

Do You Mean...? 4 Natural Ways to Ask for Clarification

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

91 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

Martin, the client wants us to make the page lighter.

All right.

I will change the background from dark blue to pale cream.

No, she means lighter as in simpler.

Fewer elements.

That is a completely different kind of lighter.

And a perfect reason to check what someone means before you start working.

Welcome to Your English Toolbox.

I am Julia.

And I am Martin.

This is episode five of Everyday Useful Expressions, our series of ready-made English for real situations.

Today we are learning four natural ways to ask for clarification and check that you understood correctly.

Our first expression is: Do you mean...?

Do you mean you want fewer elements on the page?

This expression offers a possible interpretation and invites the other person to confirm or correct it.

For example: Do you mean we should cancel the meeting?

Or: Do you mean the first option or the second one?

A typical answer is: Yes, exactly.

Or: No, what I mean is...

Do you mean is more useful than simply saying, "I do not understand," because it shows what part you think you understood.

And it makes the misunderstanding easier to repair.

Our second expression is: So, what you're saying is...

So, what you're saying is that the page should feel simpler, not brighter.



Exactly.

We use this expression to summarise another person's main idea in our own words.

For example: So, what you're saying is that we need more time, not more people.

Or: So, what you're saying is that the price includes delivery.

Tone matters here.

With a calm, interested tone, it checks understanding.

With an angry tone, it can sound like a challenge.

So use it to clarify, not to trap the other person.

Our third expression is: If I understand correctly...

If I understand correctly, you want the new version by Thursday.

This is neutral, careful and especially useful in meetings, instructions and professional conversations.

It shows that you are checking your interpretation, not claiming that it is certainly correct.

For example: If I understand correctly, each person will prepare one section.

Or: If I understand correctly, there is no additional fee.

A natural response is: Yes, that's right.

Or: Not quite.

Let me explain.

The phrase gives the other person space to correct you politely.

Our fourth expression is: Could you walk me through that?

Could you walk me through that?

This means: Could you explain the process or idea step by step?

It is useful when repeating one sentence will not be enough.

For example: Could you walk me through the new booking system?

Or: I understand the goal, but could you walk me through the next steps?

We often use walk someone through something.

The technician walked me through the setup.

It is friendly and professional, but it asks for a fuller explanation, so use it when you genuinely need the steps.

Do not ask someone to walk you through their name.

Unless their name has twelve parts.

Even then, another question may be better.



Let us compare all four expressions.

Do you mean...? offers a possible interpretation.

So, what you're saying is... summarises the main idea in your own words.

If I understand correctly... checks your interpretation carefully.

And could you walk me through that? asks for a step-by-step explanation.

Time for a quick challenge.

Choose the best expression before we answer.

Situation one.

You think "next Friday" means the Friday after this one, but you want to confirm.

Do you mean Friday the eighteenth?

Situation two.

A colleague gives you a long explanation, and you want to summarise the central idea.

So, what you're saying is that the original plan is still possible.

Situation three.

You want to check a professional instruction without sounding certain.

If I understand correctly, I should send the document to both teams.

Situation four.

You need someone to explain a new system step by step.

Could you walk me through that?

Now practise one complete clarification.

Begin with: If I understand correctly...

Checking understanding is not a sign of weak English.

It is a sign of careful communication.

On the episode page at [yourenglishtoolbox.com](https://yourenglishtoolbox.com/resources/episode-135-transcript/), you will find five additional expressions for clarifying and checking understanding.

Each one includes its meaning, tone, two examples and active practice.

The direct link is in the episode description.

Now, about the client's page.

Do you mean we should remove some sections?

Not quite.

So, what you're saying is that we should keep the sections but simplify the design.



Yes, that's right.

If I understand correctly, the background can stay dark blue.

No. She also wants pale cream.

This project is less straightforward than I thought.

Would you like me to walk you through it?

Please do.

See you next time, friends.

Goodbye.

