

Mariko's story

Mariko, who had recently arrived from Japan, was a student at a large U.S. University. Although at first apprehensive, she had become accustomed to the different routines and lifestyles of the United States and was doing quite well in her courses. She had become quite good friends with one of her classmates, Linda, and the two women often had lunch together.

One afternoon, the professor in a class the two women took together asked for two volunteers to come in early the next morning to help code some research data. Linda volunteered and suggested that Mariko might also be willing. Mariko replied hesitantly that she did not think her English was good enough for her to do it and that it would be better to ask for another volunteer. Linda said that Mariko would be quite capable and told the professor that she and Mariko would do the work. The next day, Mariko failed to turn up and Linda was obliged to do all the work herself. The next time she saw Mariko she asked her rather coldly what had happened to her. Mariko apologized and said that she had to study for an exam that day and did not really feel capable of doing the work. Linda exasperatedly asked her why she had not said so clearly at the time Linda committed them to do it. Mariko just looked down and said nothing.

How would you explain Mariko's failure to state explicitly her intentions not to come?

Four options are given, please choose one that seems the most probable explanation for you and explain your choice (why you think this is the most probable and the other options are not)! Try to apply what you have learnt so far! Do not be afraid that you might not pick the right choice. The main point here is how you argue with the help of the knowledge you have acquired.

1. Mariko did not really understand what was asked from her and did not want to show her lack of comprehension in front of the class.
2. Mariko felt it wrong to give direct refusal to the professor.
3. Mariko probably forgot or confused the time but was too embarrassed to admit her silly mistake.
4. Mariko resented Linda's publicly volunteering her without asking her first.