

Test Your Vocabulary Skills

Polite, Neutral or Rude Language 2

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 5 Complaining to your manager about a new work colleague:

- a) Polite: "I just wanted to have a little word with you about one of our more recently employed colleagues, a Mr. Anthony R. Brown. We have found ourselves in something of a disagreement regarding the utilisation of space within our shared working environment."
- b) Neutral: "Can I have a word with you about Anthony? He's started using my desk without asking me first."
- c) Rude: "That new guy has nicked my desk. It's so out of order. I had a go at him about it yesterday. You're the manager – you're supposed to sort these things out, not just stand there gurning like an imbecile."

Situation 6 Asking for a loan at the bank:

- a) Polite: "We'd like to apply for about ten thousand pounds, if that's possible."
- b) Neutral: "We're going to need about ten K, I think."
- c) Rude: "Give us the ten grand or we'll be taking our business somewhere that appreciates us!"

Situation 7 Asking when the next bus is due:

- a) Polite: "I wonder, dear sir, if you could perhaps find your way towards informing me of whether there is a bus due to be arriving where we are now standing, within a suitably short period of time?"
- b) Neutral: "Excuse me, do you know whether there's a bus due soon?"
- c) Rude: "Can you get out of the way? You're blocking the bus timetable, you big fat oaf."

Situation 8 Thanking your grandmother for the expensive birthday present that she has sent you:

- a) Polite: "Thank you so much for the earrings. They are absolutely wonderful. It was so kind of you to think of me. You really shouldn't have, grandma!"
- b) Neutral: "Thanks for the earrings. They're nice."
- c) Rude: "Is that all I'm getting this year? You're so mean – and you're getting worse!"

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Answers:

Situation 5

- b) Neutral: "Can I have a word with you about Anthony? He's started using my desk without asking me first."

Situation 6

- a) Polite: "We'd like to apply for about ten thousand pounds, if that's possible."

Situation 7

- b) Neutral: "Excuse me, do you know whether there's a bus due soon?"

Situation 8

- a) Polite: "Thank you so much for the earrings. They are absolutely wonderful. It was so kind of you to think of me. You really shouldn't have, grandma!"

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