

Match the apology and the situation

Instructions for teachers

Cut up the cards so that the situations (in italics) are still together in two columns but there are individual language cards. Students look at just the situations and brainstorm their own ideas for apologies for each one. They are then given the language cards to match to the situations. Different matches are possible, but there is probably only one way of matching them all. Give them each an uncut version to check their answers with, then do the activities at the bottom.

Cards to cut up/ Suggested answers

<i>You kept someone who is phoning you on hold for a long time</i>	"Sorry to keep you waiting."	<i>You are phoning someone again to ask another question</i>	"Sorry to bother you again, but there's one more thing I don't understand"
<i>You have arrived late at a restaurant</i>	"Sorry I'm late. Have you been waiting long?"	<i>You need someone to move so you can get off the train.</i>	"Excuse me, can I just..."
<i>You have spilt someone's drink</i>	"I'm terribly sorry. Let me buy you another one."	<i>You spilled your drink on your own clothes</i>	"Whoops."
<i>A customer has just shown you a dirty spoon.</i>	"I'm sorry sir; I'll bring you a clean one right away."	<i>A waiter brought you the wrong food.</i>	"I'm sorry, but this isn't what I ordered."
<i>You have to tell someone their flight has been cancelled</i>	"I regret to inform you that there has been a problem."	<i>You accidentally burp after a big meal</i>	"Pardon me!"
<i>You didn't hear someone</i>	"Pardon?"	<i>You are trying to stop a stranger to ask for directions.</i>	"Excuse me. Can you help me?"



<i>Your wife has found out about your girlfriend</i>	<i>"There is no excuse for my actions."</i>	<i>You are a child who has broken someone's window</i>	<i>"I'll never do it again, I promise!"</i>
<i>You are telling someone they are losing their job.</i>	<i>"I'm sorry to have to tell you that..."</i>	<i>You have eaten your friend's chocolates</i>	<i>"I'm so sorry. I didn't realise they were yours."</i>
<i>You behaved badly when you were drunk last night.</i>	<i>"I'm afraid I'd had a little too much."</i>	<i>You have just blown your nose in front of someone</i>	<i>"Sorry. I think I've caught a cold."</i>
<i>Someone enters while you are on the phone</i>	<i>"Sorry, I'll just be a minute."</i>	<i>You see someone smoking where they shouldn't</i>	<i>"I'm afraid that isn't allowed here."</i>
<i>Someone is speaking a language you don't know</i>	<i>"I'm sorry. I can't understand what you are saying."</i>	<i>You didn't follow someone's instructions</i>	<i>"I'm sorry, I misunderstood."</i>

Language analysis

What things often follow apologies?

Find examples of those things above.

Practice activities

Use the phrases on the cards to start longer conversations.

Improvise your own conversations about the topics on the situation cards (without looking at the phrases on the other cards until you have finished).