

❖ Lesson 5

- Problem Solving
- Making Suggestions

Warm-up Questions:

- Have you worked with people from another culture?
For example, people from another country or people from the same country but from a different cultural background?
Do you have any such interesting experiences?
- What do you think is important to communicate with your boss, colleagues in the office, colleagues at another branch, or colleagues in another country?

Challenge!

Work in pairs. One person is in trouble and the other person must make a suggestion or give advice to solve the problem.

- **Person A:** You live alone and come home from work to find the door unlocked. Ask for advice.
- **Person B:** Make a suggestion or give advice.

Lesson 5:
Problem Solving

Useful Expressions for Problem Solving

■ Knowing the situation of a problem 状況を把握する

1. The shipment **was supposed to** reach our client three days ago, but **it still hasn't** arrived.
2. The products we ordered arrived, but the order was five short. **We need** the missing products by tonight, **but can't** reach our supplier **since** their business hours are over.
3. **I found that** the phone number of our new office had been **printed wrong** on the announcement cards.
4. **There seems to be a misunderstanding with** one of our clients **on** the price. **They insist on** paying only the price without tax because that's how much they thought it cost including tax.

Useful Expressions for Problem Solving

■ Finding out the cause of a problem 原因を解明する

5. **Why don't we check** the shipping record and contact the carrier?
6. **Do we know why** it happened? / **Who was responsible for** the order? / **Is** the number on the order record **correct**?
7. **Let's see** what the printer has to say about it.
8. **Maybe we should** go into the past communication records with the client to find out why we made them think so.

Useful Expressions for Problem Solving

■ Looking for the solution of a problem 解決策を見出す

9. We'd better re-ship the product to our client **ASAP**. We'll **have** the carrier **pay for the loss**.
10. How about **making do with** what we have tonight and **file a complaint** with the supplier tomorrow?
11. **Can't we** ask the printer to seal the correct number over the wrong one **at their cost**?
12. We should **apologize for** the misunderstanding **and accept** the price as understood by the client.

★ Class Work

- Think of a similar problem that happened recently in your workplace. Share the story with your partner and the class using the bold-faced phrases above.
- What other problems have you had or often have?
What phrases do you want to learn in order to explain the problems or the solutions?

Lesson 5:

Making Suggestions

Making Suggestions 「提案する」

～ 意味の強弱を使い分ける ～

People make suggestions everyday. A boss may suggest that his staff work more efficiently. A wife may make suggestions on her husband's drinking habits. A shop keeper may suggest to his/her customers which item to choose.

Look at the dialogs below to learn how each level of language deals with the situation.

■ Dialog 1: Strong Suggestion 強い提案 (それをしなければ不利益を被るという響きを持つ)

A: So, do we have to finish the project by the end of the year?

B: Yes. That means we only have six months for the project.

A: Then, **we'd better** hurry and decide on the main concept.
Otherwise, we won't even get the pilot done by the end of the year.

Look at the dialogs below to learn how each level of language deals with the situation.

■ Dialog 2: Neutral Suggestion 普通の提案 (提案するに至る正当な理由があるという響きを持つ)

A: So, do we have to shorten the project schedule?

B: Yes. We only have six months to complete the project.

A: I think we should talk to the people upstairs sometime.

It seems they don't understand that the quality is more important than a fast launching because consumers are demanding more day by day.

Look at the dialogs below to learn how each level of language deals with the situation.

■ Dialog 3: Soft Suggestion やわらかい提案 (ひとつの案として提示、強制力を持たせない)

A: So, we only have six months to finish the project?

B: That's right. We have to either speed up our work or come up with a way to shorten the time for the project. Any ideas?

A: It might be a good idea to outsource some of the work so that we could focus only on the core operation.

★ Class Work

1. Compare the three dialogs and discuss the difference among the bold-faced phrases on what makes a suggestion strong, neutral or soft.
2. When you make a suggestion, you need to give a reason to support your suggestion. See how the reason for each suggestion is given in the above dialogs.

★ Class Work

3. Practice making suggestions on the following situations. Give reasons.

- Company policy on work hours
- Unwanted email or direct mail
- Monday morning
- Your choice

More Examples for Making Suggestions

- *Make your own sentences using the bold-faced phrases.*

■ Strong Suggestions

1. **Let's** stop the black market from getting any bigger.
2. **We must** eliminate unprofitable plants.
3. **There is no alternative but to** organize the local project team.
4. We **have to** be careful not to misread the data here.
5. You **should** go see their new model. It's just awesome.

More Examples for Making Suggestions

- *Make your own sentences using the bold-faced phrases.*

■ Neutral Suggestions

1. **Why don't we** change our quality control system?
2. **How about** setting the price at ¥500 per box?
3. **Can't we** just get someone else to take care of the problem?
4. **What do you think of** getting rid of the old files?
5. **I suggest that** we go with the former plan. It was more appealing.

More Examples for Making Suggestions

- *Make your own sentences using the bold-faced phrases.*

■ Soft Suggestions

1. **We could** outsource secretarial affairs.
2. **I would suggest** buy**ing** the product on the installment plan.
3. **You might like to** contact their service office at 6229-2123.
4. **One idea is to** stop producing A12 and focus on A15.
5. **May I suggest that** you see their representative to talk about the contract?

★ Class Work

- *Make a suggestion on each problem below. Try to use the bold-faced expressions in the “More Examples” section.*

1. Japanese economic recovery
2. Low birthrate in Japan
3. Future resources of National Pension money
in Japan
4. Waste problem

★ Pair Work

- *Tell your partner about a problem you have had with the people and things below.*
- *Give each other suggestions.*

1. Boss or client
2. Family or friends
3. Pets or neighbors
4. Shops or companies
5. Your choice

Risk Management Case Studies

Risk is a possibility that something might happen, usually something bad. It may produce loss or other unwelcome events.

Risk management aims to prepare for the consequences in order to maximize benefits rather than losses. Successful risk management involves knowledge of where the risk lies and understanding what losses might arise from the risk. Look at the two case studies below and think of some possible risks, the losses, and how they can be minimized, and managed, and perhaps turned into a benefit.

Risk Management Case Studies

Case 1:

Your company is going to get a temporary agency to outsource your sales people. This is the first time the company has outsourced their staff.

- Risk 1: _____
2: _____
- Loss 1: _____
2: _____
- Management 1: _____
2: _____

Risk Management Case Studies

Case 1:

Your department is going to rearrange the office in order for the staff to work more efficiently. Most of the desks, telephones, PCs, and file cabinets will be moved around.

- Risk 1: _____
2: _____
- Loss 1: _____
2: _____
- Management 1: _____
2: _____

★ Final Practice and Acting It Out ★

- Talk about some solutions to the problems below. You can refer to the hints or use your own ideas.
- Create a dialog to talk about the solutions. Then act out one of the dialogs to the class.

★ Final Practice and Acting It Out ★

■ Problem 1:

All the PCs in your office were infected with a virus. Some of the data on your computer which was very important to you and your partner, was lost. You don't want this to happen again.

* Hints:

- (a) Have the virus protection software update automatically when online.
- (b) Backup

★ Final Practice and Acting It Out ★

■ Problem 2:

Many customers have complained about the quality of a certain brand of potato chip. Most of the chips were overcooked.

* Hints:

- (a) Recall the chips line from all stores
- (b) Set up a meeting with the production department

★ Final Practice and Acting It Out ★

■ Problem 3:

You and your partner are going to give a presentation at a customer's office. Now, you two are in a coffee shop near the customer's office and are getting ready for the presentation. Suddenly, you realize that a few pages in the handout you plan to give to the customer are missing.

* Hints:

- (a) Call your office and have someone fax the pages to the nearest convenience store and make copies there.
- (b) One of you goes back to the office to get the pages while the other goes ahead and starts the presentation.