

CORRECTING POLITELY AND ASKING FOR CLARIFICATION

B2-C1 | Functional language for clear, polite communication

1 Useful phrase patterns

Use a polite correction when needed, or ask for clarification when you are unsure.

I'm not sure that's quite right.

I'm not sure that's quite right. The date was changed.

I think there may be a misunderstanding.

I think there may be a misunderstanding about the deadline.

Just to clarify, ...

Just to clarify, are we meeting in person?

If I understand you correctly, ...

If I understand you correctly, the fee is optional.

Could you elaborate on that?

Could you elaborate on that a little?

Could you clarify ...?

Could you clarify which option you recommend?

Would you mind repeating that?

Would you mind repeating that more slowly?

Could you give an example?

Could you give an example of what you mean?

2 Respond to the situations

Write one polite correction or clarification question for each situation.

1. A colleague says the report is due on Friday, but the latest email says Monday. Correct this politely.

2. A client says they understand the proposal, but their question shows that they have confused two options.

3. Your manager says, 'We need a more flexible approach.' Ask for more detail.

4. A speaker says, 'The service is included.' Check whether you understand this correctly.

5. A trainer uses the phrase 'a conflict of interest.' Ask for an example.

6. Someone gives a complicated explanation of a new procedure. Ask them to repeat it more slowly.

7. A teammate says the meeting is online, but the calendar invitation says it is in person. Correct this politely.

8. A lecturer says that a result is statistically significant. Ask them to explain what this means in context.

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B2-C1 | Suggested answers

3 Possible answers

These are examples only. Other accurate and polite responses are also correct.

Encourage students to choose a phrase that suits the situation and relationship.

1. I'm not sure that's quite right. I thought the latest email moved the deadline to Monday.

2. I think there may be a misunderstanding. The two options offer different levels of support.

3. Could you elaborate on what you mean by a more flexible approach?

4. Just to clarify, are you saying that the service is included in the original price?

5. Could you give an example of a conflict of interest in this situation?

6. Would you mind repeating that more slowly? I want to make sure I understand the procedure.

7. I'm not sure that's quite right. The calendar invitation says that the meeting is in person.

8. Could you clarify what 'statistically significant' means in this example?
