

ENGLISH

matters

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DODATEK



POLITENESS IN ENGLISH

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matters

kieszonkowy

poradnik językowy
Language Guide

Politeness in English

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 2nd English Matters language guide! This time we would like to acquaint you with words, phrases and expressions that are used for exchanging courtesies. In the English language being polite means much more than just saying 'thank you', 'sorry' and 'excuse me'. Very often it requires forming long and complex sentences and choosing an appropriate word for a specific context. So we'd like to encourage you to read our guide in order to be courteous in an English way.

to acquaint sb with sth | zaznajomić kogoś z czymś

to exchange courtesies | wymieniać uprzejmości

appropriate | odpowiedni, stosowny

courteous | uprzejmy

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Saying Hello!

Greeting	Answer
How do you do?	How do you do?
Hello! How are you?	Fine, thank you. / Very well, thank you.
Hi! How are things? / Are you OK? / How are you doing? / How is everything?	Yeah, fine. / Not too bad, thanks. / Not so good. / So so.
Nice to meet you.	Nice to meet you too. / It's nice to meet you as well.
Good morning. / Good morning Sir. / Good morning Madam. / Good afternoon. / Good evening.	It's a <u>pleasure</u> to meet you. / Pleased to meet you.
Good to see you again. / Nice to see you again. / I'm pleased to see you. / I'm happy to see you.	Pleased to see you too.
What's up?	Really busy, thanks, and you? / Oh, not much, and you? / Oh, same old same old. How about you?
How are you doing?	I'm alright, and you?
Hey Peter, how have you been?	Very well, thank you. And you?
How have you been?	Pretty good.
Hi Peter, what have you been up to?	Nothing much.
It's been a long time. How are you man?	I'm doing well.

pleasure | przyjemność

Greeting someone you haven't seen for a while.

It's been a long time.

It's been too long.

What have you been up to all these years?

It's always a pleasure to see you.

How long has it been?

I'm so happy to see you again.

How come I never see you?

It's been such a long time.

Long time no see.

Where have you been hiding?

It's been ages since we last met.

Saying Goodbye!

Goodbye!

Farewell!

Have a good day!

Take care!

Bye!

Bye bye!

See you soon!

Later!

See you later!

Talk to you later!

Catch you later!

Ciao!

See you tonight!

It was great to catch up!

It's been lovely to see you.

See you!

how come | jak to jest możliwe?

to hide | chować się, ukrywać się

farewell | żegnaj!

See ya!
Bye for now!
Later, skater!
See you tomorrow!
Have a lovely weekend!
Have a nice evening!
I've got to rush off!
I'm really sorry, I've got to dash!
Cheerio!
It was nice meeting you!

Saying Thank You!

Thank you!
Thanks!
Thank you very much!
That's very kind of you.
You're so helpful.
Thank you for coming!
Thanks, I appreciate it.
Thank you for taking the trouble to help me. I do appreciate it.
Many thanks.

Accepting Thanks

That's all right!
You're welcome.
Don't mention it.
Not at all.
It's nothing.
My pleasure.

to rush off | pędzić, lecieć
to dash | śmigać, popędzić
to appreciate sth | doceniać coś
you're welcome | nie ma za co

I'm sorry vs. Excuse Me

Excuse me

'Excuse me' is a formula that is used to remedy a past or forthcoming violation of a social rule on the part of the speaker. It is the expression of the speaker's relation to a set of rules. It is used when a social rule has been broken or is about to be broken. The speaker is the person who is responsible for the breach.

I'm sorry

'I'm sorry' is used when the speaker is concerned about a breach of another person's rights or damage to their feelings. The speaker expresses dismay or regret that another person has suffered. 'I'm sorry' is an expression of sympathy. It puts an emphasis on the relation between the speaker and the addressee.

Use 'Excuse me' when:

- you'd like to get someone's attention in a polite way
Excuse me, can you tell me the way to the town hall?
- you do something considered to be rude or embarrassing
Excuse me, I didn't mean to burp.
- you'd like to leave somewhere
Excuse me a moment. I need to powder my nose.

to remedy sth | naprawiać coś
forthcoming | nadchodzący, zbliżający się
set | zestaw, zbiór
breach | naruszenie, pogwałcenie
concerned about sth | zaniepokojony czymś
damage | uszczerbek, szkoda
dismay | niepokój
sympathy | współczucie
to put an emphasis on sth | kłaść nacisk na coś
addressee | adresat, odbiorca
town hall | ratusz
embarrassing | wprawiający w zakłopotanie

- you need to interrupt someone
Excuse me, but there is someone waiting for you.
- you disagree with someone but would like to be polite
Excuse me, but I never said you could borrow my car without asking.
- you'd like someone to repeat what they have just said
'Where is the nearest church?' 'Excuse me?' 'I asked where the nearest church is?'

Use 'I'm sorry' when:

- you want to emphasize that you wish you hadn't done something
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to break your favourite mug.
- you apologize for doing something rude /embarrassing
Sorry, I should have let you know I wasn't coming.
- you want to interrupt someone in a polite way
Sorry to interrupt, but where is Mr Clark's office.
- you disagree with someone
I'm sorry, but I don't think it's a good idea.
- you ask for repetition
I'm sorry, what was the name of the person you're looking for?

Supermarket

'Excuse me' is appropriate when you're hurriedly making your way through a crowd of people.

If you'd like someone to step aside, use 'I'm sorry'.

If you get in someone else's way, then you can use either 'I'm sorry' or 'Excuse me'.

to burp | *pot. beknąć*

mug | kubek

repetition | powtórzenie

hurriedly | szybko, prędko, w pośpiechu

crowd | tłum

to step aside | odsuwać się na bok

to get in sb's way | zachodzić komuś drogę

Formal vs. Informal

Sometimes 'Excuse me' sounds more formal than 'I'm sorry'. For example:

I'm sorry, what did you say?

Excuse me, what did you say?

Pardon

'Excuse me' and 'Sorry' in some contexts may be replaced with the word 'Pardon'.

You can use 'Pardon' if you haven't understood what the other person has just said and you'd like them to repeat it or when your body makes a rude noise and you want to apologise.

Use 'please' when:

- you ask for something or you'd like someone to do something
Would you help me with my homework, please?
- you accept an offer
Would you like some tea? Yes, please.
- you emphasize a request
Sit down, please.

Variations

I'm sorry, but...

Excuse me, but...

I'm sorry that...

Excuse me for + -ing...

I'm awfully sorry...

Would you please excuse me...

Sorry about that...

I'm sorry to say /report...

I'm sorry for...

I'm sorry about...

to replace sth with sth | zastąpić coś czymś

Dialogues

A: *How are you doing today?*

B: *I'm fine. What about you?*

A: *Never better, thank you.*

A: *Hi, how are you doing?*

B: *I'm doing well. How about you?*

A: *I'm pretty good. Thanks for asking.*

A: *Bye, bye. Have a nice evening.*

B: *Thanks. You, too!*

Requests

I wonder if I might use your mobile phone.

I should /would be grateful if you could /would reply before January 5th.

I should /would appreciate it if you could /would reply before April 6th.

Do you think you could open the window?

Could you tell me how much it costs?

Would you mind locking the door when you leave?

Could you please open the door?

Could I possibly have another cup of tea?

Would you be so kind as to give me a ride home?

Would you mind if I put off sending you the file till tomorrow?

Is there any chance of you helping me with my luggage?

Would it be awfully inconvenient for you to give me a lift home this evening?

How to sound more polite

- use the past tense instead of the present tense

I wondered if you could show me where the post office is.

grateful | wdzięczny

to reply | odpowiedzieć

to put sth off | przełożyć coś, odłożyć coś

inconvenient | niedogodny

How many days did you plan to stay?

- use progressive verb forms

I am hoping you can come to my party.

- use past progressive forms

I was wondering if you could lend me some money.

Excuse me, I was wondering if this was the train for London.

- use future tenses

I will have to ask you to leave.

Will you be staying for Christmas?

- use modifying adverbs (possibly, awfully, just)

The Weather

'When two Englishmen meet, their first talk is of the weather.'

Samuel Johnson

English weather-speak is a form of greeting, the way the English start a conversation. Contrary to a popular belief, the English are not obsessed with weather. Conversation about the weather is treated as a simple greeting, an ice-breaker or filler. The most important rule is then to continue the conversation. It must be a reciprocal exchange of ideas. If you don't want to sound rude, you must always agree with what the person starting the conversation is saying. Even if you think that it isn't cold, start your answer by agreeing with the previous speaker and later on add that you like such weather or that it was colder yesterday.

'Ooh, isn't it cold?' 'Yes, although luckily, I tend not to notice the cold much. Two days ago it was much colder than today, wasn't it?'

- Nice weather, isn't it?
- Beautiful day, isn't it?
- Can you believe all of this rain we've been having?
- It looks like it's going to snow.

contrary to sth | wbrew czemuś

reciprocal | wzajemny

previous | poprzedni

- It sure would be nice to be in Cyprus right about now.
- I hear they're calling for thunderstorms all weekend.
- Bit chilly today, isn't it?
- It's nippy, isn't it?
- We couldn't ask for a nicer day, could we?
- How about this weather?
- Did you order this sunshine?
- It's so perfect outside; not a cloud in the sky.
- It's really sunny out.
- It's really cloudy out there. I wonder if it will rain today.
- It's pretty cloudy outside
- It's a bit windy today.
- It's sweltering!
- What a deluge!
- It's chucking it down!
- Isn't it humid today?
- It's been cloudy for a week now.
- It's not raining too hard. It's just drizzling.
- It's so hot and humid outside. The air feels really thick and sticky.
- We're expecting a snow storm this afternoon.
- The roads are really messy. There is a lot of slush on the roads because the snow is melting, so be careful.
- It's really sunny today!

Dialogues

A: *Isn't it a nice day?*

B: *Yes, it is.*

A: *It looks like it may rain soon.*

B: *I hope it does rain.*

A: *Yeah, me too.*

thunderstorm | burza z piorunami
chilly | chłodno
nippy | rzeško
sweltering | duszno, duchota
deluge | potop

it's chucking it down | leje jak z cebra
humid | wilgotno
drizzling | mżawka
slush | breja
to melt | topnieć

C: *It seems to be clearing up.*

D: *Yes, I think so too.*

C: *I wonder if it's going to rain today.*

Conditionals

Politeness can be expressed via the use of conditionals. In such a case, 'will' is used after 'if' or inversion is used.

If you will wait for a moment, I'll go and ask the manager.

If you will excuse me, I need to bring more plates.

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask.

Beating about the bush

Very often, being polite in the English language means being indirect. For example:

Too direct	Indirect and polite
Don't be late.	We are going to start the party pretty close to eight o'clock. We wouldn't like the food to get cold. So, it would be lovely if we could start on time.
You can't wear jeans.	The party is going to be pretty formal. So I think the guests will all dress up.

plate | talerz

to hesitate | zawahać się

to beat about the bush | owijać w bawełnę, mówić ogródkami

Negative politeness

In order to make requests and sound polite, Native Speakers of English try to soften their statements by means of being indirect, using phrases such as ‘kind of’ or ‘pretty close’, or using impersonalization. For instance:

We’re thinking of wearing formal clothes.

I was wondering if you could visit us on Friday.

We are going to start pretty close to eight o’clock.

Disagreeing politely

I’m afraid I disagree.

I beg to differ.

I’m not so sure about that.

Not necessarily.

I don’t see it that way.

I see what you mean but I’m not at all convinced that...

Yes, that may be true, but...

I understand what you’re saying, but on the other hand ...

I see what you mean, but...

Yes, but on the other hand...

Maybe, but don’t you think...

I hear what you’re saying, but the way I see it...

I respectfully disagree.

True, but I’m afraid I disagree (with)...

I understand what you’re saying, but if you ask me, I think...

I understand where you’re coming from, but tend to think that...

I respect your point, but...

Perhaps, but I can’t help thinking that...

I sounds interesting, but...

Yes, but...

Erm, well...

I know, but...

convinced | przekonany

Other phrases used to express politeness

to hope...

to seem...

perhaps

If you don't mind me saying so.

I would prefer it if...

do you mind?

I'm very grateful...

Certainly

Of course

Sure

If I may say so.

I beg your pardon.

Don't mention it.

Not at all.

Exchanging courtesies – dialogues

A: *Good to see you again.*

B: *Lovely to see you too.*

A: *How about joining me and my wife for dinner?*

B: *Thank you for asking me, but I've already promised to eat dinner with my sister.*

A: *Maybe some other time then.*

B: *Certainly.*

A: *It's been lovely to see you.*

B: *Have a good day. Ciao!*

A: *Hi Peter, how have you been?*

B: *Pretty good. Thank you.*

A: *Was your journey tiring?*

B: *No, not at all. Surprisingly, the sleeping compartment was very comfortable.*

A: *I'm glad to hear that. How long did it take you to get here?*

B: *10 hours, altogether.*

compartment | przedział

A: I hope you're hungry as we've prepared a lavish meal.

B: Can't wait.

A: Would you like something to drink before food is served?

B: Sure. Coffee, please.

A: Hey Joe, I'm terribly sorry for being late.

B: No worries. We still have plenty of time to get to the concert on time.

A: Bit chilly today, isn't it?

B: It's been cloudy for a week now. I hope it won't be any worse tomorrow.

A: Mary told me that there were going to be a lot of VIPs at the concert. The event seems to be pretty formal – kind of a black tie event.

B: Oh, I understand. In that case, would you like me to wear a tie?

A: If it isn't too much trouble for you.

B: No, not at all.

Idioms with reference to politeness and manners

- **to mind your Ps and Qs**

to make an effort to be polite and on your best behaviour
Always mind your P's and Q's with Aunt Rose.

- **to take French leave**

to be absent at work without asking for permission or leave
a social event without saying goodbye to the host;
Is John coming back for dessert or has he taken French leave?

- **the done thing**

the correct behaviour; the right thing to do
Wearing flamboyant clothes to the office is not the done thing.

- **to speak out of turn**

to intervene when it is not appropriate or to say something
tactless
Whenever I meet new people, I'm afraid of speaking out of turn.

lavish | suty

black tie | oficjalne przyjęcie

absent | nieobecny

permission | pozwolenie

host | gospodarz

flamboyant | ekstrawagancki

to intervene | przeszkadzać, wpaść
w słowo

appropriate | odpowiedni, stosowny

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