

Test Your Vocabulary Skills

Polite, Neutral or Rude Language 1

Read the situations below and decide which type of language is most likely to be used – polite, neutral or rude. Compare the different responses and consider why they may or may not be appropriate:

Situation 1 Receiving a certificate from the Dean of your university:

- a) Polite: "Thank you very much."
- b) Neutral: "Thanks. That's great."
- c) Rude: "Thanks for nothing. This place is a dump. I'm so glad I'm leaving. I'll never come back."

Situation 2 Renting a DVD at the video shop:

- a) Polite: "Excuse me, madam. I don't mean to be rude, but I was wondering whether you possibly have "Meet the Parents" available for home rental?"
- b) Neutral: "Hi. Have you got "Meet the Parents"?"
- c) Rude: "Where's "Meet the Parents"?"

Situation 3 At a job interview:

- a) Polite: "I am very interested in the job because I enjoy working in a customer service environment and meeting new people."
- b) Neutral: "I haven't worked for a while, so I'm just looking for something to keep me going really. I don't mind what."
- c) Rude: "Look – are you going to give me the job or not? Because I'm really busy and I don't want to sit around here all day. And open the window! It's so hot in here."

Situation 4 Somebody in another car drives into the back of your car at the traffic lights:

- a) Polite: "Good morning, sir. Lovely day, isn't it? Would you mind awfully removing your four-wheel-drive from the back of my Mini Metro?"
- b) Neutral: "Oh dear. Look at the mess. Oh. I don't know what to do. We'll have to swap insurance details."
- c) Rude: "You stupid idiot! What on earth are you doing? I don't believe it! What were you thinking? For goodness' sake – you went right into the back of me!"

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Answers:

Situation 1

a) Polite: "Thank you very much."

Situation 2

b) Neutral: "Hi. Have you got "Meet the Parents"?"

Situation 3

a) Polite: "I am very interested in the job because I enjoy working in a customer service environment and meeting new people."

Situation 4

b) Neutral or c) Rude – depending on how you choose to handle the situation!

b) Neutral: "Oh dear. Look at the mess. Oh. I don't know what to do. We'll have to swap insurance details."

c) Rude: "You stupid idiot! What on earth are you doing? I don't believe it! What were you thinking? For goodness' sake – you went right into the back of me!"

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