



Thanking in English

A: Thanking responses matching

Teacher's instructions: Photocopy and cut up the two pages so that the left hand side remains as columns and the right hand side is individual cards. Alternatively, the ones on the right could be left in groups of two or three to make it something like a jigsaw and therefore easier to put together. Give out only the left hand column from both pages first, and let students discuss possible responses. Then give out the cards from the right hand column for them to match up. When they think they have finished, give out photocopies of the worksheet for them to check their answers with. There might be other possible matches, but there is hopefully only one way of matching them all up.

"Thanks for helping me tidy up."	"It was really no trouble at all. I actually enjoy washing up. In fact, I'd happily do it every day."
"Are you okay?"	"Much better, thanks for asking."
"I was worried about you."	"I'm fine, but thank you for your concern."
"Thank you for coming all this way."	"It really is no problem at all. It's nice to get out of the office."
"Thanks for your patience."	"Thank you for all your efforts trying to get it sorted out."
"Thank you for coming."	"Thanks for inviting me."
"I've photocopied last week's notes for you."	"Thank you sooooo much, that's a great help."
"I was going to help but they've given me another project."	"Okay. Thanks anyway."
"Thank you so much for your help while I was in hospital."	"Don't be silly, it was the least I could do."
"Here's your beer."	"Ta. I'll get you one later."
"Thanks for getting the milk and bread."	"No worries, I go to the shops every Saturday anyway, so I can do it every weekend if you like. Perhaps you can do the same for me on a weekday sometime."



"Thanks, I couldn't have done it without you. I'll buy dinner."	"There's really no need, I was just happy to be of help."
"I bought you something for your birthday."	"Oh, you shouldn't have!"
"I'd also like to thank you, Sarah, for being such a great friend."	"Stop it, you're embarrassing me!"
"Here are the keys to my car."	"Thanks. I'll get them back to you by Friday."
"I've found a copy of that CD you've been looking for."	"No? Really? You're a star!"
"I had a great time. Thanks for inviting me."	"I'm glad you enjoyed it."
"Thank you so much for rescuing my cat from the tree."	"No need to thank me, madam. Just doing my job."
"Would you like to come for a drink later on?"	"Thanks for the invitation, but..."
"Here's your hammer back. Thanks for lending it to me."	"Thanks for getting it back to me so quickly."
"Thanks for having me."	"It's been our pleasure. You must come and stay again soon."
"Thanks. That's just what I needed after that walk."	"Would you like another?"
"There's no need to apologise, it could happen to anyone."	"Thanks for your understanding."
"Would you like me to carry that for you?"	"That would be a great help. Thanks."
"Can I help you?"	"No thanks, I'm just looking."
"Would you like a cup of tea?"	"Thanks for the offer, but I've just had one."



B: Language brainstorming and analysis

From your own knowledge and the phrases you looked at before, discuss the questions below:

What are more informal ways of saying “Thank you”?

What are more formal ways of saying “Thank you”?

What words can you add to “Thank you” and its more formal and informal versions to make longer sentences?

Which examples of thanking on the previous worksheet use the structure Thanks + Reason + Future action? Could you add that structure to any of the other examples on the last two pages?

What phrases are often used to reply to “Thank you”?

Which less generally used phrases above mean the same thing/ are used in the same way?

Which replies to thanks use the structure Fixed phrase + Reason why thanks not needed + Offer of future help and/or Ways of repayment? Could you add that to any of the other examples?

What thanking sentences can you use in phrases for starting and ending business phone calls and emails?

In which situations are these phrases used?

- Thanks anyway
- Thanks again
- Thanks for asking
- Thanks for your concern
- You're a star/ a hero/ a lifesaver
- You shouldn't have
- Thanks for your understanding
- Thanks for having me
- Thanks for the offer
- Thanks in advance



C: Roleplays

Roleplay some of the following situations with at least four lines per conversation, paying attention to how and how often you say thank you.

- Someone has helped you carry a heavy box.
- You've spent the weekend on someone's yacht.
- Someone has helped you write a report.
- An ex-colleague invites you to a restaurant and pays the bill
- You are receiving presents from a few friends, one at a time.
- Someone sent you a birthday message. This is the first time since then that you've spoken
- Buy two or three things in a newsagent's (e.g. cigarettes, a magazine and some chewing gum)
- Phone reception and ask to speak to someone. They are not there.
- You are leaving your host family to get a taxi to the airport to fly home.
- You are leaving the company today. Go round and talk to your colleagues.
- Politely refuse all your partner's offers of help
- Your partner helped you when you were sick and is now asking after your health

D: Common errors in thanking language

What is wrong with each of the lines below?

- Thanks for the lovely meal – Thanks for eating it x
- Thanks for carrying the box for me – It was my pleasure x
- Thanks for coming here to see me today – You're welcome x
- Thanks for coming here to see me today – Thanks for having me x
- Cheers very much x
- I managed to find you a vase to replace the one from your set that got broken – Sorry. That's so kind x
- I am very gratitude x
- Thank you a lot x

These phrases can only be used in very particular situations and are often used wrong by language learners? What are the correct situations?

- Thank you for your cooperation.
- Thank you for continuing to do business with us.
- Thank you for your kind attention.

What are the differences between these phrases?

- Thanks in advance/ Thanks for your cooperation
- Thanks in advance for.../ Thanks for...
- Thanks for your hospitality/ Thanks for having me
- Thanks for your recommendation/ Thanks for your recommendation, but...
- Thank you. That's so thoughtful./ Thank you. That's very kind

Suggested answers

More informal ways of saying “Thank you”

Thanks/ Cheers/ Ta/ I owe you one/ You're a star/ You're a lifesaver

More formal ways of saying “Thank you”

I am very grateful for.../ I would like to express my gratitude for.../ Please accept my thanks for...

Words can you add to make longer sentences

Thank you so much/ Thank you very much/ I would like to thank you for../ Thank you for.../ I really can't thank you enough for.../ Thanks a lot/ Thanks for.../ Thanks again/ Thanks anyway/ Cheers for.../ You're an absolute star./ You're a real lifesaver./ You're a total hero.

Thanks + Reason + Future action

Thanks, I couldn't have done it without you. I'll buy dinner.

Typical replies

You're (very) welcome/ Not at all/ (It was) no problem. (Anytime)./ Don't mention it/ (It was) my pleasure/ No worries/ It was really no trouble (at all)./ No, no, no. Thank you/ It was the least I could do

Fixed phrase + Reason why thanks not needed + Offer of future help and/or Ways of repayment

No worries, I go to the shops every Saturday anyway, so I can do it every weekend if you like. Perhaps you can do the same for me on a weekday sometime.

Thanking phrases for starting and ending business phone calls

Thank you for calling.../ Thanks for your call./ Thanks for getting back to me so quickly.

Thanking phrases for starting and ending business emails

Thank you for your email (yesterday)/ Thanks for making the time to meet me yesterday/ Thank you for your interest in our company/ Thanks again/ Thanks in advance

In which situations are these phrases used?

- Thanks anyway – When they can't help
- Thanks again – When you thanked them for the same thing earlier in the conversation/ email
- Thanks for asking – When refusing an invitation or when someone asks after your health
- Thanks for your concern – When someone asks about your health
- You're a star/ a hero/ a lifesaver – When someone really helps you
- You shouldn't have – When receiving gifts
- Thanks for your understanding – When they respond to your rejection
- Thanks for having me – After staying at someone's house (although others use it for hospitality more generally)
- Thanks for the offer – After turning down an offer of help or an invitation



- Thanks in advance – After asking someone to do something for you

Thanking errors

- Thanks for the lovely meal – Thanks for eating it x – Should be “I’m glad you enjoyed it”, although this is possible as a joke
- Thanks for carrying the box for me – It was my pleasure x – It can’t be a pleasure to carry a box!
- Thanks for coming here to see me today – You’re welcome x – You should also thank them
- Thanks for coming here to see me today – Thanks for having me x – Only used for hospitality, not business meetings
- Cheers very much x – Perhaps because it comes from the word for toasts, you can’t add words to cheers to make it stronger
- I managed to find you a vase to replace the one from your set that got broken – Sorry. That’s so kind x – Sorry never means thank you in English
- I am very gratitude x – Gratitude is a noun.
- Thank you a lot x – The levels of formality don’t match. Should be “Thanks a lot” or “Thank you very/ so much”

What are the correct situations?

- Thank you for your cooperation. – After a polite command or explain rules
- Thank you for continuing to do business with us. – Only usually used after they have complained or in set letters
- Thank you for your kind attention. – Only usually used in sales letters, i.e. junk mail

What are the differences?

- Thanks in advance/ Thanks for your cooperation – The former is much more general and more common
- Thanks in advance for.../ Thanks for... - The latter is only used for things that have already happened
- Thanks for your hospitality/ Thanks for having me – The former is more general
- Thanks for your recommendation/ Thanks for your recommendation, but... - The latter is a rejection
- Thank you. That’s so thoughtful./ Thank you. That’s very kind – The latter is more general