

OXFORD BUSINESS ENGLISH SKILLS

# *Effective*

JEREMY COMFORT



NEGOTIATING

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS



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JEREMY COMFORT

*with* YORK ASSOCIATES



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# Introduction

## Introduction to the course

Negotiating is very much a key communication skill for all Business English learners. Although you may not be involved in high-level international negotiations, most of you will have to negotiate with colleagues, bosses, customers, and suppliers at some stage in your career. Negotiating effectively promises some of the biggest prizes of all communication skills – the right deal for the company, a salary rise, a budget increase, even a day off work. It is a sophisticated skill because it requires the negotiator to be competent in all key communication and language skills and to often maintain their performance under pressure. The skilled negotiator must also be aware of cultural differences which can so easily lead to communication breakdown.

*Effective Negotiating* is divided into eight units which approach the skills and language step by step. Starting with preparation and opening, through clarifying and dealing with conflict to bargaining and concluding, the learner is taken through a variety of practice activities which aim to develop both confidence and competence. At the same time, each unit addresses a key cultural issue which can affect the success of a negotiation.

## Course components

The course consists of four components: a video, a Student's Book, an audio cassette, and a Teacher's Book.

### The Video

The video, which lasts approximately 30 minutes, is the central component of the course and acts as a springboard for all the activities in the Student's Book. Based around a negotiation between a Belgium-based multinational and a British IT company, it illustrates key moments from a typical business negotiation, both internally, and between the teams.

### The Student's Book

The book consists of eight units which correspond to those in the video. Each unit is divided into four sections: *Communication skills*, *Culture and tactics*, *Language knowledge*, and *Negotiating practice*.

The *Communication skills* section identifies and practises key negotiating skills which are illustrated in the video, and aims to involve the learner in a process of feedback, evaluation, and development. The *Culture and tactics* section raises a number of key cultural issues which may lead to

misunderstanding and communication breakdown, and looks at how such problems might be avoided. The *Language knowledge* section, supported by the audio cassette, focuses on and expands the learner's knowledge in key functional and lexical areas. The concluding *Negotiating practice* section gives the learner the opportunity to put communication skills, cultural awareness, and language knowledge into practice, using a variety of role-plays and simulations.

## The Audio Cassette

This consists of approximately 50 minutes of extracts from a wide range of negotiations and forms the basis of the listening activities in the *Language knowledge* section of the Student's Book.

## The Teacher's Book

This book provides an introduction to the course from a teacher's point of view. It is intended as a guide to help the teacher to handle the different components of the course most effectively. It offers suggestions for further exploitation in the classroom and self-study time, and contains extra, photocopiable materials for negotiating practice.

## The approach

In each unit, *Effective Negotiating* first illustrates a poor model of negotiating practice in order to demonstrate what can go wrong and how (*Version 1*). It then moves on to look at a good model in which the negotiators communicate effectively and progress is made (*Version 2*). The video is essential as the starting point for each unit. The approach is designed to develop learners' abilities in three main areas.

## Communication skills

The course develops the key skills which make negotiations successful. It seeks to build the learner's confidence in their ability to deal with all stages of the negotiating process. Skills such as opening the negotiation, establishing your position, dealing with conflict, making proposals, bargaining, and consolidating your position and concluding are demonstrated on the video. These are then analysed and practised with the support of the Student's Book. Learners are encouraged to develop their own style of negotiating based on an awareness of their own particular strengths and weaknesses.

## Culture and tactics

In order to develop the learner's awareness of how cultural background can affect negotiating styles and tactics, the course highlights and contrasts certain key communication styles – including, for example, task- versus person-orientation and emotional versus neutral response. The video demonstrates the problems arising when opposing cultural styles clash, whilst the follow-up tasks guide the learner into an analysis of the communication styles fostered by his/her business culture. These concepts are then used to develop the learner's flexibility in dealing with negotiating partners from different cultures.

## Language knowledge

Language areas such as sequencing, asking questions, making suggestions, threatening, and making conditions are presented and practised in the Student's Book. The audio cassette is used to further illustrate and practise these areas. Additional exercises at the end of the section seek to develop the