

Just speak ***Miniguide for Unplanned Situations***



Alena Konečná

About you, me and this miniguide

Hey there, HR professional!

Imagine you are in an **HR meeting** with international colleagues. Somebody asks you an **unexpected question**. You want to answer but your brain is suddenly empty and **you are stuck!**

I remember those stressful situations very well.

My name is Alena, and I help **HR professionals communicate professionally and confidently** at work in English.




I created this simple miniguide to help you in those first moments so that you can overcome the stress and start speaking!



What to do

when you get stuck

It's completely normal and it happens in your native language too! In an unexpected situation, our strong emotions can make it difficult to say anything intelligent. Use these tricks to take the control back:

-  **Breathe:** Take a deep breath or two. It helps you think clearly and feel more in control.
-  **Ground yourself:** Feel your feet on the ground. Simple, right? This little trick helps you focus.
-  **Listen actively:** Maybe you didn't understand everything but it's OK. Try to catch at least something - and use the phrases in this miniguide.

What to say

when you don't understand



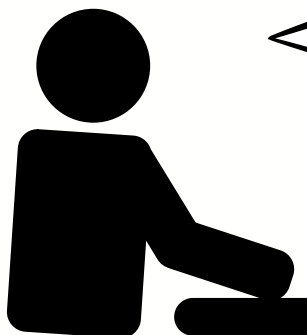
TIP: Sometimes, we don't catch anything and have no idea what the other person said. And that's normal too! Use these alternatives to "Could you repeat, please?" to show your interest.

"Can you repeat it more slowly, please?"

"Excuse me, one more time?"

"I'm not sure I understand, can you repeat it?"

"I didn't catch that. Can you say it again?"



"I am not sure I understand.
Can you repeat that please?"

What to say

when you don't know if you understand
or
when you understand only in part

“What XYZ are you talking about?”

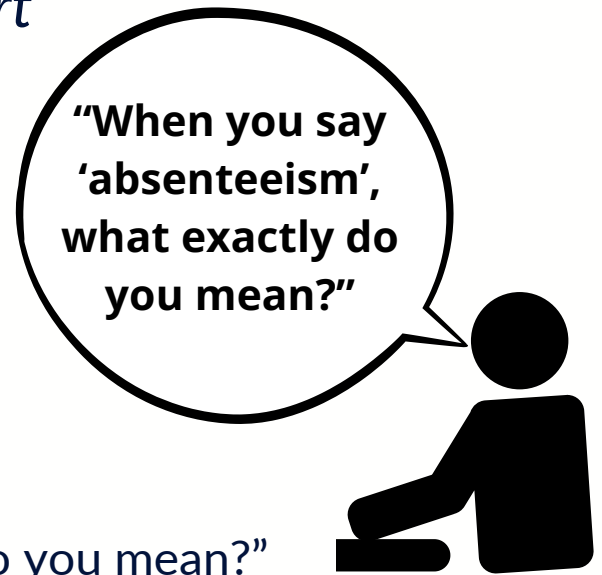
“Do you mean the XYZ?”

“What do you mean by XYZ?”

“When you say XYZ, what exactly do you mean?”

“If I understand correctly, you're asking about XYZ. Is that right?”

“I want to make sure I understand. When you say XYZ, what exactly do you mean?”



TIP: Are you frustrated from saying “Could you repeat, please?” all the time? Try to catch at least something that the speaker says and use it to ask one of these clarifying questions.

What to say *to react to unexpected questions*

“That’s an interesting question. Let me think for a moment.”



“That’s an interesting question. Let me think for a moment.”

“Thanks for asking that. Let me take a moment to think about it.”

“That’s a great point. Let me take a moment to make sure I address it properly.”

“That’s a great question. I don’t have the information now but let’s discuss this next week.”






TIP: Use these phrases to buy some time. This way there is no awkward silence or “aaaa... hmmm...” after a question and you show interest in the person asking the question.

Now what?

practice makes confident

It is not necessary to learn all these phrases. You are not a walking dictionary!

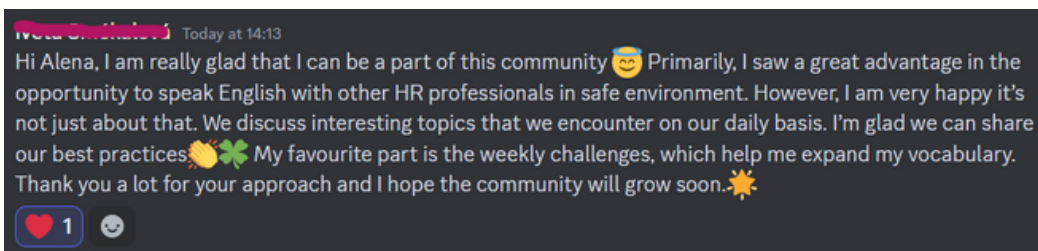
-  Read all the phrases out loud and **see which sound most natural to YOU**, which are the easiest for you to say.
-  Remember to **take a deep breath**, feel your feet, and listen up.
-  If you are not sure, start with the “**could you repeat it more slowly**” and then build on what you heard.

Good luck and fingers crossed!

You don't have to do this alone!

Good job! How can you keep the momentum and stay consistent and motivated?

Join our [Confident HR Speaker Community](#) and learn together with other HR professionals who have the same goal - to speak English professionally and confidently at work!



Kateřina Hrabovská • 1st

HR & People care lead. OKRs facilitator. Project manager. Mentor and lifelong...
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I had been searching for a place to connect with HR professionals and discuss topics in English. Thanks to [Alena Konečná](#), I now join regular meetings where we share experiences, tackle HR issues, and improve our English communication skills. After a few months, I feel more confident handling any situation, even though I'm not a native speaker. Alena is opening more spots, so anyone can join—maybe we'll meet there! 😊 🍀

Registration is open until 31 January 2025. See the details and register [here](#).



Thank you!

I appreciate that you took the time to read this miniguide. I hope it will prove useful for you!

If you have any feedback, don't hesitate to reach out, I always keep working on improving my services.

Good luck, I hope to get to know you better!

Alena Konecna



“One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say.”

Bryant H. McGill