

1

INTRODUCING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Language can be used in different ways in different situations. It is as important to learn the polite and right way of communicating with others as it is to read and write in any language. In this unit, you will learn how to navigate a conversation in a variety of contexts.

To begin with, this section will help you learn how to say who you are after greeting someone who does not know you. You will also learn how to respond to introductions. There are different ways of doing this depending on whether the situation is a formal or an informal one.

Read the following dialogues and pay attention to the expressions in bold, used in formal situations.

Dialogue 1 (formal)

(Prakash Reddy is a new teacher. He introduces himself to the headmistress, Nina Shetty. Time: morning)

Prakash Reddy: Good morning, Mrs Shetty. I'm Prakash Reddy. I'm the new history teacher reporting for duty.

Mrs Nina Shetty: Good morning, Prakash. (I'm) pleased to meet you. Welcome to the National School. We're glad to have you.

Prakash Reddy: Thank you. I'm looking forward to working here.

Dialogue 2 (formal)

(Mrs Shakti Thomas walks up to Mr Abhay Sarkar, an employee in the bank where she has just started work.)

Mrs Thomas: Good morning! I'm Shakti Thomas. I've joined the bank today as an assistant accounts officer. I was with a private finance company in Trichy earlier.

Mr Sarkar (rising to his feet): Good morning! I'm happy to meet you. I'm Abhay Sarkar, and I'm a manager in the housing loans division. Welcome to our bank!

Mrs Thomas: Thank you, Mr Sarkar. Very nice meeting you too.

Dialogue 3 (informal)

(Vishal is at a wedding reception. He introduces himself to Jacob, his sister's classmate.)

Vishal: Hello. I'm Vishal, Smita's brother.

Jacob: Hi, Vishal! Nice to meet you.

Vishal: Nice meeting you too.

Points to Note

- Be brief and precise when you introduce yourself.
- You usually do not put a title in front of your name when introducing yourself to others. There are some exceptions, for example, you could introduce yourself as Mrs Sethi. You can also introduce yourself with your rank and title if you are part of the Armed Forces or the police in formal situations, for example, Brigadier Khan or DSP Kaur.
- You can omit using your full name in informal situations but must always do so in formal ones.
- Other ways of introducing yourself are:
Let me introduce myself. I'm
I'll introduce myself. I'm

Now you will learn how to introduce two people who are strangers to each other. Once again, the language and the terms used are different in formal and informal settings.

Dialogue 1 (formal)

(Dr Preeta Rao and Mr Salil Mohammad meet for the first time at the workplace of a common friend, Mrs Padma Padamsee.)

Mrs Padamsee: Dr Rao, I'd like to introduce you to Mr Salil Mohammad. Mr Mohammad is our company secretary. Mr Mohammad, **please meet** Dr Preeta Rao. Dr Rao is an educational advisor with the UNICEF.

Dr Rao (shaking hands): **How d'you do**, Mr Mohammad? I'm **happy to meet you**.

Mr Mohammad: **Thank you**, Dr Rao. **This is indeed a pleasure**. Mrs Padamsee has spoken to me about the fine work that you are doing among children in government schools.

Dialogue 2 (formal)

(Ms Tara Gupta, the manager of an advertising agency, introduces Mr Subir Jain and Mr Aftab Khan to each other.)

Tara Gupta: (to Subir Jain) Subir, **here's Mr Aftab Khan**. He **heads** the copywriting department.

(to Aftab Khan) Aftab, I'd like to introduce Mr Subir Jain to you. **He's** our new graphic designer.

Aftab Khan: **Hello**, Mr Jain. **Glad to meet you**.

Subir Jain: **Nice to meet you too**. **Please call me Subir**.

Dialogue 3 (informal)

(Kritika introduces her sister Alka to her classmate John.)

Kritika: John, **this is my sister**, Alka. She's an editor with the *Times of India*. Alka, **meet John**. He's my classmate and captain of the college basketball team.

John: Hi, Alka! Nice meeting you.

Alka: Hello, John. It's nice meeting you too. I used to know your cousin Stella at the K. N. Degree College.

Points to Note

- Some other expressions you can use to introduce people to one another are:
 - *I'd like you to meet*
 - *Have you met?*
 - *Do you know each other?*
 - *Let me introduce*
 - *May I introduce (formal)*
 - *It gives me great pleasure to introduce (to an audience at a public function)*
- In formal situations a woman is introduced to a man.
- If the people being introduced are both either women or men, then the older person is usually introduced to the younger.
- At the work place, the senior person is introduced to the junior.

EXERCISES

A. Look at some expressions used in formal and in informal situations to introduce two persons to each other and those that they can use to respond. Read each item and repeat it filling in a name of your choice.

1. I'd like to introduce you to
2. Please meet
3. This is
4., meet
5. I'm happy to meet you.
6. This is indeed a pleasure.
7. Nice meeting you.

B. Fill in the blanks after each greeting by introducing yourself in different ways. Say each item aloud for practice.

1. Excuse me, Mr Das.
2. Hello, Kala.
3. Hi, Babu.

C. Working first in pairs and then in groups of three, write and enact the following situations in the form of brief dialogues choosing appropriate expressions from those given above.

1. Rahul Kapoor from Omega Tech, Bangalore, enters the Pune office of his company's chartered accountant with whom he has an appointment. He introduces himself to the person's secretary, explaining who he is, where he is from and why he is there.
2. Smita goes to her friend Praveen's house. Her younger sister, Amita, is with her. Smita introduces the two to each other.
3. Anushree and her mother meet her college professor Dr Priya Mahate in the mall while they are in line for the same movie. Anushree introduces them to each other.

2

ASKING, GIVING AND REFUSING PERMISSION

We sometimes need to ask other people for permissions—for help, information, money or for leave—and also respond when someone makes similar requests to us. It is important to know how to use language carefully to do this if you want a positive response to your request. It is also necessary to give permission pleasantly, without making the other person feel that the request is bothering you or that you are doing him/her a favour. In case you have to decline permission, it has to be done tactfully, without causing offence. In this unit, you will learn how to make and respond to requests for permission politely in English.

Once again note how the language and phrases you use would differ in formal and informal situations.

Dialogue 1 (formal)

(Aruna asks her teacher for permission to work in the library during her class.)

Aruna: Ma'am, could you permit me to work in the library, please. I have to read up on my topic for the seminar on Monday.

Teacher: Alright. But make sure that you borrow the class notes from your classmates and do the assignment.

Aruna: Thank you, ma'am. I'll do that.

Dialogue 2 (formal)

(Vanita and friends wish to go to a movie on the occasion of a friend's birthday. She makes a request to the warden for permission.)

Vanita: Good morning, Madam.

Warden: Good morning, Vanita. Is anything the matter?

Vanita: Madam, Today is Monik's birthday. May we seek your permission to go to an evening show?

Warden: When are you returning?

Vanita: We'll be back as soon as the movie is finished, Madam.

Warden: Hmm

Vanita: Please, Madam!

Warden: **You may go.** Give me the list of friends going to the movie. Make sure you return before 10. I'll inform the security.

Dialogue 3 (formal)

Asif: Good morning, Mr Jain.

Mr Jain: Good morning, Abbas. What's the matter? You look worried.

Asif: My son is unwell and needs to have an operation. I'd be grateful if you could permit me to take ten days leave.

Mr Jain : **That shouldn't be a problem.** Das can take care of your projects while you are away

Asif: Thank you very much, Mr Jain.

Mr Jain : **You're welcome,** Abbas. Don't worry. Your son's going to be fine.

Dialogue 4 (formal)

(Praveen asks his boss for permission to take leave. He refuses.)

Praveen: Good afternoon, sir.

Boss: Good afternoon, Praveen. How is work at the factory site progressing?

Praveen: A little slow, but we'll complete it on time.

Boss: Please remember that our deadline is the 31st.

Praveen: The building will definitely be ready by then. Sir, **could you permit me to take two days leave, please?**

Boss: **I don't think that's a good idea.** You can't afford to take time off from work at the moment, can you?

Dialogue 5 (informal)

(Manju asks a junior colleague to help her with a project report.)

Manju: Amir, **would it be possible for you to help me draft my project report this evening?**

Amir: **I really wish I could've helped, but** I'm leaving after lunch. My mother's arriving from Pune, and I have to meet her at the station. I'm so sorry.

Manju: That's all right.

Dialogue 6 (informal)

(Sudhir asks his cousin Amita to go shopping with him.)

Sudhir: Amita, **will you come shopping with me this evening, please?** I have to buy a present for mother. It's her birthday next week.

Amita: **I'm sorry I can't make it today, Sudhir.** I have my music class. **But I'd love to help you choose a gift for auntie.** **Can we go tomorrow evening instead?**

Sudhir: **Oh, yes. We could do that.** See you tomorrow evening then. Bye.

Amita: Bye.

Dialogue 7 (informal)

(Hari is riding his motorbike. He sees Jose at the bus stop.)

Jose: Hi, Hari. Where're you going?

Hari: (I'm going) to the market.

Jose: Can you give me a lift to the post office, please.

Hari: Okay! Hop on.

Jose: Thanks.

Here are some expressions you could use to make and respond to a request. The expressions at the top are more formal than those towards the bottom of the list.

To make a request

*May I request you to . . ., please.**

I was wondering if you'd do me a favour.

I'd be grateful if you could . . .

I'd really appreciate it if you'd . . .

If you don't mind, could you . . ., please.

Could I ask a favour of you, please.

I wonder if you could . . .?

Do you think it would be possible for you to . . .?

Do you think you could . . .?

Would it be possible for you to . . .?

Would you mind . . .?

Sorry to bother you, but could you . . ., please.

I hate to trouble you, but could you . . ., please.

To respond

*I consider it a privilege to . . .**

*I feel honoured to . . .**

I would like to thank . . . for . . .

My pleasure.

Certainly.

I'd be delighted.

I'd be happy to.

Of course.

I'd be glad to.

No problem at all.

Sure.

Okay.

I am sorry but . . .

I'm sorry.

I hate to do this but . . .

Would you . . . , please.

Could you . . . , please.

Can you . . . , please.

* These expressions are used only in very formal situations.

Points to Note

- Requests can be either direct (as in *Could I use your telephone, please*) or indirect (as in *Would it be possible for you to draft my project report?*)
- When making a request, remember that *Would you . . . ?* or *Could you . . . ?* are more formal than *Will you . . . ?* or *Can you?*
- One way of making a request more polite is by starting with an apology (as in *Sorry to bother you, but could you book a ticket for me?*)
- When agreeing to a request, you can show that you are doing so willingly by using *I'd be happy to/I'd be glad to/Certainly/Yes, of course/My pleasure.*
- When declining a request, you can show that you regret not being able to agree by using expressions such as *I'm sorry, but . . .* and *I wish I could have, but . . .*. You can also indicate that you are concerned about the problem of the person making the request by offering alternative solutions or making helpful suggestions (as in *Can we go tomorrow instead?*)

EXERCISES

- A. *Fill in the blanks with suitable expressions. You can use the expressions that appear in bold in the sample dialogues. The first blank is filled for you as an example.*

3

DESCRIBING DAILY ROUTINES

Sometimes, perhaps in an interview or in a group discussion you may be asked about your daily routine—meaning what are the things you do on a daily basis. There are certain phrases that demarcate time of day, type of activity, and areas in which you perform those activities that are useful to know in such situations.

Time of day	Areas	Activities
morning	at home	wake up
noon	in school	brush my teeth
night	in office	have lunch/dinner/ breakfast
dawn	in a restaurant	have a shower
dusk	at the bus stop/ station/taxi stand	shave/put on makeup
late afternoon	at the movies	get dressed
evening		drive/take a bus/ auto/taxi
mid-morning		work/attend
meetings/ conference		with clients, etc.
		do the dishes
		do my laundry
		make the bed
		water the plants

Read the following sample dialogues and pay attention to the phrases that are used to describe all your daily activities as well as those that link and arrange your activities in chronological order.

Dialogue 1 (informal)

(Anuj is asked about what his morning routine is like in college by his mother)

Mother: So tell me, what do you do in the mornings? Do you wake up on time? Do you remember to eat breakfast?

Anuj: Come on Ma! I am old enough to take care of myself! I **wake up by 6:30 am** and brush my teeth. **Then I head out for** a run or workout on those days that I don't have an 8 am class. **I come back by about 7:15 or so, shower, shave, make my bed and head for breakfast by 8.** That's when the canteen opens. I am **usually done by half past 8** and **get into class by 9.** Happy?!

Mother: Wow! I didn't realise you could be this disciplined. Where was all this sense of routine when you were living at home?

Anuj: That's because you were there to wake me up!

Dialogue 2 (formal)

(Preetika is asked how she will manage working in a company and pursuing her MA in Dance at the same time by a prospective employer Ms Shashi)

Shashi: I see from your application that you are pursuing a Masters in Dance. This is a large commitment on your part. Do you see yourself being able to both work here and do your Masters at the same time?

Preetika: Absolutely ma'am. I have no doubt that I will be able to do justice to both commitments. I have excellent time management skills and I do not foresee my Masters having an adverse impact on my job.

Shashi: How exactly will you find time to do all this? You do realise that this position requires you to be in office from 3 pm to 8 pm everyday except weekends.

Preetika: I understand your concerns. My classes at the university start at 7:30 am and end at 12 pm. Fortunately the university is close to the office so even in peak traffic time it will not take me more than half an hour to reach the office. I would take a lunch break from 12:15 pm to about 1:15 pm or so. Even if I leave campus by 1:45 or 2 pm I would still reach the office by 2:30 pm at the latest. I have my own vehicle and would not be dependent on public transport. The only times I would have to request an allowance to be late or to work from home would be when I have to take the semester examinations. Since those are decided in advance I believe I can work out a sensible shift change with the HR department for those times without causing anyone too much trouble. I hope this answers your question?

Shashi: It seems as if you have thought about this quite thoroughly. I am impressed by your sense of planning and your foresight. Let me think about this and get back to you in a couple of days.

Preetika: Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Points to note

- Keep your sentences short and simple while describing your routine. Don't add unnecessary details unless asked for.
- Remember to use the appropriate phrases for times of day and activities and linking words/phrases to indicate the sequence in which your activities take place.
- Be very careful and precise in the way you approach answering questions about your daily routines in formal settings. For instance, you wouldn't want to mention how much time you take to have a bath or go to the toilet in formal settings.

4

COMPLAINING AND APOLOGISING

There are many situations where you either have to complain about something or apologise for doing the wrong thing. You might want to complain as a customer about a product or service, or the behaviour of a colleague, or simply as a sibling. You might have to apologise to a friend, or to a customer or employer.

The following dialogues demonstrate how to make a complaint in such a manner that the other person involved doesn't feel you are being malicious or unkind.

Dialogue (formal)

(Mrs Nair goes to her neighbour, Shamim, to make a complaint.)

Mrs Nair: Good evening, Mr Shamim. I'm sorry to trouble you, but there's a small problem that I want to speak to you about.

Shamim: What is it, Mrs Nair?

Mrs Nair: There seems to be a leak in your bathroom pipe and the water seeps through the roof of our flat downstairs. Could you have the pipe repaired, please.

Shamim: Oh, I'm terribly sorry. I knew the pipe had a leak somewhere, but I didn't realise that it was causing damage to your flat. Please forgive me. I'll have the pipe repaired immediately.

Mrs Nair: That's very kind of you, Mr Shamim. I hope you didn't mind my bringing up this matter.

Shamim: Oh no, Mrs Nair. I'm glad you brought the problem to my notice. I wouldn't have known about it otherwise.

Dialogue (formal)

(The new washing machine that Shashi Bajaj bought stops working after being used for just two days. In spite of the calls she makes, the dealer does not send a service engineer to take a look at it. Shashi goes to the company's office to make a complaint to the manager in charge of the customer service division.)

Shashi: Good morning, Mr Dutta. I have a complaint to make.

Dutta: Good morning, ma'am. Could you tell me what the problem is, please.

Shashi: I bought a Fine Wash fully automatic washing machine from Mayuri, your dealer at Prabhat Nagar, on the 12th of this month. The machine was installed on the 13th. It ran well for two days but on the third day, it simply stopped working. Mayuri has not responded to any of my calls. I'd like you to help me in getting the piece replaced.

Dutta: This is most unfortunate, ma'am. I assure you that the defective machine will be replaced by a fresh piece before evening. Please accept my apologies.

Shashi : Thank you, Mr Dutta, for being so understanding and helpful. I'm sorry for having bothered you.

Dialogue (informal)

(Anil and Afifa are close friends. Anil gets selected to the IPS but forgets to tell Afifa about it. Afifa is hurt and complains to Anil about his behaviour.)

Afifa: Anil, I'm very upset with you.

Anil: Why, Afifa, what have I done?

Afifa: I hear that you have been selected to the Indian Police Service. I'm surprised that you didn't think of telling me about it.

Anil: Oh Afifa, I'm so very sorry! I don't know why I thought that you were with all our other friends when I broke the news. Do forgive me if you can.

Afifa: That's all right. These things happen sometimes. I knew you wouldn't deliberately do a thing like that.

Now look at some dialogues that demonstrate how to apologise and/or accept an apology from someone else.

Dialogue 1 (formal)

(Chandran apologises to a senior colleague for not completing his work on time.)

Sheila Bose: Mr Chandran, could we meet this afternoon to discuss your project proposal, please.

Chandran: Ms Bose, I must apologise for not completing the proposal on time. I was unwell.

Sheila Bose: That's all right. But please complete it by next week.

Chandran: I certainly will.

Dialogue 2 (formal)

(Satish apologises to his teacher for talking in class.)

Satish (at the staff room): Excuse me, ma'am.

Teacher: Yes, Satish. What is it?

Satish: Ma'am, I'm really sorry for talking in class. Suma wanted to know what we did in the class she missed yesterday. But I know I shouldn't have been talking.

Teacher: Satish, you know how annoying it is when you don't pay attention.

Satish: Yes, ma'am, I realise that. **I won't do it again.**

Teacher: **Don't worry about it.**

Satish: **Thank you, ma'am.**

Dialogue 3 (formal)

(Sirish apologises to his boss for reaching the office late.)

Boss: Where's Sirish?

Revati: He hasn't come in yet, sir. *(pause)* Oh, here he is.

Sirish: **Excuse me** for being late, sir. The bus didn't turn up, and I had to look for an auto.

Boss: **That's okay. But please** be on time in future.

Sirish: **I will,** sir.

Dialogue 4 (informal)

(Shilpa has to meet her friend Arati, who is coming from Assam, at the railway station. But Shilpa is late by ten minutes.)

Arati: Here you are at last, Shilpa! Hi! I was beginning to get worried.

Shilpa: Hi! Look, **I'm really sorry I'm late.** I was caught in a traffic jam.

Arati: **No problem.** It's good to see you.

Points to note

- Keep your sentences short and simple while describing your routine. Don't add unnecessary details unless asked for.
- Telling someone that you are not satisfied with something or that you feel hurt about something they have done is perfectly all right. But you must remember to be polite when making a complaint or responding to one.

- When making a complaint, begin by describing the situation and the problem briefly and clearly, for example 'This is about the school bus driver. He is always late.'
- Say how the problem affects you, for example 'The children are never able to get to school on time.'
- Request that a solution be found to your problem, for example 'Could you talk to the driver, please.'
- Always respond to a complaint with an apology, for example 'I'm sorry the bus has been coming late.'
- Promise to find a solution, for example 'We'll make sure the driver is punctual in future.'

EXERCISES

A. *Fill in the blanks in the following dialogues, using different expressions to apologise.*

1. A: for disturbing you.
1: Oh, that's all right.
2. A: for the delay in returning the books (that) you lent me.
2: Don't worry about it.
3. A: not inviting you to my birthday party.
3: Forget about it.
4. A: Oh, I've spilt all the ink.
4: Never mind.
5. A: for not informing you about the change in the timetable.
5: Don't let it bother you.

B. *Fill in the blanks in the dialogues below, giving a reason for a mistake or promising to correct it. After you finish, enact them with your partner. Take turns so that each of you plays the roles of both the person making the apology and the person accepting it.*

1. A: I'm so sorry I'm late. (give a reason).
B: It's okay. But please don't be late in future.