

ETIQUETTE AT THE OFFICE.- Session 2.- Rules of etiquette.

Situation

Read the text and listen to the situation.



It's lunchtime and the girls have a few minutes to eat and **have a chat**.

Lourdes: Hi, **Susana!** How 's everything?

Susana: Not too bad, how are you?

Lourdes: Great, thanks. Look, that conversation I had with Michael has made me think. You know that here in the UK it's very important to apologise when you've done something wrong.

Susana: Sure, everybody knows that.

Lourdes: Well, yes, but perhaps we don't do that as often as we should, because things are different in Spain.

Susana: OK, **Lourdes**, **what's your point?**

Lourdes: **What I mean is that** we need to be familiar with the rules of etiquette in this country. Etiquette is very important, especially in the office, you know?

Susana: **I couldn't agree more.** What do you suggest we do? Maybe ask somebody?

Lourdes: That's a good idea, but I thought we could start by reading this book about business etiquette I **borrowed** from the library. We might find out that we don't know that much about etiquette at the office.

Susana: Let's see. Hmm... It says here that in the UK punctuality is very important in business situations. If you know that you will be late, it is a good idea to phone and offer your apologies.

Lourdes: Wow, we should take that into account. Any other interesting pieces of information?

Susana: Yes, listen to this: "When we meet somebody in a business situation, a firm handshake is the norm. Maintain eye contact during the greeting but avoid anything prolonged and keep a few **feet** of personal space."

Lourdes: "Personal space"? That's something I would never have thought about.

Susana: That's true. We are learning so much... and I think we still have lots to learn in the future.

Lourdes: I agree: this stuff is fascinating, but there are so many rules! We'll never be able to work in the UK **unless** we learn all these rules!

Susana: Don't worry, we'll **work something out**.



Now it's your turn

Write in the forum:

- ✓ Do you know the rules of etiquette in your country?
- ✓ Are there many rules concerning working in an office?
- ✓ Do you think etiquette is important in a business context?

Submit

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1.- What to say.

Quotation

"Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. If you have that awareness, you have good manners, no matter what fork you use."

Emily Post

Situation

The girls decide to make a list of office etiquette rules. This is what they come up with:

- ✓ Be punctual.
- ✓ Dress appropriately.
- ✓ Don't abuse the flexibility they give you.
- ✓ Be polite to everyone.
- ✓ Don't do too many personal things on the company's time (personal phone calls, email, etc.).
- ✓ Call if you can't come or are going to be late.
- ✓ Respect colleagues' privacy.



Now it's your turn

Give your opinion in the forum:

- ✓ What do you think about the previous list?
- ✓ Are there any other rules you can think of?

1.1.- Office etiquette.

There are proper ways to behave in any social situation. Proper etiquette is to be followed when dining out, **attending** a wedding or funeral, giving gifts and even saying "thank you." Did you know there's also proper etiquette to be followed when working in an office? Below are some ways you can practice good office etiquette.



1. If you show up to work every day with a **wrinkled** shirt, **uncombed** hair or dirty fingernails, it will be noticed. Who do you think your supervisor is going to choose to represent the company on a business trip or in a meeting? The person wearing **sneakers** and T-shirt, or a co-worker who always shows up for work with **well-groomed** features and freshly ironed clothes?
2. Your desk or cubicle should be an extension of yourself. If it's **messy** and **cluttered**, you'll probably have difficulty locating necessary items. In addition, your colleagues will not regard you in a favourable light **due to** the untidiness of your workspace.
3. If you're late on a regular basis, people notice. If you have trouble leaving the house on time, or seem to always be missing connections, perhaps you should wake up earlier to remedy the situation. The same is true for business meetings. It is never a good idea to arrive late for a business meeting.
4. There's a saying, "you never get a second chance to make a good first impression." When meeting people for the first time, it's good practice to use eye contact and a firm handshake and tell the other person how nice it is to meet him or her. If you already know the person, but others in your **environment** don't, it's necessary to make the proper introductions.
5. Whether in a meeting, on the phone or sitting in a co-worker's office, pay attention. It's bad manners to be caught with your mind **wandering** or to have no clue as to what actually took place. Be a good listener and take notes. Don't interrupt unless you absolutely have to.
6. Just as they would resent someone who's constantly late, co-workers also have **issues** with those who spend most of their time on personal phone calls. Not only are they **disruptive**, but it's unfair to have pleasant chats while those around you are working. It's a good idea to keep personal phone calls to a minimum and to keep cell phones turned off during business hours.

Adapted from <http://www.essortment.com/etiquette-tips-office-etiquette-36837.html>



Now it's your turn

Match the paragraphs with the most suitable title.

Matching exercise

| Title | Match | Paragraph |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| The greeting. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| Pay attention to your appearance. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| Be on time. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Pay attention. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Telephone etiquette. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Keep your desk tidy. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 |

Submit

2.- How to say it: Modal verbs for deduction.

Think about it

Think about the following situation: Kevin is 10 years old.

- ✓ *It's 10 am. Kevin must be at school.*
- ✓ *It's 11.30 am. Kevin might be in the middle of his Spanish lesson.*
- ✓ *It's 7 pm. Kevin can't be at school.*

What is the difference between the previous sentences?



We can use these modal verbs (also called modals of probability, speculation or certainty) when we want to make a guess about something. We choose the verb depending on how sure we are.

We use **may**, **might** or **could** to say that something is possible or probable in the present or in the future.

- ✓ **May** (more probable).
 - *Where is Kurt? He may be at home or he might be at the sports pavilion.*
- ✓ **Might** (the possibility is quite remote).
 - *I might study Medicine next year, but I don't think I will.*
- ✓ **Could** (less probable, too).
 - *Where is Jane? I don't know, she could be at school.* (Might is also possible).
- ✓ **Must** is used in an affirmative sentence to say that we are sure about something.
 - *My students get very high marks. They must study very hard.* (I am sure that they are studying a lot).
 - *The lights are on. Someone must be in.* (I am sure there is someone in the house).
- ✓ **Can't** is used in negative sentences to say that something is impossible.
 - *They can't be brothers. They are completely different.* (It is impossible that they are brothers).
 - *They can't be in, as the lights are off.* (It is impossible that there is someone in the house).
- ✓ When talking about the present there is a line that goes from very probable to almost impossible. For example: I am waiting for Julie with another friend, David.
 - I ask: *"Where is Julie?"*
 - David guesses:
 - *She must be on the bus.* (About 95% possible).
 - *She may be in the wrong room.* (About 50% possible).
 - *She might come soon.* (About 30% possible).
 - *She could be lost.* (About 30% possible).
 - *She can't be at home.* (About 5% possible).
- ✓ Notice that the opposite of **must** is **can't** in this case.

Translation

[Click here to read the Spanish translation.](#)

2.1.- Now you put it into practice (I).

Think about it

Read the sentences. Make deductions using "can't", "could" and "must".

1. Annie goes to school from 9 am. to 2 pm. It's 1:30 pm. Where's Annie?
2. Ron likes playing soccer on Saturday mornings. It's Saturday afternoon. What's Ron doing?
3. Joanna never leaves her house before eating breakfast. Today she's running late. What's she doing?
4. Pedro never skips work. Today is the final game of the Soccer World Cup. Where's Pedro?
5. Rhonda and Jackie love watching movies. Their favourite movies are comedies, but they don't like animated movies very much. Today, a new 3D animated movie is released. What are they doing?



Now it's your turn

Look at the following phrases and use one of the modal verbs in brackets to fill the gaps.

1. They (may/must) be away for the weekend but I'm not sure.
2. He (can/could) be French, judging by his accent.
3. With luck, tomorrow (can't/could) be a sunny day.
4. You (can/might) be right but I'm going to check anyway.
5. The exam (can't/might) be easy. You never know.
6. It (may/can't) be true about a sauropod dinosaur living in Lake Télé in the Congo. It's impossible.
7. Dave reckons she's from the States but I think she (can't/might) be from Scandinavia.
8. I (can't/might) go to the party but I'm not sure yet.
9. This (must/could) be the right answer but we'll have to check with your teacher to make sure.
10. She's been revising 10 hours a day for 3 weeks. She (could/must) be exhausted.
11. Nobody's answering. They (can't/must) be out.
12. He (can't/may) be from the USA. He doesn't speak English.

2.2.- Clauses of reason.

Clauses of reason are used when we want to express the reason why we do something. They are introduced with: **because, as, since, owing to, due to, because of.**

- ✓ **Because, since, as:** They mean "porque" and are usually placed in the middle of a sentence. They are followed by a sentence.
 - *Shakira could not sing because/as/since she was ill.*
- ✓ **Since, As:** When they are placed at the beginning of the sentence, they mean "como".
 - *Since/as it was raining, we didn't go out.*
 - *As/since she fell off her bike, she had to go and see the doctor.*
- ✓ Remember the structure: **Because/since/as + clause.**
- ✓ **Because of / Owing to / Due to:** They mean "a causa de, debido a". They are always followed by a noun.
 - *Shakira could not sing because of her illness.*
 - *We didn't go out due to the rain.*
- ✓ These sentences are **incorrect:**
 - *She could not sing because her illness.*
 - *She could not sing because of she was ill.*
- ✓ Remember the structure: **Because of/due to/owing to + noun.**



Translation

[Click here if you want to read the Spanish translation.](#)

2.3.- Clauses of result.

These clauses are used when we want to express the result or consequence of an action. These sentences start explaining the reason and they give the result in the end. Result clauses are normally introduced with: **so**, **consequently**, **for this reason**, **as a result**, **therefore**.



- ✓ We use "**so**" and "**consequently**" to join two clauses. We also use "**and therefore**" and "**and as a result**" to join two clauses.
 - *Shakira was ill, so she could not sing.*
 - *We all heard of his accident and as a result we didn't go out.*
- ✓ We use **therefore** and **as a result** at the beginning of a new sentence.
 - *We are not interested in those articles. Therefore, we are not going to order any of them.*
 - *She fell off her bike. As a result, she had to go to hospital.*
- ✓ We also use **so + adjective + that** or **such + (adj) (a) noun + that**, when we speak about the result of something.
 - **So + adjective + that:**
 - *The exam was so easy that everybody passed it.*
 - *It was so cold that nobody went out.*
 - **Such + (adj) (a) noun + that:**
 - *It was such a difficult exam that nobody passed it.*
 - *He is such a good teacher that all his students want to go to his classes.*
- ✓ When the noun is plural or uncountable, we don't use the article "a".
 - *They were such beautiful flowers that I couldn't cut them.*
 - *They were carrying such heavy luggage that they had to hire two taxis.*

Translation

[Click here to read the Spanish translation.](#)

2.4.- Now let's put it into practice (II).

Let's do some exercises on reason and result clauses. This should not be too difficult for you. Let us give it a try.



Now it's your turn

Fill in the blanks with "because, because of".



1. The flight was delayed the fog.
2. They have travelled to Ireland they wanted to know Oscar Wilde's country.
3. She had to stay in bed her injured leg.
4. We didn't eat anything we had already had dinner.
5. My students were really happy their good results.

Submit



Now it's your turn

Fill in the blanks with "because, since, so, therefore, because of".

1. it was a lovely day, we went for a swim in the river.
2. We missed the beginning of the show we were really late.
3. She didn't get the job her appearance.
4. I didn't like the film, I left the cinema before it had finished.
5. The main road was closed because of some road works. , we had to take a secondary road.

Submit



Now it's your turn

Fill in the blanks with "so or such (a)".

1. He is lazy that he will fail all his exams.
2. These are disgusting vegetables that I cannot eat any of them.
3. The car was dirty that it smelled terrible.
4. It was hot evening that we couldn't work outside.
5. The room was crowded that we could not have any cake.
6. He is nice man that all girls want to go out with him.

Submit

Think about it

Join these sentences using "so or such (a)". Make the necessary changes.

1. The dog was very big. Everyone was frightened.
2. Their party was really noisy. Nobody could sleep.
3. It was a terrible storm. It tore down several trees on the road.
4. She has pretty eyes. Everybody looks at her.
5. They are very good parents. Their children gave them lots of presents at Christmas.
6. They had a terrible flight. They will not fly with that airline again.

3.- Words you need: Business culture.

A **collocation** is a particular combination of words, that is, two or more words that often go together. These combinations just sound "right" to native speakers, who use them all the time. Let's take a look at some collocations with culture:

- ✔ **Canteen culture:** the attitudes of some members of an organization who are considered to be sexist and racist, which is not always approved by the leaders of the organization.
- ✔ **Company or corporate culture:** the shared values and practices of the employees of a particular company. The way a company works.
- ✔ **Long-hours culture:** the way in which some workers feel they are expected to work much longer hours than they are paid to do.
- ✔ **Macho culture:** ideas and attitudes typically associated with men: physical strength, aggressiveness, etc.



Dress code: Dress codes are written and sometimes unwritten rules with regards to clothing. Let's see what expressions we can use to talk about dress codes.

Dress code

| ENGLISH | SPANISH |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Business suit. | Traje (formal, para ir a la oficina). |
| Casual Fridays / dress-down Fridays. | En algunas empresas, los viernes se viste de manera informal. |
| You can dress casually. | Vestir de manera informal. |
| You can dress formally. | Vestir de manera formal. |
| Smart casual. | Atuendo informal, pero pulcro y apropiado. Por ejemplo, para los hombres podría ser una camisa sin corbata, zapatos y pantalones de algodón. |



Now it's your turn

Which word combination describes each of the following?

Matching exercise

| Sentences | Match | Word combination |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| In the past very few women were promoted in this company. Now things are beginning to change. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Canteen culture. |
| Although a member of the team, he didn't like to participate in the sexist conversations by the coffee machine. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Company or corporate culture. |
| Employees complain that their health and productivity will decline if they continue working for 10 hours every day. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Dress code. |
| In our company, employees are required to wear uniforms. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Long-hours culture. |
| Our company is very customer-focused. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Macho culture. |

Submit

3.1.- Now you put it into practice (III).



Text summary



Now it's your turn

Are the following sentences true or false?



The way you dress shows respect for your managers.

- True.
 False.

A dress code robs you of your personal style.

- True.
 False.

Business casual includes jeans and T-shirts.

- True.
 False.

For men, business casual can include a tie.

- True.
 False.

For women, business casual doesn't include high heels.

- True.
 False.



Now it's your turn

Write in the forum:

In your country, how do people dress at work? Do any companies have dress-down days? What are the advantages and disadvantages of how people dress?

Submit

Appendix.- Licenses of resources.

Licenses of Resources used in session 2.- "Rules of etiquette."

| Resource (1) | Resource information (1) | Resource (2) | Re |
|--------------|--|--------------|--|
| | <p>By: Jodi. License: CC by-nc-sa 2.0. From: http://www.flickr.com/photos/squirmelia/4409484132/</p> | | <p>By: DG EMPL. License: CC by-n From: http://www.flickr.c</p> |
| | <p>By: Jay Wood. License: CC by-nc-sa 2.0. From: http://www.flickr.com/photos/jaywood/4247944275/</p> | | <p>By: Dave Gough. License: CC by 2 From: http://www.flickr.c</p> |
| | <p>By: Hubert Burda Media Konzernkommunikation. License: CC by-nc-sa 2.0. From: http://www.flickr.com/photos/bambi2010/4860043078/</p> | | <p>By: Lee Shaver. License: CC by-n From: http://www.flickr.c</p> |
| | <p>By: NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. License: CC by 2.0. From: http://www.flickr.com/photos/gsfsc/4440319873/</p> | | <p>By: Luc Cesca. License: CC by-n From: http://www.flickr.c</p> |
| | <p>By: Iven Zumach. License: CC by-nc-sa 2.0. From: http://www.flickr.com/photos/ivenzumach/3646204844/</p> | | |

