



1 Saying 'no' politely

A In groups, answer these questions.

- 1 What excuses do people make when they say 'no'?
- 2 Have you ever had to say 'no', but been embarrassed?
- 3 Have you ever said 'yes' to a request, but later wished you had said 'no'?
- 4 When is it rude to say 'no' in your country?

B  CD1.34 Listen to the first part of a short talk by a cross-cultural communications expert. Complete these five tips for saying 'no' politely.

- 1 Pay
- 2 Offer
- 3 Show
- 4 Be
- 5 Avoid

C  CD1.35 Listen to the second part of the talk, which looks at saying 'no' in different countries. Decide whether these statements are true (T) or false (F). Correct the false ones.

- 1 In Japan, it is very important to focus on verbal communication.
- 2 In Japan, it will embarrass people if you turn down a request.
- 3 Indonesians do not like to embarrass people by saying 'no'.
- 4 Bahasa Indonesian has 12 ways of saying 'yes'.
- 5 In China, silence can mean there are problems.
- 6 In the Arab world, silence usually means 'no'.
- 7 Refusing a cup of coffee from an American host is considered rude.



D Match the invitations and requests (1–5) to the responses (a–e).

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Would you like to go out for a meal later? 2 Would you like some more food? 3 Shall we meet up next Tuesday? 4 Please stay a little bit longer. 5 Can you check that the fire-exit notices are all in the right place, please?</p> | <p>a) I'm afraid you've come to the wrong person. You'll have to ask Ingrid in Health and Safety. b) Thanks for the invitation, but I'm not feeling so well. Maybe some other time. c) Nothing more for me, thanks. It was delicious. d) I'm sorry. I'd love to, but I have other plans that evening. e) I've had a wonderful time and I wish I could, but I really have to go.</p> |
|---|---|

E  CD1.36 **Listen and check your answers.**

Task

In pairs, role-play these situations. Read both roles (A and B). Take it in turns to play Role B, so you both get the opportunity to say 'no' politely.

| | A | B |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | You are the host at a meal in a restaurant. Offer your client some champagne. | You do not drink alcohol. Say 'no' politely. |
| 2 | You have to complete a short report quickly. Ask a colleague to help you. | You are very busy, and this is not your job. Suggest your colleague asks Freya to help. |
| 3 | You are an investment director. Invite a client to an important hospitality event next month. | You cannot attend this event because you have already accepted another invitation. But you want to maintain a good relationship and you would like to attend another event in the future. |
| 4 | You are the host at a meal in your home for some business contacts. Offer your guest some lamb, rice and vegetables. | You hate lamb. Say 'no' politely. Say you are happy with just rice and vegetables. |
| 5 | You have just finished writing a very important report, which you need to submit in an hour. Ask your colleague to check it first. | You are very busy. You have to prepare for a meeting with your boss in an hour. |
| 6 | You are in a country where it is common to go out to eat late at night. Invite a business contact who has arrived from another country to go out for a meal at 10 p.m. tonight. | You are very tired and need to prepare for an important meeting tomorrow. |




2 Doing business internationally

A A meeting in Morocco


What do you know about Morocco? In pairs, do this quiz. Decide whether each statement is true (T) or false (F). If the statement is false, correct it. Check your answers on page 134.

- 1 Morocco, a country in North Africa, has a border with Egypt
- 2 Religion plays a big role in Morocco's day-to-day life and business culture
- 3 Moroccans always use Arabic when they do business internationally.
- 4 It is good to ask Moroccans about their family and work
- 5 Friday is a good day to do business
- 6 Networking is very important in Moroccan business culture
- 7 Moroccans value greatly the reputation of their business
- 8 In Moroccan business, who you know is more important than what you know
- 9 Meetings often go on longer than scheduled. Moroccans do not like time pressure when doing business
- 10 Moroccans are usually looking to build long-term business relationships

Task 1

1  CD1.61 Andrew Morgan is not very familiar with Moroccan business culture. He is meeting an Arab businessman, Karim Mansour in Rabat, who has been recommended by a colleague at head office. Listen and answer these questions.

- 1 Why is Andrew Morgan visiting Morocco?
- 2 How does Morgan's company plan to distribute its products in Morocco?
- 3 What contacts does Morgan want to get during the visit?

2  CD1.61 Listen again and note down the cultural errors Andrew Morgan makes. If necessary, refer to the audio script of the conversation on page 159. Compare your answers with those on page 135.



B A posting to Mexico

Joanna Simmons works for a large food company based in Dallas, Texas. She has been posted to the company's subsidiary in Monterrey, Mexico. Unfortunately, she is having difficulties adjusting to the local business culture. Joanna sends some e-mails to her friend, Samantha, who works at head office. Work in groups of three. Each of you reads one e-mail. Summarise it briefly to the others in your group. Then do Task 2 below.

1

11 March

Hi Samantha!

You wanted to know how I'm getting on here. Not too well, I'm afraid. I'm having problems adapting to the business culture.

My knowledge of Spanish is not as good as I thought. I sometimes get invited to dinner at colleagues' homes. My hosts ask me a lot of questions about serious topics back home, but it's really difficult for me to have a conversation in Spanish with them. So I'm taking Spanish classes at the weekend to improve my language skills.

Actually, I've been trying to make things easier for myself by asking questions about Mexican culture. That way, my hosts do most of the talking!

2

4 May

You know, the Mexican way of doing business is so different. I have to go to business breakfasts every week, usually from 8 to 11. I'm not used to that. And business lunches are very important here. They go on for hours, and business is discussed only at the end of the meal. Also, no one seems very interested in my marketing ideas. I feel my Mexican colleagues are watching me and trying to decide if they like me.

3

13 June

I've noticed a few things about the business culture here. Mexicans don't seem to like much eye contact. Maybe they think it isn't polite. And they've got strange ideas about personal space. They stand very close to you and they often touch your shoulder or arm. But if I step back to get a bit more space, they're not happy.

Task 2

In small groups, discuss these questions.

- 1 What features of Mexico's business culture is Joanna having difficulties dealing with?
- 2 Has she done anything to overcome her difficulties? If so, what has she done?
- 3 What advice would you give her to help her adapt to the local business culture?
- 4 Is she the right person for a posting to Mexico? Why? / Why not?
- 5 Do you think you would have any problems working in a situation like this? If so, why?

C Doing business in South Korea

In a radio programme called *Business Today*, four people talked about their experiences of doing business in South Korea.

Task 3

1  CD1.62 – 1.65 Listen and make notes about the key points in each extract. Listen again if necessary.

2 Write a list of dos and don'ts for someone visiting Korea.

examples:

Do

Get information about people you are going to do business with.

Don't

Forget that the oldest person is often the most senior in a group of Korean executives.

D Work in groups. Consider the business cultures of the three countries featured in this section: Morocco, Mexico and South Korea.


- 1 If you could have a one-year posting to one of these countries, what would be your order of preference? Discuss your ranking with other members of your group and give reasons.
- 2 Choose one of the three countries. How does the business culture in your own country differ from the country you have chosen? In what ways is it similar?
- 3 Choose a country that interests you. Do some research into its business culture, then present what you've learned to your colleagues.




3 International conference calls

A Discuss these questions.

- 1 Do you enjoy using the phone? Why? / Why not?
- 2 What is a conference call? How is it different from a regular phone call?
- 3 Have you ever been involved in a conference call? How successful was it?
- 4 What do you think are the differences/ similarities between conference calls and face-to-face meetings?
- 5 What do you think the biggest problems are?


B  CD2.35-2.40 Listen to six short extracts from conference calls. What do you think is the problem in each situation?

C  CD2.35-2.40 Listen again and match the extracts (1-6) to these types of problem (a-f).

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| a) getting cut off | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) background noise | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) speaking too fast | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) unknown speaker | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) leaving the main topic | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) interrupting / stopping a speaker talking | <input type="checkbox"/> |

D  CD2.41 Listen to the first part of a talk by an expert on international conference calls.

- 1 Which of the problems in Exercise C are mentioned?
- 2 According to the expert, what is the biggest / most common problem?

E  CD2.42 Listen to the second part of the talk and complete these tips for participants.

- 1 Make sure you are in a q_____ p_____.
- 2 Avoid e_____ and d_____.
- 3 Prepare for the call in a_____.
- 4 When speaking, stay on t_____.
- 5 Signal or label what you s_____.
- 6 Try not to i_____.
- 7 Wait to be invited to c_____.

F Read these notes made by another participant on the final part of the talk and decide whether the sentences below are true (T) or false (F).

Call leaders

- Make sure everyone knows when call will be – send e-mail reminder and numbers or passwords
- Pay attention to time zones for international calls – very early or very late not popular with all!
- Like meetings, make sure you have agenda and goals, so everyone is clear about purpose
- Conference-call meetings take longer than face-to-face meetings – not too many agenda items
- Need to open and close call + important for the call leader to begin on time and welcome participants
- Do a roll call at the start. Get people to introduce themselves – helps to build relationships
- Signal the move from introduction to actual talk
- Begin with: 'We're ready to go. I've heard from John, Katja and Marina. Have I missed anyone?'
- If a lot of people / big meeting, tell those not speaking to go on mute, to reduce noise
- End with summing up + reminder of action points
- Set date and time of next meeting

- 1 The times of conference calls are important.
- 2 An agenda is not important for conference calls.
- 3 Conference calls tend to be slower than face-to-face meetings.
- 4 The call leader should introduce everyone at the start.
- 5 A summary of the main points by the call leader is important.

Task

You are managers in a multinational company which needs to reduce costs and is looking at ways to do this.

- 1 Work in groups of four. Look at the agenda below. Turn to the correct page and study your role card. Prepare for the conference call.

Student A: Turn to page 134.

Student C: Turn to page 137.

Student B: Turn to page 132.

Student D: Turn to page 139.

Hold the call and discuss the points. Decide what to do.

- 2 Following your call, in pairs write some tips on how to participate effectively in international conference calls.

Do:

Don't:

Be careful of:

Compare your tips with another pair.

Agenda

- 1 Introduction of regular conference calls
- 2 Timing of calls
- 3 Training courses
- 4 AOB



4 Preparing to do business internationally

A Discuss these questions.

- 1 Which countries share a border with your country or are your near neighbours?
- 2 How is their culture different to yours?
- 3 Thinking about the rest of the world, which cultures do you think are most different to your own? In what ways?

B Do this culture questionnaire. Compare your answers with a partner.

IN YOUR CULTURE ...

- 1 What time is the most important meal of the day?
 - a) 12:00–14:00
 - b) 18:00–20:00
 - c) 20:00–22:00
 - d) another time
- 2 How do you greet business contacts or colleagues when meeting?
 - a) with a handshake
 - b) with a kiss/hug
 - c) with a bow
 - d) another way
- 3 Which of the following do you or would you use in business situations?
 - a) first names
 - b) surnames
 - c) titles and first names
 - d) titles and surnames
- 4 You have a business meeting at 2.30 p.m. What time do you arrive?
 - a) a little before – say 2.20
 - b) exactly on time
 - c) some time later – say 2.45
- 5 In a meeting, do you expect:
 - a) everyone to try and speak?
 - b) everyone to listen while each person speaks in turn?
 - c) only some people to speak?
- 6 When you are making important business decisions, what is it most important to consider?
 - a) what we did before
 - b) what we are doing now
 - c) what we are going to do in the future
- 7 How should decisions be made?
 - a) by the boss alone
 - b) by everyone together
 - c) by the boss, but after asking for opinions
- 8 If you do a job well, who should be rewarded?
 - a) only you
 - b) all the people in your team
 - c) the whole company

C After you have completed the questionnaire, discuss these questions with your partner.

- 1 Do you think other people from your culture would answer in the same way?
- 2 Which aspects of your culture are important for business visitors to know about?

D Look at the comments below (1–7) made by people doing business in other cultures. Match them to the aspects of culture in the box (a–g).

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| a) age/status | b) body language |
| c) entertaining | d) humour |
| e) showing emotion | f) socialising |
| g) time | |

1 Everything went very, very slowly, and a lot of people arrived late. There was a lot of tea drinking and chatting, but nothing seemed to happen. I wanted to make some decisions.

2 I tried to make a joke at the start of my presentation, to break the ice and make people feel relaxed, but nobody laughed. Everybody was so serious. Nobody asked any questions either. But we got the contract!

3 I'm not sure I was taken very seriously, as I'm quite young. It was a bit strange. There were four people at the meeting with us, but only one person – the oldest one – spoke. He asked me when the boss was arriving, even though I told them I was there to make the deal.

4 At the presentation, I couldn't really tell them about the products properly, as they kept interrupting all the time. There was a lot of shouting. Nobody seemed very serious. It was all much too noisy for me.

5 There was a lot of nodding when we were making our offer and we seemed to have a deal. But then suddenly we didn't. It was all very unusual to me. I thought nodding meant 'yes, we agree'.

6 At the drinks reception, I tried to keep the conversation going, but they didn't seem interested. They just looked bored. Maybe they were shy. It was a bit awkward, really – just too quiet for me. In my country, we like a lively conversation. Perhaps they just didn't like me!

7 We had a very stressful meal. After I finished each course, more and more food arrived. I didn't want to be rude, but the more I ate, the more they brought. Some of my colleagues couldn't eat some of the more 'unusual' dishes.

Task

Work in pairs / small groups.

- 1 Each person should prepare a short talk giving some advice for foreign businesspeople coming to your country. The title of the talk is:

'Aspects of my culture that a business visitor might find unusual or difficult.'


Decide where the visitors are coming from and what will be useful for them to know. Look back at some of the earlier sections, and try and include some different aspects of culture. Think about attitudes, habits and behaviour.


- 2 Listen to your partners' talk(s) and ask three questions.
- 3 Write some dos and don'ts for business visitors to your partners' country.

E Discuss these questions.

- 1 Do any of the situations in Exercise D seem familiar to you?
- 2 Which situation would make you feel the most/least comfortable?

F You are going to listen to a talk given by a cross-cultural expert. Food is one example of a visible aspect of culture. What other examples can you think of?

G  CD2.68 Listen to the first part of the talk and check your ideas. What other examples are given?

H  CD2.69 Listen to the second part and answer these questions.

- 1 What does the speaker say about the following, and how they affect doing business in other cultures?
 - a) the structure of society
 - b) building relationships
 - c) decision-making
 - d) time
 - e) status
- 2 What general advice does she give for doing business in other cultures?

