

PRACTICE ROOM 16 · GOING FURTHER

TALKING *across cultures*

Direct or indirect, close or distant: different cultures play conversation by different rules.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Interactive version: attenglish.com/talk/16

PHRASE BOX SAY IT

BRITISH INDIRECT

That's an interesting idea.
I'll bear it in mind.
Not bad at all.

CHECKING

Just so I understand, do you mean...?
In my country we usually... Is it the same here?
I hope that didn't come across wrong.

REPAIRING

Sorry, I didn't mean it like that.
Let me put that another way.
That came out wrong!

DIRECT OR INDIRECT? SORT

British English is often indirect: people soften what they mean. Sort these phrases. Tick one column for each.

	Direct	Indirect
No, that's wrong.		
I'm not sure that's quite right.		
Send me the file today.		
Would you mind sending the file today?		
I don't like it.		
It's not really my cup of tea.		
You're late.		
Did you have trouble finding us?		

CULTURE SCENARIOS CHOOSE

What's really going on? Choose the best reading. Circle your answer.

1. Your British colleague says, "That's an interesting idea." in a flat voice and moves on.

- a) They love it. b) They probably aren't convinced. c) They didn't hear you.

2. A Dutch colleague says your presentation was "too long and confusing in the middle".

- a) They're being rude. b) They're being direct and helpful, as is common in Dutch working culture.
c) They're angry.

3. You invited a British friend round and they said, "I'll try to make it."

- a) They will definitely come. b) They may not come. c) They're coming early.

4. Someone keeps standing very close to you while talking.

- a) Take a small step back and keep smiling. b) Tell them they're rude. c) Leave.

REPAIR A MISUNDERSTANDING **PLAY**

A comment of yours came out wrong. Repair it. Write what you would say at each turn.

Olivia: “So what do you think of my new haircut?”

Olivia: “Oh. Different good, or different bad?”
