

Unit 6: Apologizing and Regret

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:



- Understand when apology is effective
- Identify formal apology and regret phrases
- Identify informal apology and regret phrases
- Use spoken and written apology and regret phrases

Discussion questions:

1. When was the last time you said sorry for doing something?
2. Have you ever used words to apologize besides sorry? What are they?

Activity 01: Listen to the language they use for apologizing and practice saying the useful phrases. Write down the phrase you hear below. [Audio 6.1](#)

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
 5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____

Activity 02: Listen to [Audio 6.1](#) again. Complete the dialog.

so sorry	really	right	OK
fault	about	fine	too

Paul : Noelia! I am (1)**so sorry**.....! Are you (2)

Noelia: I think so. That was lucky.

Paul : I'm (3) sorry! I didn't see you!

Noelia: That's all (4) I shouldn't have been running.

Paul : No, no. I should have been paying attention.

Noelia: And they teach you not to run inside of the school.

Paul : Still, it was my (5) and I'm sorry.

Noelia : I'm sorry (6) It was both of us. Honestly, it's (7) Don't worry (8) it.



The 9 rules for true apologies

Discussion:

1. Why apologies are needed to be true?
2. What are the effects of faking apologies?
3. What are the advantages of giving true apologies?

1. **A true apology does not include the word “but” (“I’m sorry, but ...”).** “But” automatically cancels out an apology, and nearly always introduces a criticism or excuse.
2. **A true apology keeps the focus on your actions—and not on the other person’s response.** For example, “I’m sorry that you felt hurt by what I said at the party last night,” is not an apology. Try instead, “I’m sorry about what I said at the party last night. It was insensitive and uncalled for.” Own your behavior and apologize for it, period.
3. **A true apology does not overdo.** It stays focused on acknowledging the feelings of the hurt party without overshadowing them with your own pain or remorse.
4. **A true apology doesn’t get caught up in who’s to blame or who “started it.”** Maybe you’re only 14% to blame and maybe the other person provoked you. It can still help to simply say, “I’m sorry for my part in this.”
5. **A true apology needs to be backed by corrective action.** If your sister mentions she’s paid for your last few dinners together, apologize and let her know that you plan to pay for the next few.
6. **A true apology requires that you do your best to avoid a repeat performance.** Obviously, it doesn’t help to apologize with a grand flourish and then continue the very behavior you apologized for. Passionate expressions of remorse are empty if you don’t put sincere effort into ensuring that there is no repeat performance.
7. **A true apology should not serve to silence another person (“I said I’m sorry at least 10 times, so why are you still bringing up the affair?”).** Nor should an apology be used as a quick way to get yourself out of a difficult conversation or dispute.
8. **A true apology should not be offered to make you feel better if it risks making the hurt party feel worse. Not all apologies are welcome.** Making amends may be part of your healing process, but find another way to heal if the other person doesn’t want to hear from you.
9. **A true apology recognizes when “I’m sorry” is not enough.** A serious hurt or betrayal requires to repair work overtime to restore trust.



Activity 03: Read the dialog and practice it with your partner. Then, write a similar one.

John : I thought you said you could finish this report by Tuesday.

Adam : I apologize. Please forgive me.

John : You almost cost me my job. You were a week late with this project.

Adam : Look, I am really sorry. Honestly, it took more research than I first thought.

John : Is it your excuse? You could have told me earlier.

Adam : Please accept my apologies. It was my fault. I will try to make this up to you.

John : Okay, I will give you one more chance.



Activity 04: Match the problems with the ways to apologize.

A			B		
<div>1. You made a mistake that hurt your co-worker’s reputation</div> <div>2. You didn’t respond to a pressing email.</div> <div>3. You were late for a meeting</div> <div>4. You missed a deadline on a team project</div> <div>5. You’re dealing with an unhappy customer</div> <div>6. You regret the words or tone you used</div>			<div>A. I know I missed an important deadline, and I apologize for that. I plan to work on this assignment over the weekend to make up for the lost time.”</div> <div>B. Sue, while I meant what I said when we spoke earlier, I really regret the tone that I used, and I’m sorry for that.”</div> <div>C. I’m very sorry you experienced that. That is not what our customer experience is all about, and I’m going to do everything I can to make things right.”</div> <div>D. “I just realized I missed your email. I am so sorry. I’m going to drop everything to address this. What can I do to help?”</div> <div>E. “I’m very sorry I was late. I won’t let it happen again.”</div> <div>F. I am so sorry this happened. I claim full responsibility, and I will let our boss know that this was my mistake, not yours.”</div>		
1	2	3	4	5	6

Activity 05: Create 5 sentences by using the phrases below. Let's look at the example.

Poor service provided

Late response to
manager/customer

Damage something accidentally

Making Apologies		
I truly apologize for...	Please accept my deepest apologies...	Pardon me for being...
My sincerest apologies for ...	I'd like to apologize for...	Excuse me for interrupting.
I take full responsibility.	I was wrong on that.	I had that wrong.
Please forgive me for...	I'm sorry to have kept you waiting.	Please accept my apologies for...

For example: I truly apologize for forgetting to send you an invitation to the meeting.

Activity 06: Choose the correct answer.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I hope you'll ___ me for being late. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> forgave forgive forgiving I would like to ___ for my bad behavior. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> forgive excusing apologize I am very ___ that I am late but my alarm didn't go off. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> excuse sorry sorrying Please accept my ___ for being late. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> apologis apologies apologizing A ___ for my fault yesterday. I shouldn't treat you that way. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> thousand sorry thousand pardons thousands pardons | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ___ me. Can I tell you something important? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Excuse Sorry Apologies I am ___ to trouble you, but could you turn the music down? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> sorry forgive excuse ___ me. I didn't mean to bump into you. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies Pardoning Pardon There's really no ___ for my behavior last night. I was drunk... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> excuse excising excuse I ___ for my misbehavior last night. Too much was said. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> appologize apologize apologizing |
|--|--|

Activity 07: Use the phrase from activity 6 and do a role play in a group of 3.

Late to a meeting Missed a deadline Dealing with customers Forgot to do something

Discussion: Work in pairs. Ask and answer the questions.

Student A	Student B
1. Who did you email to last week? 2. Do you send a lot of emails? why? why not? 3. Do you send emails to your friend? 4. Did you get any study/course information sent to your email? What was that? 5. Have you ever sent an email to your teacher?	1. Do you like to send emails? Why? Why? not? 2. Have you ever received an email? Who? 3. Do you prefer email or chat? Why? Why not? 4. Do you send photos in your email? 5. Do you love getting emails? Why? Why? not?

Activity 08: Read the line 1-9 from some letters and emails. Which are formal, which are informal? Which are beginnings (B)? Which are endings (E)?



	Informal		Formal	
	B	E	B	E
1. We trust that the arrangement meets your satisfaction.	•	•	•	•
2. Write or, better still, email me soon.	•	•	•	•
3. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.	•	•	•	•
4. I'm sorry I haven't been in touch for so long but you know how it is.	•	•	•	•
5. Take care. I can't wait to see you next week.	•	•	•	•
6. We apologize for the inconvenience.	•	•	•	•
7. Great to hear from you again.	•	•	•	•
8. Dear John, thanks for your email. It is great to hear from you after so long.	•	•	•	•
9. Thank you for your email. Please find the attachment below.	•	•	•	•

Activity 09: Write an email for not being able to join the students' meeting and send it to the Social Affaire team. (Homework)

Activity 10: Circle the phrases you can use in a letter of apology.

- a) I am writing to apologize for ...
- b) What can I say, except I'm sorry that ...
- c) The first thing I would like to know is ...

- d) I owe you an apology ...
- e) I would be grateful if you could offer your advice.
- f) I beg you to forgive me for ...
- g) Thanking you in advance for this information.
- h) Once again, sincerest apologies for ...

Activity 11: Put the words in the correct order to make sentences.

1. writing/ I'm/ to/ say/ sorry/ turning/ I /am/ for/ not/ up /how /yesterday.

2. chance/ Please/ me/ a/ give/ to/ and /apologize.

3. dinner/ Please/ me /and /me /forgive/ with /have/ tonight.

4. phone/ just/ I/ was/ about/ to/ my/ from/ house/ last/ right /leave/ when/ I/ got/ a/ call /my / Aunt /Tina.

Activity 12: Listen and fill in the blanks. [Audio 6.12](#)

happened	about	sorry	chance	phone
turning	out	other	forgive	

Dear Julie,

I'm writing to say how **1** I am for not **2** up yesterday. Please give me a **3** to explain and apologize.

I was just **4** to leave my house last right when I got a **5** call from my Aunt Tina. It turned **6** that my grandmother had fallen and hurt her leg and I had to drive her to the hospital as she had no **7** way of getting there. It was all **8** so quickly that I didn't have time to phone you.

Please **9** me and have dinner with me tonight.

Activity 13: Read this informal apology email to an employee for misbehavior. Label the different parts of the letter with the words in the box.

Conveying Understand	Greeting	Gratitude
Closing remark	Explain and Solve	Accepting responsibility

Dear Brandon, } (1)_____

I am very sorry for my behavior in the staff meeting this morning. I cut you off in the middle of your presentation and criticized your performance in front of the staff. This was not only unprofessional but also simply disrespectful. I let my stress about a personal matter impact my management of the office.

I have always said to you, and to all my employees, that I want this office to be a place where you all feel comfortable sharing ideas with one another. When I yelled at you publicly for a small error in your presentation, I damaged that collaborative environment.

I am taking steps to make sure I do not lose my temper in that way again. I am working to manage my stress so that I do not let it impact the way I interact with my employees. I also know how capable you are of conducting a terrific staff meeting. I would, therefore, love for you to lead the staff meeting next week.

I am very sorry again. Feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely, } (6) _____
Olivia



(2)_____

(3)_____

(4) _____

(5) _____

Activity 14: Write an apology letter to your Social Affaire for being absent from class 3 days.

Start your writing here:

[illegible]


