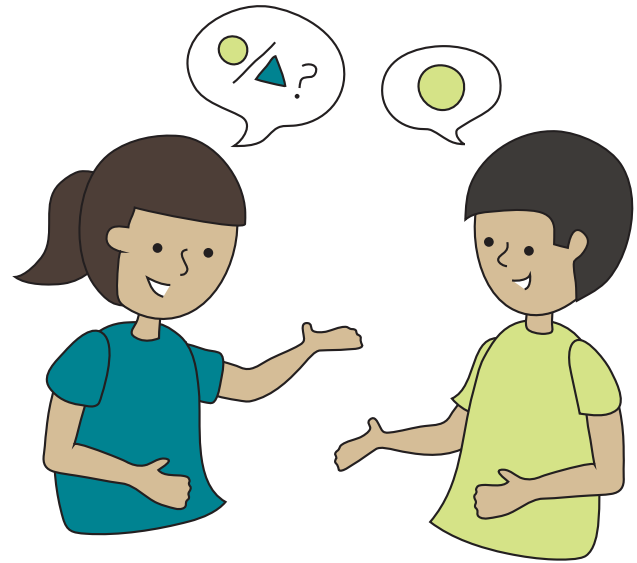


Asking for Clarification



Warm-Up

Clarify is a verb. It means “to make clear.” You need to speak and understand language clearly in order to communicate. If you don’t understand someone, you need to ask for clarification. *Clarification* is a noun.

In the paragraph above, what parts of speech are the words *clear* and *clearly*?

Dialogues

Read the dialogues, and practice with a partner.

A. Asking for Clarification

Dialogue 1

A: **Excuse me. Could you repeat that, please?**
 B: No problem. I said that the next bus comes in 15 minutes.

Dialogue 2

A: **I’m not sure I follow. Could you give an example?**
 B: Sure. Let me think of one.

Dialogue 3

A: **Did you say the meeting is on Friday?**
 B: No, I said the meeting is today. We’re meeting to discuss Friday’s schedule.

B. Using Tag Questions to Ask for Clarification

Dialogue 1

A: You said three cups of sugar, **right?**
 B: No, I said two cups of sugar.

Dialogue 2

A: You understand the rules, **don’t you?**
 B: Yes, I understand them clearly.

Dialogue 3

A: You are Joey’s wife, **aren’t you?**
 B: No, I am Allan’s wife. Lisa is Joey’s wife.
 A: Oh, I’m sorry! You and Lisa look similar. Thanks for clarifying.

C. Offering Clarification

Dialogue 1

A: **What I mean is, come over anytime.**
 B: Oh, okay. Thanks for clarifying.

Dialogue 2

A: **Let me explain that differently.**
 B: Thanks. I’m really confused.

Dialogue 3

A: **Let me clarify. This trip is just for the senior students.**
 B: Oh, I misunderstood. I thought it was for all of the students.

Asking for Clarification

A. Useful Expressions for Interrupting

Never pretend to understand something that you don't understand. Use a polite expression to interrupt and ask for clarification if you don't hear or understand something properly.

1. Pardon me?
2. I beg your pardon?
3. Excuse me. Could you repeat that, please?
4. Could you say that again?
5. I'm sorry, I didn't hear you properly.
6. I'm sorry, I missed that.
7. I'm sorry, I didn't catch that.
8. I don't understand what you mean. /
What does _____ mean?
9. Could you give an example? /
Could you explain more about _____?
10. Did you say _____?
(repeat what you think a person said)

Let Me Be Clear

Play a game of broken telephone in small groups. One person starts a message and whispers it to another person. Did the message make it all the way to the end of the line? Now play again. This time, if you don't hear correctly, ask the whisperer for clarification:

Example:

A: (*whispering*) I like cute puppies, such as poodles.

B: (*out loud*) I'm sorry, I didn't hear you.

A: (*whispering*) I said I like cute puppies, such as poodles.

B. Speaking Practice

Now work with a partner. First, work together to come up with questions for the responses below (orally). Then practice asking and answering the questions together. The person who asks the question will ask for clarification after hearing the response. The respondent will repeat the answer (more slowly). Finally, switch roles.

Responses:

- 459-9901
- 450 Water Street
- Melissa
- April 14
- It's on page 45.
- There is no parking available here.
You will have to park on the street.
- In aisle seven.

Example:

A: What's your phone number?

B: 459-9901.

A: I'm sorry, I didn't catch that.

B: (*more slowly*) 459-9901.

Informal Clarification

BETWEEN FRIENDS

Close friends and family members aren't always polite. You may hear them asking for clarification in a very informal way.

- What?
- Say again?
- Huh?
- Wha'd you say?
(What did you say?)

Vocabulary Review

A. Choose the Best Response

Listen to the recording. Circle the best response for each question.

1. a) Let me clarify.
b) No, I don't get it.
c) Yes, that's right.
2. a) Allow me to rephrase that.
b) Thanks. I'm really confused.
c) Yes, it's a good one.
3. a) You're coming, aren't you?
b) Understand?
c) That's right.
4. a) Yes, you got it now.
b) Let me explain.
c) I'm sorry, I don't understand.
5. a) Follow me.
b) Sorry. I'll give you an example.
c) Yes, that's how I got here.
6. a) No, I said for 14.
b) That's okay.
c) Oh, I misunderstood.

B. Word Forms

The word "clarify" is a verb. The word "clarification" is a noun.
The word "clear" is an adjective. Which word is needed in each blank?

1. Are we all _____ on what we need to do?
2. Let me _____. You *can* use a dictionary.
3. Please ask for _____ if you don't understand.
4. I need you to _____ the instructions.
5. The voice message was not _____.
Can you tell us your address again?

A Fun Idiom

ON THE SAME PAGE

to have the same information and a shared understanding of something

- I just want to make sure we're all on the same page.
- Are we on the same page?
- I don't think we're on the same page.

Review

Task 1

Work with a partner. Read a dialogue between two hockey coaches and some parents. Identify the following:

1. the date of the event
2. the location of the event
3. clothing requirements
4. transportation details
5. the cost of the event
6. one special rule
7. one important reminder

A TEAM MEETING

- Coach #1:** Hi, parents. We have a few announcements about the upcoming hockey tournament. As you know, the tournament is on the second weekend in March in Brampton, Ontario.
- Interrupting Parent #1:** Pardon me, where is it?
- Coach #2:** Brampton. Next, all players must have their Home and Away jerseys.
- Interrupting Parent #2:** Sorry, I missed that.
- Coach #1:** Bring your child's Home and Away jerseys to the tournament.
- Coach #2:** Next, each child must bring his own skates, helmet, padding, and hockey stick. We will not have extras.
- Interrupting Parent #1:** Could you repeat that, please?
- Coach #2:** Bring your child's jerseys, skates, helmet, padding, and hockey stick.
- Coach #1:** We are taking a bus. The bus is leaving on Saturday at 9:00 am from Market Square.
- Interrupting Parent #2:** Sorry, did you say Markham?
- Coach #1:** I said Market Square. Am I forgetting anything?
- Coach #2:** No siblings are allowed on the bus.
- Interrupting Parent #1:** I'm sorry, what does that mean?
- Coach #2:** No brothers or sisters. Players and parents only.
- Coach #1:** Oh, and all players must bring a deposit of \$50 to Monday's practice.
- Interrupting Parent #2:** Pardon me? Did you say \$15?
- Coach #1:** \$50. Five-oh. And don't forget to sign and submit the permission form.
- Coach #2:** Are there any questions?

Review cont.

Task 3

It's time to hold your parent meeting. Go to the front of the room with your partner and hold your meeting. The parents (classmates) will practice interrupting you politely to ask for clarification. They may also ask you additional questions.

Remember to talk about:

- the date of the event
- the location of the event
- clothing/equipment requirements
- transportation details
- the cost of the event
- one special rule
- one important reminder

Did You Remember?

PROMPTS FOR INTERRUPTING

1. Pardon me?
2. I beg your pardon?
3. Excuse me. Could you repeat that, please?
4. Could you say that again?
5. I'm sorry, I didn't hear you properly.
6. I'm sorry, I missed that.
7. I'm sorry, I didn't catch that.
8. I don't understand what you mean. / What does _____ mean?
9. Could you give an example? / Could you explain more about _____ ?
10. Did you say _____ ? (*repeat what you think a person said*)

Speaking Assessment Tool

Student / Group: _____

Date	Level	Assessed By	Role-Play Scenario	Skills
			Asking for Clarification	Speaking, Listening

Criteria	Achieved 	Achieved With Help 	Needs Improvement 
interrupts politely			
asks for clarification using tag questions			
provides a reason for the lack of comprehension or understanding			
speaks clearly			

Notes




Learner Reflection

ASKING FOR CLARIFICATION

Add check marks (✓) to show what you've learned in this lesson.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Can I...	Yes (very well) 	Yes (with help) 	Not yet 
ask for clarification?			
use tag questions when asking for clarification?			
offer clarification?			
interrupt politely when I don't understand or don't hear properly?			
ask for clarification in a very informal situation?			

My Notes