

CLARIFYING AND CHECKING UNDERSTANDING

B2-C1 | Conversation practice examples for clarifying meaning and next steps

Conversation: Defining an urgent request

Clara	The client needs an urgent update on the survey. Can you put something together?
David	Could you clarify what you mean by urgent? Do they need it this afternoon or by tomorrow morning?
Clara	By ten tomorrow. They want a preliminary picture before their planning meeting.
David	When you say a preliminary picture, do you mean headline results rather than the full analysis?
Clara	Yes. The response rate, the main trends and any obvious issues. We don't need recommendations yet.
David	Am I right in thinking that I should include incomplete responses in the response-rate figure?
Clara	Show completed and partial responses separately. Otherwise the figure could be misleading.
David	To confirm , I'll send three slides by ten, with the response figures separated and a note that the analysis is provisional.

Key phrases: Could you clarify what you mean by / When you say / do you mean / Am I right in thinking that / To confirm

Conversation: A proposed flexible rota

Manager	We're introducing a flexible rota next month. Staff will be able to exchange some shifts.
Employee	What would that involve in practice? Could two people agree a swap without asking you?
Manager	They could propose it, but I'd need to approve it so each shift has the right skills covered.
Employee	Just so I'm clear , it isn't an automatic right to change any shift?
Manager	Correct. And we'd need forty-eight hours' notice, except in an emergency.
Employee	Could you be more specific about emergencies? For example, would sudden childcare problems count?
Manager	Yes. In those cases, call me directly rather than waiting for the online request to be approved.
Employee	Could I check my understanding? Planned swaps go through the system; unexpected problems should be discussed with you by phone.

Key phrases: What would that involve in practice? / Just so I'm clear / Could you be more specific about / Could I check my understanding?

Create your own conversation

Choose one prompt. Use at least two key phrases and include a natural response and follow-up.

Prompt 1: Clarify a vaguely worded work request. Establish the deadline, scope and how uncertain findings should be presented.

Prompt 2: Ask how a new policy works in practice. Check approval, exceptions and the action you should take.