

INTERRUPTING POLITELY

B2-C1 | Functional language for entering a conversation politely

1 Useful phrase patterns

Interrupt politely when you need to ask, clarify, or add an important point.

If I may, ...

If I may, I would like to add a different perspective.

Sorry to interrupt, but ...

Sorry to interrupt, but could we return to the main point?

Before we move on, ...

Before we move on, could we clarify the deadline?

Could I come in here?

Could I come in here? I think there is another factor.

Can I just pick up on that point?

Can I just pick up on that point for a moment?

May I ask a quick question?

May I ask a quick question about the budget?

I don't mean to interrupt, but ...

I don't mean to interrupt, but the figures may be out of date.

Perhaps I could add something here.

Perhaps I could add something here from the client's side.

2 Respond to the situations

Write one polite interruption that fits each situation.

1. A meeting is moving to the next topic, but the group has not agreed on the deadline for the current task.

2. A colleague says that a proposal is too expensive. You want to mention a cost that has not been included.

3. A presenter is making a conclusion that you think ignores an important customer concern.

4. During a discussion, someone refers to sales figures from last year as if they are current.

5. A team is discussing a problem, but you want to return to an earlier point that has not been answered.

6. A speaker is explaining a new policy. You want to ask how it will affect a particular department.

7. A client is describing a problem, and you want to add information from another team's experience.

8. A group is about to make a decision, but you want to ask one final question about the risks.

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B2-C1 | Suggested answers

3 Possible answers

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

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

1. Before we move on, could we clarify the deadline for the current task?

2. I don't mean to interrupt, but the estimate does not include the training costs.

3. If I may, I would like to add a customer concern that may affect that conclusion.

4. Sorry to interrupt, but the figures may be out of date. Could we check the latest report?

5. Can I just pick up on that earlier point? I do not think we have resolved it yet.

6. May I ask a quick question about how this policy will affect the finance department?

7. Perhaps I could add something here from our team's experience with a similar issue.

8. Could I come in here? I have one final question about the possible risks.
