separately state the final plan, then compare. Polish one or two useful forms once the message works.

55-60: each learner explains one change that helped their reader. Save first/revised versions and the reply; agree a next step.

Later task and adaptations

Fresh task, 15 minutes: swap roles. Allow six minutes to draft, five to clarify/reply/confirm, and four to compare what was understood. More processing time is valid; timings are estimates. Start without the model when appropriate, retaining agreed access support. No completed headset model should be shown first.

One-to-one: teacher takes the reader role, responding only to what the learner writes. Use a genuinely new request later. **Online:** send one private role file per learner. **B1:** retain page 1 phrases and rehearse facts orally. **B2:** reduce the bank and compare concise tone choices for a familiar colleague. Formality alone does not add missing facts.

Record a useful next step

For each learner note: **exact words; reader understanding or question; one target; revision; support used; later sample; next teaching move.** Separate reader success from grammar accuracy. A jointly agreed answer or a supported revision does not establish lasting independent use or a CEFR level. Classroom timing and effectiveness remain untested.

Check meaning before form

WE1 | Keep these answers until after learners have tried

Model comparison and language

A: presentation/demo generally, but no exact file, usable deadline or clear reply request. Ask which file, when to send it and when to confirm.

B: final approved Cedar demo slide deck; demo Thursday 15 October 2026 at 10:00 London; file by Wednesday 14 October at 16:00 London; confirmation by Monday 12 October at 12:00 London. Sam confirms whether the deadline is possible, or offers a delivery time. Replying on Monday and delivering on Wednesday are different actions.

Forms: Could you + base verb; Could we + base verb; move from/to; by for a deadline, at for a clock time, on for a day. Confirm a possibility before treating it as agreed. Accurate concise alternatives are welcome.

A draft to review after first attempts

Subject: Meeting

Hi Alex,

Our meeting has changed because of a client call. Can you do Thursday afternoon? The link is the same. Please reply soon.

Thanks, Riya

Success: reason and unchanged link are mentioned. Problems: which meeting and slots, reply deadline and unagreed change. Choose one connected target: make the proposed change and reader action clear. Do not correct everything at once.

A possible revision of the original request

Subject: Request to move our project-planning meeting

Hi Alex,

A client call clashes with our online project-planning meeting on Tuesday 13 October 2026, 10:00-11:00 London time. Could we move it to Thursday 15 October, 14:00-15:00 London time? The online link would stay the same.

Please reply by Monday 12 October at 12:00 London time to let me know whether that works. If not, could you suggest another time?

Thanks for your help,

Riya

Reply, confirmation and fresh-task key

Alex's possible reply: Thanks for checking. I have team training on Thursday 15 October from 14:00 to 15:00 London time. Could we meet from 15:00 to 16:00 that day instead?

Riya's possible confirmation: That works for me. Just to confirm, our online project-planning meeting will be on Thursday 15 October 2026, 15:00-16:00 London time, using the same link. Thanks, Riya.

Confirm the change before replacing Tuesday. Keep the original proposal in the revised first request.

Fresh request key: Noor requests six headsets for Thursday 22 October, 09:00-11:00 London time; collection at reception by Wednesday 21 October 16:00; reply by Tuesday 20 October 12:00 confirming availability/arrangements or quantity available.

Pat: can supply only four, ready at reception Wednesday 21 October from 15:00 London. Ask if four are enough.

Feasible agreement: Noor accepts four, combines them with two owned headsets to make six, and confirms a collection time from 15:00 to 16:00 Wednesday at reception. Accept 15:00 or another explicit time in that interval. Do not assume a time has been agreed until the exchange establishes it.