

Apologizing

We all make mistakes. It's just a part of life. Knowing how to apologize when we do though, is an important skill to have. It helps us maintain and strengthen relationships with others.

Here we'll introduce you to common ways of both forming and accepting apologies. With help from these phrases you'll be prepared for any situation involving apologies. Have a look at the tables below and start improving your English!

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Making an Apology

There are many different ways to form apologies. In the table below you'll find several examples that will help you. Have a look and get prepared for the next time you need to apologize!

I'm sorry that I'm late.

I'm sorry for hurting your feelings.

Pardon me for cutting ahead.

Please forgive me for saying that.

I would like to apologize for my behavior.

Sorry, but I won't be able to make it to the party.

I'm sorry for stepping on your toes.

That was wrong of me to do.

I'm sorry that I'm late

By using the sentence pattern I'm sorry that + ACTION you can apologize for doing something. Another example using this sentence pattern is: I'm sorry that I forgot your birthday. Alternatively, you can also use the following sentence pattern to do the same thing: I apologize that + ACTION. As in: I apologize that I was late. There are many ways someone could react to an apology, for example somebody might simply say this: That's okay.

I'm sorry for hurting your feelings

One way to apologize for doing something is to use the sentence pattern: I'm sorry for + ACTION. A further example of this pattern is: I'm sorry for forgetting your birthday. Alternatively, you could also use: Excuse me for + ACTION or I apologize for + ACTION. In response to an apology like this, somebody might say something like: I accept your apology.

Pardon me for cutting ahead

Pardon me is a bit more formal than Excuse me, I'm sorry, and I apologize. Use the sentence pattern Pardon me for + ACTION when you want to be extra polite or if you are in a formal situation like a business meeting. Another example using this pattern is: Pardon me for saying that. A response to this expression might be something like: It's no problem.

I'm sorry for stepping on your toes

To step on somebody's toes is an English idiom that means to insult or offend somebody. Usually this is caused by getting involved in something that is the responsibility of someone else. Here is another example of how you could use this idiom: I just wanted to help him with his work, but I ended up stepping on his toes. A typical response to an apology using this idiom might look something like this: That's okay. I know you were just trying to help.

Accepting an Apology

When others apologize to you, you'll want to be able to respond. Here we'll introduce you to phrases that you can use to do this. Take a look!

That's all right.

I accept your apology.

It's okay.

Don't worry about it.

No need to apologize!

I'm the one that needs to apologize.

No harm done.

No problem.

I understand, it's okay.

Don't mention it.

No big deal.

It happens to the best of us.

Don't worry about it

This is a very common response to apologies. Alternatively you could say: There's no need to worry about it, No worries!, or Forget about it. Someone might then respond with: I'm glad you understand.

It happens to the best of us

This is a sentence that you might say to somebody who is apologizing for something minor that they did, like coming late to class, oversleeping, or forgetting to call back. It means something along the lines of We've all done it before, so don't worry. Somebody could respond to this phrase in many different ways, for example like this: I'm still very sorry!.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the most important English phrases that I need to know when dealing with apologies?

I'm sorry that I'm late.

I'm sorry for hurting your feelings.

Sorry, but I won't be able to make it to the party.

That's all right.

It's okay.

Don't worry about it.

No problem.

How do you apologize in English?

There are lots of different ways to form an apology in English. Check out these examples:

I'm sorry that + ACTION.

I'm sorry that I'm late.

I'm sorry that I forgot to call back.

I'm sorry that I missed our meeting.

I apologize that + ACTION.

I apologize that I was late.

I apologize that I didn't tell you I was leaving.

I apologize that I missed our meeting.

I'm sorry for + ACTION.

I'm sorry for hurting your feelings.

I'm sorry for doing that.

I'm sorry for saying those things to you.

Excuse me for + ACTION.

Excuse me for saying that.

Excuse me for doing that.

Excuse me for being late.

I apologize for + ACTION.

I apologize for making us late.

I apologize for causing all this.

I apologize for not being on time.

How do I apologize in a formal setting?

Formal apologies will still use the same sentence patterns from above, but the beginning of the apology will usually start with either Pardon me or Please excuse me; as in Pardon me for being late. and Please excuse me for being late.. If you want to be extra polite in a formal setting then stick to apologies starting with these words. Other apologies starting with I'm sorry... or I apologize... are a bit more informal, but you will hear them commonly in both formal and informal situations.



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