



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

Conversation Preparation Guides

Title: Expressing Thanks, Regrets, and Condolences

Topic: Social Interactions

Level: Intermediate

Practice on Your Own

- Practice pronouncing the polite expressions you are learning in your new language (please, thank you, sorry, apologies, condolences). Listen to audio examples and associate the expressions with the appropriate situations. Listen and pronounce after the speakers. Also read the materials available to you. (If your textbook does not provide much information, you can look for more information online.)
- Think of situations when you would say please, thank you, sorry, apologies and condolences in the language you are learning.
 - For example, think about a situation where a friend invited you to her/his house and you accepted the invitation. Unfortunately due to a lot of work you could not make it. You therefore apologize to your friend.
 - Another scenario would be asking a friend how her/his vacation was. The friend responds in a culturally acceptable way and says that her/his grandmother died. Tell your friend that you are sorry to hear that and offer your friend condolences.
 - Also think about asking your friend if you can borrow a book that you need for class tomorrow and use “please”/“thank you” or culturally appropriate expressions.
- Practice these situations on your own before the conversation session.

Practice in Conversation Session

- **Warm-up practice using polite expressions.** Be prepared for a warm-up activity with your conversation partner and fellow students to practice using polite expressions in appropriate situations. This will help you retain vocabulary you have learned. Your conversation partner may describe a situation and ask you to provide the appropriate expression. Or she/he may say an expression and ask you to provide the correct response (for example, your conversation partner says “thank you” and you reply “you’re welcome”).
- Be prepared to role play different situations using the appropriate polite expressions. In each situation, use culturally appropriate greetings before you proceed with the rest of the conversation.

- In one scenario, you and your role play partner are conversing after school. Your partner asks you why you didn't go to her/his house. You say you are sorry and apologize for not making it because you had a lot of work.
- In another situation, as you interact with your friend, you ask how the person's vacation was. The person says it was good but her/his grandmother died. You express your sorrow and offer the person your condolences.
- In the scenario where you are asking your friend if you can borrow a book that you need for class, use "please"/"thank you" or culturally appropriate expressions.
- Repeat these role plays, switching roles, so that you become more familiar with the words and the situations in which to use them. Make up other role plays as well to practice a variety of different situations.
 - Your conversation partner may share information about etiquette in different situations. While conversation sessions should generally stay as much as possible in the language being studied, the conversation partner may need to explain this important cultural information in English.