



POLITE ENGLISH FREE ON-LINE COURSE

Lesson 3:

Apologizing politely

version without a key

WARM UP



THINK

→ Do you often have to apologize for something?

→ How do you feel when you have to apologize?



REMEMBER!

TO APOLOGIZE

Or to APOLOGISE (UK)

we apologize **FOR** SOMETHING

and **TO** SOMEBODY

For example:

The bank apologized **for** the error.

The pilot apologized **to** passengers for the delay.



SPEAKING

Inform your friend / colleague about the following facts:

– *your colleague apologized for being late to your boss*

– *your colleague apologized to you for not having completed the project task on time*

– *your colleague apologize to another colleague from Accounting Department for not having delivered an invoice on time*



LISTENING AND WATCHING

Watch the video:

<http://www.englishcentral.com/video/11344/how-to-apologize-politely>

And answer the questions:

1. In which countries people are used to use polite language on every day basis?

2. In which countries people apologize rather rarely?

3. What does apologizing in the western countries indicate?

4. Why do we have to be careful when we want to apologize while working with people from different cultures?

5. What are the four steps of apologizing?



REMEMBER!
WE SHOULD ALWAYS APOLOGIZE IN A POLITE WAY!



USEFUL PHRASES FOR APOLOGIZING

Match the phrases with the explanations of their usage.

1. Sorry.		A. In this phrase, we use additional words like for example: “so” to make the meaning stronger. If we use the additional words, they are stressed. The last word is the strongest.
2. I'm (so/very/terribly) sorry.		B. We use this phrase to criticise ourselves and the mistake that we have just made.
3. Ever so sorry.		C. This phrase is a general short apology. We use this when we bump into people on the street. At other times, it sounds too weak.
4. How stupid / careless / thoughtless of me.		D. This phrase is used to ask the other person not to get angry. The tone is quite informal.
5. Pardon (me).		E. This phrase is often used in formal letters. The word in brackets makes the apology very strong and very formal.
6. That's my fault.		F. We use this phrase to take all the responsibility for what happened.
7. Sorry. It was all my fault.		G. This is a polite phrase used for asking someone to repeat what they have just said.
8. Please excuse my (ignorance).		H. This phrase we use to apologise for our lack of knowledge or ability. We can replace the word in brackets with other nouns, e.g. carelessness, forgetfulness.
9. Please don't be mad at me.		I. This phrase is quite formal but it's a stronger apology than just 'sorry'.
10. Please accept our (sincerest) apologies.		J. We use this phrase to take the responsibility for what happened but it is a little stronger than phrase number 6.

ANSWERS:

1. C 2. A 3. I 4. B 5. G 6. F 7. J 8. H 9. D 10. E



MORE PHRASES FOR APOLOGIZING

I (really) must apologize	I have reflected on my actions and...
I hope you can forgive me (one day)	I know it was wrong (of me) (to...)
I'd like to apologize	It was (a bit) insensitive of me (to...)
I accept (full) responsibility	Please accept my sincere/sincerest apologies
I am/feel (so) ashamed	There is (really/absolutely) no excuse for my actions/behaviour/inaction/laziness
I can understand how you feel (about...)	You are right to blame me
I do apologize	(I know) I have let myself/you (all) down (by...)
I take (all) the blame	(I know) it was thoughtless (of me)
Please accept my/our apologies	I don't know what got into me
Please excuse my behaviour/thoughtlessness/...	I just want the ground to swallow me up
(I now realise that/I know) I shouldn't have done that	I think I went a bit too far
(I'm sure) you must be (very) disappointed in me	I would like to express my regret
(Please) don't be mad (at me)/don't kill me	I'm happy to take (my share of) the blame
I accept that I am to blame/that it's my fault	If I could take it all back, I would
I am sorry to have disappointed you	It was inexcusable
I apologize wholeheartedly/unreservedly	It's unforgivable, I know
I cannot say/express how sorry I am	Please don't hold a grudge/don't hold this against me

Source: <https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/fl-apologizing.htm>



SPEAKING

Practice the polite expressions by using the phrases above in the following situations.

You have arrived late for a business meeting. Apologize.

You have arrived late for a business lunch. Apologize.

You have arrived late for a meeting with your new client. Apologize.

You have to tell your employee that you have to fire him / her. Show your empathy and apologize.

You have to tell your colleague that he had not been invited for an important tender.

You have to tell your colleague that his / her client had gone to another supplier.

You are a waiter / waitress. A customer has just shown you a dirty glass. Apologize.

You've taken by mistake your friend's pen. Apologize.

You behaved badly on a company's party last night. Apologize to your colleagues and your boss.

You are at your friend's party. You've spilt red wine on their new sofa. Apologize.



PAIR WORK

Work with your friend/colleague and practice the phrases in situations above. Try to keep the conversation going for a bit longer. Improvise.