



Expressing yourself: ways of apologizing

Overview: In this lesson, learners review and consolidate ways of apologizing and accepting apologies.

Total time for activities: 35-40 minutes

Level: upper intermediate to advanced

EXPRESSING
YOURSELF

Teacher's Notes

1. Before class, cut up the Student's Copy so that you have four individual worksheets for each learner.
2. Distribute **Worksheet A**. Learners match the sentences with their functions.

3. Check answers in plenary.

Answers

1. *d* 2. *c* 3. *g* 4. *a* 5. *f* 6. *b* 7. *e*

4. Explain that this lesson will focus on the function of example sentence 3 and will look at ways of apologizing. In British English, the alternative spellings 'apologise', 'apologising' etc. are also used. Distribute **Worksheet B**. Learners complete the sentences.
5. Check answers in plenary.

Answers

1. *I am sorry.*
2. *Sorry for keeping you waiting.*
3. *Sorry that you've had to wait so long.*
4. *I/We owe you an apology.*
5. *I do apologize.*
6. *Please accept my/our apologies.*
7. *I/We regret any inconvenience this may cause.*
8. *I/We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.*
9. *I beg your pardon.*
10. *I/We apologize to our customers for the long wait.*

Note that learners might use *must* instead of *do* in sentence 5. You can acknowledge this as an alternative correct answer.

6. Distribute **Worksheet C**. Learners try to answer the questions in pairs.
7. Go through the answers and distribute **Worksheet D** for reference.
8. Ask learners, in small groups, to think of recent situations in which they apologized to someone, or someone apologized to them, or they heard or read an apology. These situations may be in English or in their L1, for something trivial or something important, in their own lives or in the news, films etc.

If the situations were in English, they should try to recall how the apology was phrased and how the listener responded (if there was a response). If the situations were in their L1, they should suggest how the apology – and the response, if there was one – could be formulated in English.

They then report and discuss their experiences and suggestions in plenary.



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Worksheet A

Uses of 'sorry': Match the sentences with their functions.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. I'm sorry you haven't been feeling very well. | a. to express disappointment |
| 2. I'll be here again on Wednesday, sorry, I mean Thursday. | b. to politely get someone's attention so that you can tell or ask them something |
| 3. Sorry I'm a bit late. | c. to interrupt what you are saying and make a correction |
| 4. I'm sorry you won't be joining us this evening. | d. to express sympathy |
| 5. I'm sorry, but what you're saying isn't logical. | e. to politely ask someone to repeat something they have said |
| 6. Sorry, do you know if this train stops at Cross Gates? | f. to disagree politely |
| 7. I'm sorry, when did you say you made the reservation? | g. to apologize |



Worksheet B

Ways of apologizing: Complete the sentences.

- I _____ sorry.
- Sorry _____ keeping you waiting.
- Sorry _____ you've had to wait so long.
- I/We _____ you an apology.
- I _____ apologize.
- Please _____ my/our apologies.
- I/We _____ any inconvenience this may cause.
- I/We apologize _____ any inconvenience this may cause.
- I _____ your pardon.
- I/We apologize _____ our customers for the long wait.



Worksheet C

More about ways of apologizing:

- In apology number 1, which words are stressed?
- In apology number 5, which words are stressed?
- In apology number 3, can the word 'that' be omitted?
- In apology number 5, can the word 'do' be omitted?
- Which apologies are used particularly in writing and/or in formal speaking?
- The words 'sincere' or 'sincerely' can make an apology more emphatic. Which of the apologies can they be added to, and which position(s) in the sentence can they occupy?
- The word 'unreservedly' can make a formal apology more emphatic. Which of the apologies can it be added to?
- What phrases or sentences can be used to accept an apology?



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Worksheet D

More about ways of apologizing – answers

1. 'Am' and 'sorry'. More commonly, the contraction 'I'm' is used. 'I am' makes the apology more emphatic.
2. 'Do' and 'apologize'. Adding 'do' makes the apology more emphatic.
3. yes
4. yes
5. sentences number 6, 7, 8 and 10
6. sentences number 5, 6, 7, 8:
I apologize sincerely.
Please accept my/our sincere apologies.
I/We sincerely regret ...
I/We sincerely apologize for ...
I/We apologize sincerely for ...
7. sentences number 8 and 10:
I/We apologize unreservedly ...
8. No problem. / That's (quite) all right. / (There's) no need to apologize.