

Making arrangements cultural differences and useful phrases modals practice

What cultural differences might there be connected to making arrangements (fixing meetings, inviting people for dinner, saying no, etc)?

Choose things from below and say what is normal in your country and how that might be similar or different in other countries, using verbs like “should”, “need to”, “must/ have to”, “can”, “shouldn’t”, “mustn’t”, “don’t have to” and “don’t need to”.

You _____ start an email suggesting or changing an arrangement with a line saying that like “I’m writing because I’d like to meet...”

You _____ start an email suggesting or changing an arrangement with a more indirect line just mentioning the meeting or its topic

You _____ use very enthusiastic language when you say yes

You _____ just say okay or that it is convenient when you say yes

You _____ start saying no with positive phrases similar to when you say yes, then say something like “but”

You _____ apologise when you say no

You _____ sound really unhappy/ disappointed that you have to say no

You _____ just say you are busy, you have another arrangement or it is not convenient, without giving details when you say no

You _____ give very detailed explanations of why when you have to say no

You _____ use future forms which show that your other arrangements are (really) fixed when you say no

You _____ say no by suggesting other times to meet

You _____ mention the next contact when you say goodbye

Put a tick next to the ones above which are probably a good idea in English. In some situations there is more than one possibility.

Discuss as a class, then brainstorm at least one phrase for all of the ones above which are usually necessary in English, then check with the mixed up answers under the fold.

OR

Check your answers above with the mixed up answers below. The ones which aren’t there are not good ideas.

Mixed answers

I'd love to.
That sounds great.
That's perfect.

I'd love to, but...
That would have been great, but...
That would have been perfect. However,...

I'm... ing
I will be... ing

I'm afraid I can't make it then.
I'm sorry but...

I'm meeting my boss at exactly that time.
I have a business trip to Osaka and won't be back until lunchtime.

I'm writing to you about our meeting next week.
I'm writing to you in connection with my visit to New York.
I'm writing to you because I will be visiting New York next week.

If possible, I'd prefer...
If you don't mind, ...would be better for me.

Oh, it's a shame, but...
Ahh. It's a real pity, but...
Unfortunately,...

See you then.
See you on Monday.
I look forward to seeing you...

Suggested answers**Start an email suggesting an arrangement with a more indirect line just mentioning the meeting or its topic**

I'm writing to you about our meeting next week.

I'm writing to you in connection with my visit to New York.

I'm writing to you because I will be visiting New York next week.

Use very enthusiastic language when you say yes

I'd love to.

That sounds great.

That's perfect.

Start saying no with positive phrases similar to when you say yes, then say something like "but"

I'd love to, but...

That would have been great, but...

That would have been perfect. However,...

Apologise when you say no

I'm afraid I can't make it then.

I'm sorry but...

NOT I'm afraid but... X

Sound really unhappy/ disappointed that you have to say no

Oh, it's a shame, but...

Ahh. It's a real pity, but...

Unfortunately,...

Give very detailed explanations of why when you have to say no

I'm meeting my boss at exactly that time.

I have a business trip to Osaka and won't be back until lunchtime.

Use future forms which show that your other arrangements are (really) fixed when you say no

I'm... ing

I will be... ing

NOT I will... X

NOT I'm going to... X

Say no by suggesting other times to meet

If possible, I'd prefer...

If you don't mind, ...would be better for me.

Mention the next contact when you say goodbye

See you then.

See you on Monday.

I look forward to seeing you...

Put modal verbs into the making arrangements phrases below

I _____ like to meet next week if you are available then.

I _____ be very happy to meet you at 7 o'clock, if that is convenient with you.

That's fine. I _____ just move my other meeting to the afternoon.

I _____ love to!

I _____ love to, but...

I _____ prefer Sunday, if you are free then.

I'm afraid I _____ make it then.

_____ we possibly reschedule the meeting?