



Live Lesson Notes

Politeness

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Some useful links

My **GOLD** online course for **IELTS Speaking**

<https://keithspeakingacademy.com/ielts-band7-gold-yt>

How to be **polite** in **English**

<https://keithspeakingacademy.com/being-polite-english-expressions-indirect-ielts-speaking/>

Discover more about **British Etiquette** and **Begin Polite**

<https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/British-Etiquette>

Follow me on **social media**

<https://www.youtube.com/@EnglishSpeakingSuccess>

<https://www.facebook.com/keithspeakingacademy>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/KeithIELTSMastermind/>

https://www.instagram.com/keith_speaking_academy/

Warm Up

Warm up Quiz

You are eating dinner with friends
You want the salt
Which is the best phrase to use?

- a) Give me the salt!
- b) Could you pass me the salt?
- c) Would you be so kind as to give me the salt?

Answers at bottom of PDF

Be careful of stereotypes!

Britain has polite and rude people, just like every country.

The level of politeness will depend on:

- The person
- The relationship with the other person
- The situation or context
- The person's mood

As a rule of thumb questions are used to show politeness, rather than imperatives.

A rule of thumb = a general guideline

Discover more about **British Etiquette** and **Begin Polite**
<https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/British-Etiquette>

IELTS Speaking Vocabulary: POLITENESS

Politeness (n.)

= showing respect and being thoughtful of others

Polite (adj.) /pə'laɪt/

To be polite **to** someone

*He was very **polite to** me*

You should be polite to your elders

It was polite of you to help me

To make **polite conversation**

= to make small talk

I am not very good at making polite conversation, I just say what I feel

Synonyms for polite (adjectives)

Res**p**ectful

Well mannered

Courteous /'kɜː ti əs/

Civil /'sɪv əl/

Tactful

Indi**r**ect

~~She is obese~~ - she is a bit on the large side

~~He is stupid~~ - he is not very clever

Antonyms

Impolite

Rude

Offensive

More phrases

Common courtesy (n. U / C.)

= expected politeness

It's common courtesy to take a gift when you visit someone's house for the first time.

Good manners (n.)

= behave in a correct way

He has got good manners.

To be considerate = to be thoughtful of other people's feelings

*Thanks for your help, that is very **considerate of** you*

BOOK RECOMMENDATION 📖👍

"Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour"

by Kate Fox

Here are some **quotes** from the book

<https://peacejoyaustin.medium.com/top-quotes-watching-the-english-the-hidden-rules-of-english-behaviour-kate-fox-992d52eed07d>

Politeness Dialogues

Dialogue 1 - Requesting

Senario:



Emily is watching TV.
It is quite loud.
Tom, her boyfriend, is trying to study.
He wants Emily to turn the volume on the TV down

1) What do you think he will say?

Possible answers

Will you please turn down the volume?

Turn the volume down, **will you** Emily?

Could you turn the volume down?

Do you think you could turn the volume down?

Honey, love, my dear....please...just...

More polite answers

Do you think you could *just* turn the volume down *for a while*?

Would you mind turning the volume down?

I don't suppose you could turn that down, could you?

I was wondering if you could turn the volume down?

NOTE:

British people are always looking for a chance to use irony, or be ironic (funny)

So Tom might say:

'Can you turn that up, I can't hear a thing!'

'Is that loud enough? Can you hear ok?'

'Do we have earplugs?'

2) How do you think Emily will reply?

Possible answers

Sure

No problem

No probs

No worries

Of course

Absolutely

I'd rather not

I am sorry I can't.

3) Listen and see what they really said. Is it similar to your ideas?



<https://on.soundcloud.com/iXrxEwa7dCjfmZhK7>

Full Script on Next Page

FULL SCRIPT

T: Hey Emily, I am trying to study here. Do you think you could *just* turn down the TV *a little*?

E: Sure no problem. I didn't realise you were trying to study

Dialogue 2 - Interrupting

Senario:



Tom is at work and in a meeting with his boss and other colleagues. His boss is explaining something. Tom realises his boss has missed an important point. He wants to interrupt and tell his boss this.

1) What do you think he will say?

Possible Answers on Next Page

Possible answers

Excuse me, can I just say something...?

Sorry, can I just say something...?

Can I just say something...?

Can I just add something...?

Can I just chip in?

May I just say something...?

If I could just say something

If I may add...

More polite answers

Sorry to interrupt, but

Excuse me for interrupting, but...

2) Listen and see what they really said. Is it similar to your ideas?



<https://on.soundcloud.com/i6vxHof2U4breS9X6>

Full Script on Next Page

FULL SCRIPT

T: If I could just add something, we could also mention the new product we are launching next month.

B: Good point, we should mention that too.

Dialogue 3 - Disagreeing

Senario:



Emily is at work and in a meeting with other colleagues. One of them is explaining a marketing plan. She then asks the others what they think.

Emily actually disagrees with the idea.

1) What do you think she will say?

Possible Answers on Next Page

Possible answers

Yes, but
I see your point, but...
That's an interesting idea, but...
I beg to differ...

Sorry but I disagree with you, I think...
Don't get my wrong but I have another idea..
If I may add, I actually think...
I am afraid, I have to disagree

2) Listen and see what they really said. Is it similar to your ideas.



<https://on.soundcloud.com/dUreDbfzE1Jj3jPu9>

Full Script Below

FULL SCRIPT

E: It's an interesting idea, but I think we should focus on something different. Suppose we try increasing the price instead?

IELTS Speaking Idioms: POLITENESS

Can you guess these idioms?

1



2



3



4



Answers at bottom of PDF

Dad Jokes

Why are tennis players so polite?



Answer at bottom of PDF

Listening Bingo: Politeness in the UK

Listen to someone talking about politeness in the UK.



<https://on.soundcloud.com/khyUyKwnVytYYaQa8>

1) How many examples of polite actions are mentioned in the talk?

2) Listen again. Mark the boxes that contain the *exact* words you hear. When you have a line of 3, **type** BINGO (and the words) in the chat.

Politely	Bumps into	Skip the queue
Speak out	Our Ps and Qs	Courtesy
Socialising	Over politeness	Don't worry

Answers at bottom of PDF

Full script on next page

Full Script

English people, generally speaking, put great emphasis on politeness when raising their children.

Children are taught to say, please and thank you, for absolutely everything. To say sorry, even if someone **bumps into** you and it's their fault. It's common courtesy to ask for permission, for anything and everything.

Oh yes, and we are taught to queue, and the biggest sin in England is to jump the queue. But of course no-one will say anything if you jump the queue, everyone is too polite to speak up. It would be ruder to embarrass the queue jumper than it is to jump the queue!

We are taught to give up our seat on a bus for other people who may need to sit down, and in general to be aware of **our Ps and Qs**.

Some say this culture of politeness has gone too far. The British lack sincerity and honesty with their courteous remarks. Maybe, but it is mostly just a way of smoothing social interaction. It's our social etiquette. Basically, we fear conflict and want everyone to be happy.

Admittedly, this does result in a theatre of **over politeness** when 2 British people interact. For example,

- Sorry, is this seat free?
- Yes it is, oh I am so sorry I had my bag on it.
- Oh no problem. Thank you, if you are sure it's free.
- Yes, absolutely, no worries at all.
- I can find another seat
- No really, its fine
- Ok, if you're sure. Thank you
- Your welcome. Anytime.

So there you have it, British Politeness. So thank you for listening and I am terribly sorry for taking up so much of your time.

ANSWERS

Warm Up

Quiz

You are eating dinner with friends
You want the salt
Which is the best phrase to use?

- a) Give me the salt!
- b) Could you pass me the salt?**
- c) Would you be so kind as to give me the salt?

B is the best answer, as questions (b and c) are politer than imperatives (a). The last answer (c) would be too polite and probably not appropriate in this context.

IELTS Speaking Idioms: POLITENESS

Can you guess these idioms?



1. To bend over backwards

= To make a great effort to be polite or to help someone.

She bent over backwards to make her guests feel comfortable.

2. To mind your P's and Q's

= To be careful about how you behave and speak.

At the formal dinner, everyone had to mind their P's and Q's.

3. To be on your best behavior

= To behave in the most polite way possible.

When meeting her parents, he was on his best behavior.

4. To bite your tongue

= To avoid saying something that might be considered impolite or inappropriate.

I had to bite my tongue when she started complaining about her boss, because her boss is my friend.

Listening Bingo: Planning a Holiday

Listen to someone talking about politeness in the UK.

1) How many examples of polite actions are mentioned in the talk?

6

Children are taught

- 1) to say, please and thank you
- 2) to say sorry
- 3) to ask for permission
- 4) to queue
- 5) to give up our seat on a bus
- 6) to be aware of our Ps and Qs

2) Listen again. Mark the boxes that contain the *exact* words you hear. When you have a line of 3, **type** BINGO (and the words) in the chat.

Politely	Bumps into	Skip the queue
Speak out	Our Ps and Qs	Courtesy
Socialising	Over politeness	Don't worry

Dad Jokes

Why are tennis players so polite?



Answer

Because they know how to serve well