

Thanking cultural differences and useful phrases

Label the descriptions on the next page with any countries where you know that to be true, e.g. with “Japan” if that is true in that country. Leave any which you are not sure about blank.

Share two ideas for countries and matching descriptions, and see if other groups put the same countries for that point, put a different country for that point, and/ or put the same country for other points.

Ask about any which you aren’t sure about, don’t understand, are not sure how to use the phrases from, etc, discussing which countries that point might be true in each time.

Discuss any which you know are different in different countries.

Without looking at that previous page, fill the gaps on the Brainstorming Stage worksheet with phrases you could use in English if you wanted to do those things. Phrases not on the previous worksheet may also be possible.

Check with the previous worksheet. Other phrases are possible, so please check if you wrote something different.

Compete to say the phrases as politely as you can.

Use phrases from the worksheets as you roleplay thanking people.

There are casual/ friendly ways of thanking people which are more common than the medium-formality “Thank you” in everyday speech (“Thanks”, “Cheers”, “Ta”, etc)

Formal/ polite thanking phrases tend to be longer and/ include longer words than more casual phrases (“We really appreciate...”, “We are very grateful for...”, “We would like to thank you for...”, “We would like to express our appreciation for...”, etc)

Thanking phrases are often made stronger by adding words (“Thanks a lot for...”, “Thanks a million for...”, “Thank you so much for...”, etc)

You can also make thanks stronger by telling people how fantastic they are and/ or their actions are (“You’re a total star”, “You’re an absolute hero”, “You’re a life saver”, “That was very... of you”, “I couldn’t have done it without you”, etc)

You can thank someone by saying that they did too much (“You really shouldn’t have”, “You really didn’t need to go to all that trouble”, “I can’t thank you enough for...”, etc)

You have to be careful with your intonation when thanking strongly, as the wrong tone of voice can sound sarcastic, as if you are saying “Thanks for nothing”

There is a special phrase when actually they couldn’t help you (“Thanks anyway”, etc)

A common thanking tactic is to talk about paying them back (“I’ll do the same for you someday”, “I owe you one”, “How can I ever make this up to you?”, etc)

It’s fairly common to thank someone again at the end of the conversation, email, etc (“Thanks again for...”, “As I said, thanks so much for...”, etc)

“Thank you...” phrases at the end of emails can have meanings/ functions such as ending a request, ending instructions such as a new rule, and ending bad news or an apology (“Thank you in advance”/ “Thanks”/ “Cheers”, “Thank you for your cooperation”/ “Thank you”/ “Thanks”, “Thank you for your understanding”/ “Thank you for your patience”, etc)

There are standard replies to thanks (“You’re welcome”, etc). Standard replies to thanks often minimise the thing that they are being thanked for (“Not at all”, “No worries”, “No problem”, “Don’t mention it”, “It was no trouble at all”, “It was the least I could do”, “There’s no need to thank me, I was just doing my job”, etc)

There are a few standard responses to thanks that include words connected to happiness (“It was my pleasure”, “I’m glad you liked it”, “Happy to help”, “Glad I could help”, etc)

In real life, it is more common and often better to follow up thanks with thanking them back (“Thanks for calling” after “Thanks for your help”, “Thanks for inviting us” after “Thanks for coming”, “No, no, no, thank YOU” after “Thank you”, etc)

Responding to thanks phrases are usually different from responding to apologies phrases (the latter including “Never mind”, “Forget about it”, “That’s all right”, and “Don’t worry”)

Brainstorming stage

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