

Activity Type

Speaking Activity:
matching, identifying,
responding to statements
and questions, writing
sentences (pair work)

Focus

Making excuses

Aim

To practice making
excuses in response to
requests, invitations and
accusations.

Preparation

Make one copy of the two
worksheets for each pair
of students.

Level

Intermediate (B1)

Time

25 minutes

Introduction

In this making excuses activity, students use a variety of phrases to make excuses in response to requests, invitations and accusations.

Procedure

Divide the students into pairs (Student A and B).

Give each student a corresponding worksheet.

First, students match requests, invitations and accusations with excuses.

Exercise A - Answer key

1. j 2. e 3. a 4. i 5. b 6. c 7. h 8. d 9. g 10. f

Students then underline the phrases from the first exercise that are used to make excuses.

Exercise B - Answer key

Sorry, I...
Oh, I would, but...
Sorry, I can't. I...
I'm sorry. I...
I'd be happy to, but...
I'd love to help, but...

Elicit other possible phrases for making excuses from the students, e.g. 'Actually, I can't right now because...'

Next, in pairs, students take turns reading requests, invitations and accusations to their partner, who gives a suitable excuse for each one.

Students then write their partner's excuse in the space provided.

Finally, review the excuses the students gave for each item as a class.

Student A
A. Match the requests, invitations and accusations with the excuses.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. You're late for class! | a. Sorry, I'm married. |
| 2. Can you translate this sentence? | b. Oh, I would, but I'm busy tomorrow. |
| 3. Would you like to go on a date with me? | c. Sorry, I can't. I'm not from around here. |
| 4. Could you help me carry these boxes? | d. I'm sorry. They were all sold out. |
| 5. Would you like to meet me tomorrow? | e. I'd be happy to, but I don't speak Spanish. |
| 6. Can you direct me to the station? | f. Sorry, I thought it was mine. |
| 7. You didn't hang up the clothes outside! | g. I'm sorry. I thought it was next week. |
| 8. You didn't get any pies! | h. Sorry, I thought it was going to rain. |
| 9. You forgot my birthday! | i. I'd love to help, but I hurt my back. |
| 10. You've been using my toothbrush! | j. Sorry, my alarm didn't go off. |

B. Underline the phrases above that are used to make excuses.

C. In pairs, take turns reading the requests, invitations and accusations to your partner, who makes a suitable excuse for each one. Write their excuses in the spaces provided.

Requests, Invitations and Accusations
Excuses

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. You didn't water the plants. They're all dead! | ..... |
| 2. Would you like to go to the cinema with me? | ..... |
| 3. You missed the last three English classes! | ..... |
| 4. You didn't eat the dinner I made for you! | ..... |
| 5. You broke the window with your ball! | ..... |
| 6. You ate all the biscuits! | ..... |
| 7. Can you give me a lift to work tomorrow? | ..... |
| 8. There's a hole in the shirt you borrowed. | ..... |
| 9. It's your turn to do the dishes. | ..... |
| 10. You've used all the hot water! | ..... |
| 11. Could you buy some milk from the shop? | ..... |
| 12. Can I borrow your phone? | ..... |

Student B
A. Match the requests, invitations and accusations with the excuses.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. You're late for class! | a. Sorry, I'm married. |
| 2. Can you translate this sentence? | b. Oh, I would, but I'm busy tomorrow. |
| 3. Would you like to go on a date with me? | c. Sorry, I can't. I'm not from around here. |
| 4. Could you help me carry these boxes? | d. I'm sorry. They were all sold out. |
| 5. Would you like to meet me tomorrow? | e. I'd be happy to, but I don't speak Spanish. |
| 6. Can you direct me to the station? | f. Sorry, I thought it was mine. |
| 7. You didn't hang up the clothes outside! | g. I'm sorry. I thought it was next week. |
| 8. You didn't get any pies! | h. Sorry, I thought it was going to rain. |
| 9. You forgot my birthday! | i. I'd love to help, but I hurt my back. |
| 10. You've been using my toothbrush! | j. Sorry, my alarm didn't go off. |

B. Underline the phrases above that are used to make excuses.

C. In pairs, take turns reading the requests, invitations and accusations to your partner, who makes a suitable excuse for each one. Write their excuses in the spaces provided.

Requests, Invitations and Accusations
Excuses

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. You haven't made your bed yet! | ..... |
| 2. You borrowed my car without asking! | ..... |
| 3. You were supposed to do the ironing. | ..... |
| 4. You've left the kitchen in a mess! | ..... |
| 5. Can you help me carry this heavy suitcase? | ..... |
| 6. Would you like to go for a walk with me? | ..... |
| 7. You didn't pay the phone bill. | ..... |
| 8. You're two hours late! | ..... |
| 9. You didn't show up for work yesterday! | ..... |
| 10. Can you wash the car for me? | ..... |
| 11. Could you take the dog for a walk? | ..... |
| 12. Can I borrow some money? | ..... |