

Do you mind if I...?

Difficulty Level: ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

Many ESL students struggle with the expression "Do you mind if I _____". In this lesson we will learn when to use it and how to respond to it.

We use this expression when we want to ask someone if it is okay to carry out an action, and is a way of being polite.

Examples:

Do you mind if I smoke? (You are asking if the cigarette smoke will bother them. If you just start smoking close to a non-smoker it would be considered rude.)

Excuse me, do you mind if I use this chair? (You need an extra chair at a cafe for someone in your group and the table next to you has an empty chair, just taking the chair would be considered rude.)

Excuse me, do you mind if I open the window? (You are in a restaurant and want some fresh air, just opening the window would again, be considered rude.)

How To Answer "Do you mind if..." Questions:

Think of the expression like this: "Do you mind if..." translates to "Would you be upset if...". Therefore,

Do you mind if I smoke? = Would you be upset if I smoke?

If someone smoking next to you is okay:

No, I don't mind if you smoke. = No I wouldn't be upset if you smoke.

If someone smoking next to you is not okay, because it bothers you:

Yes, I do mind if you smoke. = Yes, I would be upset if you smoke.

So In Simple Terms:

No, I don't mind. = **Go ahead, it's okay!**

Yes, I do mind. = **Please don't, it's not okay!**

Real World Example Questions & Answers:

1.) Excuse me, do you mind if we take your picture?

Go ahead, I don't mind at all.

2.) Do you think the boss will mind if I ask for Friday off?

It's worth a shot, but I think he'll mind. Friday is very busy. We need a lot of staff.

3.) A table for four please, do you mind if we sit by the window?

No I don't mind. Feel free to sit where you like.

4.) Excuse me miss, do you mind if I have a cigarette?

I'm sorry, but actually I do mind. I am 3 months pregnant. I hope you can understand.

5.) Do you mind if I call you sometime? I'd love to take you for dinner.

I do mind. I'm in a serious relationship.

Tips:

1.) This expression is very common. However, it is mostly used between strangers and acquaintances.

2.) If someone just says: "Do you mind?!" with an angry tone. They are likely upset with you. Image being on a bus and the person behind you is speaking very loud and using rude words. It is not uncommon to turn around and say: "Do you mind!" It is used as a way of letting someone know they are being rude and inconsiderate.

3.) Another way of saying "do you mind if...." is by saying "may I...". However, "do you mind if..." is more common.

4.) Try not to answer "do you mind" questions with one-word answers (yes, no) as it can sometimes be confusing.

Quiz:

Fill in the blank with whatever sounds most natural to complete the sentence.

- 1.) "Do you mind if I take some extra cake?" "___ I ___ mind at all. Please, help yourself."
- 2.) "Do you mind ___ I come to work a little bit late? I have a doctors appointment." "I ___ mind, just try to get here as soon as possible."
- 3.) "Do you think ___ will ___ if I borrow his car?" "Of course he ___ mind. You don't even have a license."
- 4.) "Do ___ mind ___ I stop by your place after work to pick up my Nintendo?" "I'll be home all day. ___ ___ ___ at all."

Daily Expressions, Phrasal Verbs & Idioms:

1.) **"Do you mind?":** Is a way to tell someone they are being rude and bothering you. It's not a polite way to ask someone to stop doing something, but sometimes it's justifiable.

"Do you mind?" "Oh I'm sorry I didn't know my music was so loud. "

2.) "Get out of here!": Is a way to call someone a liar, when they say something that is really unbelievable!

"I got a date tonight with a beautiful woman!" "Get out of here Dan!, everyone knows you can't get a date!"