

Test Your Vocabulary Skills

Polite, Neutral or Rude Language 4

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 13 While out shopping someone with a clipboard stops you and asks you to make a donation to their charity:

- a) Polite: "Thank you so much for this marvellous and unprecedented opportunity to give to your charity fund, but unfortunately I am rather late for an incredibly important appointment, so I must now hurry along. Please do forgive me for being unable to spend some moments of quality time speaking with you."
- b) Neutral: "Sorry, I can't stop now. I'm in a bit of a rush."
- c) Rude: "Get out of my way. Can't you see I'm busy? You can stop waving your clipboard at me – I haven't got any money! Why don't you get a proper job anyway?"

Situation 14 Asking a friend if they will spend two days of their holiday helping you to move house:

- a) Polite: "Would you mind possibly helping me to move next week? I'm really sorry about the timing because I know that you're supposed to be on holiday but I would really appreciate it, if that's OK."
- b) Neutral: "Are you around to help me move house next week?"
- c) Rude: "To be honest, you're the last person I would trust to be handling any of my valuable belongings, but I'm completely stuck because absolutely no one else is available. I've tried all my real friends and they're all busy next week, so I'm reduced to asking you. You'd better be free. If not I'll be in a real mess, and then I'll blame you!"

Situation 15 You find out that your partner is having a relationship with someone else:

- a) Polite: "Oh dear, that is rather a shock. Well, I'm sorry that I have evidently been a cause of unhappiness and disappointment to you and hope that you will both be very happy together. Farewell then, darling. I'll see myself out."
- b) Neutral: "Well, how long has it been going on? Yes, I'm a bit stunned. How serious is it?"
- c) Rude: "I knew you were trouble from the moment I set eyes on you! I should never have trusted you in the first place. You can give me back my CDs and my DVDs! And all the stuff I've bought you – including the diamond engagement ring! Now get out of my house. Get out! OUT!"

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Answers:

Situation 13

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

b) Neutral: “Sorry, I can’t stop now. I’m in a bit of a rush.”

c) Rude: “Get out of my way. Can’t you see I’m busy? You can stop waving your clipboard at me – I haven’t got any money! Why don’t you get a proper job anyway?”

Situation 14

a) Polite: “Would you mind possibly helping me to move next week? I’m really sorry about the timing because I know that you’re supposed to be on holiday but I would really appreciate it, if that’s OK.”

Situation 15

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

b) Neutral: “Well, how long has it been going on? Yes, I’m a bit stunned. How serious is it?”

c) Rude: “I knew you were trouble from the moment I set eyes on you! I should never have trusted you in the first place. You can give me back my CDs and my DVDs! And all the stuff I’ve bought you – including the diamond engagement ring! Now get out of my house. Get out! OUT!”

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