

# 37 Useful Words and Phrases for Business Negotiations in English

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anamariahoptean

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## Business people negotiate all the time.

They negotiate salaries and bonuses, details of contracts with partners, and deadlines with managers.

There are a lot of things you can do to ensure you get the most out of a negotiation

Naturally, you should find out as much as you can about your negotiation partner (the person you will be negotiating with), about their business and about negotiations in general.

But you can also help yourself a lot in a negotiation situation just by knowing the right vocabulary.

In this post, we are going to look at some general negotiations vocabulary, as well as some phrases you can use during a negotiation.

## General Words and Phrases Having to Do with Negotiations

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When trying to get the most out of a negotiation, you may want to do some reading about the negotiation process.

We particularly like these easy-to-understand sites that walk you through the essentials of the negotiation process:

- This first one is really quick and easy to follow.
- This other site gives you more details about each step of the negotiation process.

If you are willing to learn more tips about effective negotiations, you may come across some words and phrases you need to know in order to fully understand your material. Here are some of the most important words that you may find useful. Look at the definitions and read the examples to fully understand them.

### 1. To bargain

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**Explanation:** To discuss the conditions of an agreement, to negotiate. You can also use this as a noun (something can be **abargain**) to refer to products being sold for a really good price.

#### Examples:

"You can't **bargain** with him, he's very inflexible."

"This laptop was such a **bargain**! I paid half as much as you paid for yours and mine is much faster."

### 2. Bottom line

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**Explanation:** The most important factor.

#### Example:

"The **bottom line** is that we cannot raise both salaries and bonuses."

### 3. Alternative

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**Explanation:** A choice that could be better than the present situation.

#### Example:

"Let's consider the **alternatives** before deciding on the best candidate for this position."

### 4. To reach consensus

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**Explanation:** To agree on a matter that initially (at first) you disagreed upon.

#### Example:

"After a really long debate, they managed to **reach consensus** on the issue of sick leave."

### 5. Counter proposal

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**Explanation:** An alternative solution you offer when you disagree with the one already presented.

#### Example:

"We came with a **counter proposal**, but they weren't open to negotiation."

### 6. Deadlock

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**Explanation:** A point in a discussion which takes you nowhere because people cannot reach agreement.

**Example:**

"We reached **deadlock** quite early in the discussion, because they weren't willing to listen to our arguments and they didn't make any counter proposals."

## 7. Highball / Lowball

**Explanation:** To highball means to ask for a lot more than you think your partner will agree to offer you. On the contrary, when you lowball, you offer much less than you think is acceptable.

**Examples:**

"They started the negotiation by **highballing** their expectations, but we saw right through it."

"I thought my boss was going to **lowball** by giving me a really small raise, but he was reasonable."


## 8. Leverage

**Explanation:** Something that gives you power in a negotiation.

**Example:**

"The supermarket chain really wanted that land, but the owner didn't give in easily. He had a lot of **leverage** because the position was ideal."

Being a rock star



El problema no fue hallarte, el problema es olvidarte.  
The problem wasn't finding you, the problem is forgetting you.

04:24 / 09:35

The image shows a video player interface. At the top, the title 'Being a rock star' is displayed. The main video area shows a man with a red guitar and a subtitle in Spanish and English. The video player controls at the bottom include a play button, a refresh button, a progress bar, and a volume icon.

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After reading about the negotiation process, it is very important to learn what to say and when to say it. You can do that by learning some essential phrases to help you out in certain turning points of negotiations.

### Beginning the Negotiation and Setting the Agenda

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The way you start a discussion is extremely important because it sets the tone for the entire negotiation. It is important to be diplomatic (polite) and efficient at the same time so that you can maximize your outcome. People generally start negotiations by agreeing on the agenda. The agenda consists of all the important points that need to be discussed. You can use the following phrases to start a negotiation.

9. Let's start by having a look at the agenda.

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10. Before we begin, shall we have a look at the main points on the agenda?

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11. Should we have a look at the main points for today's discussion?

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### Listening and Asking for Proposals

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In a negotiation, it is sometimes more important to listen to what the other party has to say than to start by asking for what you want to get out of the negotiation. Be ready to listen and take notes—your partner will appreciate your ability to listen, and you may get a lot of important information you can later use! Ask your partner to give you details about what they want by using any of the following phrases.

12. What are your views on...?

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13. Do you have any suggestions for...?

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14. Would you like to suggest a course of action for...?

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15. How do you feel about...?

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### Making Suggestions and Proposals

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Suggestions and proposals may be presented at any point during negotiations. If you have a proposal to make, you can introduce it by using these phrases:

16. We think the best way is to...

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17. We propose/recommend that...

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When the negotiation reaches deadlock, someone has to come up with solutions. It is really important to keep your mind open and also help your partner see things through different perspectives. Both of these will help the negotiation to be effective.

18. I'd like to suggest a solution.

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### Arguing for Proposals and Views Presented

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After you suggest solutions, it is crucial to support them with arguments. If the arguments are sound and presented coherently (clearly), you stand much higher chances of getting what you want out of the negotiation. Introduce your arguments with phrases like:

19. The most important reason for this is...

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20. I am basing my solution on three ideas/points/reasons: Firstly,... Secondly,... Last but not least,...

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21. One of the key reasons for this is...

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### Agreeing with Proposals

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When your partner presents an acceptable suggestion, you can express your agreement by using any of the following phrases:

22. I agree with your suggestion.

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23. I think your proposal is acceptable.

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24. That sounds great to us.

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### Disagreeing with Proposals and Giving Reasons for Disagreement

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Disagreeing is one of the most difficult things to do: You don't want to offend your partner, but it is important to let them know when you are not on the same page. You can disagree by using a diplomatic tone if you introduce your concerns like this:

25. I have some reservations about...

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26. Unfortunately, our position is different from yours.

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27. I'm afraid we can't agree on...

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### Compromising

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When you simply cannot get everything you want, you will need to meet your partner halfway. Here are some ways to express you are willing to accept some terms in exchange for others:

28. We might be able to work on..., if you could...

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29. We could offer you..., if you think you can agree on...

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30. Offering you... is the best we can do right now. However, we'd need your approval on...

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31. In exchange for..., would you agree to...?

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### Clarifying

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Whenever you feel your partner is being vague or ambiguous (imprecise or uncertain), it is extremely important to clarify things on the spot. Otherwise, the negotiation may take the wrong direction and it may be too late to set the record straight. So play it safe and clarify details early on by using any of these phrases:

32. Let me make sure I got your point.

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33. I'm not sure I understood your position. Could you please tell me again how you feel about...?

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34. I just want to make sure I got this part straight.

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### Concluding

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Before you end the negotiation, it is always a good idea to recap (review or go over again) the main points you agreed or disagreed on. Here are some things you could say:

35. Let's look at what we decided to do.

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36. Shall we try to sum up the main points of our discussion?

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37. Let's sum this up really quickly to make sure we are on the same page.

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Once you learn some basic vocabulary to help you with negotiations, you will feel much more confident about getting what you want.

The more you prepare, the higher your chances of success!

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