

# Confirming and Clarifying Instructions

It's always a good idea to clarify instructions by repeating back what you heard. This gives the speaker an opportunity to either correct your understanding (e.g., *No, I mean . . .*; *No, the second street*), or confirm that your understanding is correct (e.g., *Yes, that's right*). By clarifying instructions, you can avoid misunderstandings. Here are some tips for clarifying instructions:

- Alert the speaker to your problem by using any of the following: *Wait ...*; *Sorry. . .*; *So. . .*; *Hold on . . .*; *Just a sec . . .*; *I just want to make sure I understand correctly ...*
- Ask the speaker a direct question or state your own understanding by paraphrasing the instruction (e.g., *Do you mean. . .? Was that the first street on the right? So you will be waiting for him at the Air Italia ticket counter?*).



**1** **Audio 3.14: Listen to three conversations between a manager and an assistant. In the chart below, record what the assistant says to seek clarification.**

Dialogue 1:
Dialogue 2:
Dialogue 3:

**2**

**With a partner, role-play giving and receiving instructions for the following scenarios. Take turns playing the role of the assistant. As the assistant you must use strategies to clarify and confirm the instructions.**



## Scenario 1

You are a real estate agent. Your partner is your assistant. Explain the following task to your partner:

You need a database of everyone who has attended your open houses. You need names, email addresses, the date they attended the open house, as well as the address of the open house.

You want to notify them of houses for sale. Answer all your assistant's questions. Make up details as required.

## Scenario 2

You are an HR Manager. Your partner is your assistant. Explain the following task to your partner:

You need some information to evaluate your company's orientation sessions for new employees. Ask your assistant to design a questionnaire that will be given to all recently hired employees. Answer all of your assistant's questions. Make up details as required.