



Unit: Writing
Skill 21: Meeting Notes And Agendas
Activity B: Developing An Agenda

Activity Skills:

Small group discussion.

Leadership Skills:

Understand how to write and use a meeting agenda.

Suggested Level:

Beginning

Time:

30-40 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Large sheets of paper or flip chart and markers
- Pencil and paper for every participant

Do Ahead:

- Make copies of worksheet

Source:

Developed by:
 Rory Klick
 UW-Extension

BACKGROUND:

Everyone has been to meeting that seemed to have no purpose or dragged on too long. Meeting agendas are a way to create a plan for the meeting, and keep it on topic and on time. What goes into a meeting agenda? (Distribute handout for 21B)

Let's review what these agenda parts involve. The initial check-in usually means that people go around and briefly introduce themselves, or if the group knows each other well, perhaps they provide brief updates to fellow meeting participants. The meeting facilitator then usually runs through the schedule, shares any announcements and refers people to the agenda.

The meeting then typically covers any old business, meaning issues that were discussed at the last meeting or tasks that resulted from the last meeting and have updates. Then the agenda allows time for new business, issues that have come up since the last meeting but need to be considered by the group.

A good meeting agenda will then allow time to specifically identify the tasks and assignments that have resulted from the day's discussion. To conclude, there is a chance for the meeting participants to provide recommendations for the next meeting/agenda, and share any final thoughts.

The format for an agenda is like an outline, with main topics being listed as main outline headings, and the smaller issues or concerns within a topic forming the sub-headings. Each major heading should have an estimated timeframe so the facilitator and the group have an idea of how long to spend talking about that topic. If a topic is taking longer, the facilitator can ask the group if they want to just work through that one issue and defer the other topics, or set the challenging issue aside for further discussion at the next meeting.

Many aspects of using an agenda relate to running an effective meeting, which is covered further in Activity 36A.

WHAT TO DO:

Have participants divide into small groups of 3-6 people, or do as one large group depending on numbers. Have the groups identify an idea for a meeting situation, perhaps from their own experience. Ask each group to take 5-8 minutes to develop an agenda in outline form that could be used to guide a meeting on their situation. Then have the groups pass their agenda and situation to another group, who must then follow the agenda to run the meeting. Allow the groups 8-10 minutes to conduct their meeting, and then have each group present their feedback on how the agenda worked.

Skill 21: Meeting Notes and Agendas

Activity B: Developing An Agenda

<p>Notes:</p>	<p>TALK IT OVER:</p> <p>Reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What situation did your group choose?• What issues were listed on the agenda?• Did the agenda allow longer periods of time for more difficult topics?• How did the agendas work when passed on to another group? Were they detailed enough to provide clear direction?• What recommendations came about from using the agendas? <p>Apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think about a meeting that you have attended in the past. Was there an agenda? Was it followed?• What if there is a very controversial topic and there are a lot of people present to discuss it, say a public meeting on a big local issue?• If people know the agenda in advance, what purpose does it serve?• Does it help keep the meeting on track?• Why are facilitators and time keepers so important? <p>BEYOND THE BOX:</p> <p>Optional Homework: Do some research on meetings in your school, workplace or community. Is there an agenda that is circulated prior to the meeting so people know what is going to be discussed? Get a copy and analyze how the agenda serves the goals of the meeting.</p> <p>Resources And Web Links:</p> <p>“Meeting Facilitation and Group Decision Making,” Growing Communities Curriculum, American Community Gardening Association.</p>
---------------	---