

## Polite Words and Phrases

**PLEASE AND  
THANK YOU**  
ARE STILL MAGIC WORDS

Have you ever known someone who makes you want to become a better person? Typically, that kind of person is polite in all respects, including the way he or she speaks. You will find below a series of references on the acts that define a respectful behavior.

### Polite Phrases

Most people learn the importance of the words "please" and "thank you" at a very early age. As we go through life, we see that better things happen when we don't forget to say them, and people warm up to us more quickly.

### Language Etiquette

Proper etiquette goes way beyond setting a table for a formal dinner and proper use of utensils. It's even more than knowing how to shake hands with someone you've just met. Good manners should be incorporated into every aspect of our life, including what we say during informal times.

### Recommended polite words and phrases

Here are some of the most common words and phrases that anyone who cares about proper etiquette should incorporate into their everyday language:

- Please – It is one of those words that can show good manners or come across as sarcastic, based on the tone we use, so we have to take care of the way we say it. However, any time we ask for something, it's always a good idea to add this word to soften the request.
- You're welcome – When someone says, "Thank you," your instant response should be, "You're welcome," "You're certainly welcome," or some variation that feels comfortable to you. Another way to express the same thought is, "I was happy to do it," or, "My pleasure."
- Thank you – When someone does something nice for you or gives you a gift, you should always say, "Thank you," even if it's not something you like. Not doing so because we are too busy with something else at the moment, even if we don't intend to be rude, gives the impression that we are arrogant and we feel entitled to whatever the gift or gesture was. That can leave a sour taste for the other person and it is possible that in the future, they will not be as eager to help.
- May I – The phrase "may I" puts us on the same side as the person we are speaking to. It gives the other person the feeling that we empathize, without us having to say that. For example, when we say, "May I see that book?" we give the person an opportunity to share what she or he is looking at.
- Excuse me – This is an acknowledgment that we are asking forgiveness for something, even if we didn't bring harm to those around us (for example, leaving the table, coughing, or otherwise disrupting something we are engaged in).
- I'm sorry – When we make a mistake, sometimes it's hard to admit, but the words "I'm sorry" are always the first thing we should say, as a sign of the assumed responsibility for what happened. This way, we are acknowledging our faux pas and stretching out a hand for reestablishing a cooperative relationship.

**Words and phrases to be avoided:**

- No problem – When we are thanked, and we say, "No problem," some people feel uneasy. Even though it's the contemporary way of saying, "You're welcome," it makes no sense in this context. "Thank you" does not state a problem, so "Welcome" is much more appropriate.
- Yep and Nope – These words are rude versions of "yes" and "no", mostly associated with the slang used by the younger generation. When we are at work, the proper words are the classic ones, as a form of respect and inclusion for all the persons surrounding us.
- Curse words – When curse words become part of our daily language, even if they are just by default and not intended to offend those around us, this is exactly the effect we get. People who don't use curse words in their language will feel offended even if they are not the target of those words. It's best to not use any words we wouldn't want our mom or grandmother to hear. If others use inappropriate words, maybe we can set an example for how to speak politely.
- Any words that are derogatory to a specific group, sexist, or racist show a lack of respect for others and are completely forbidden. Most companies today, including the one we are part of, have a strict policy against discrimination.
- Inappropriate language is not the only thing people find offensive: for example, someone might have the habit of involuntarily frowning when responding to another person's greeting. Therefore, we must pay attention to our para-linguistic manifestations.