

Understanding Politeness: What would you do?

Directions for the teacher:

The following questions may be discussed in small groups or as a whole class. Emphasize that there often isn't one right answer in a given situation. An exchange of ideas is the goal.

Encourage students to state exactly what they would say in each situation. You can also have students write down their responses and then read them aloud anonymously.

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TASK A. SAYING NO.

1. *You've been invited to a beach party. You'd like to go, but you already made plans to see a movie with other friends. What do you do?*



2. *A coworker is inviting you to attend a lecture by a guest speaker. She's really excited about this event. You find most lectures boring. How do you respond?*



3. *A classmate didn't show up as promised for a study session. You agreed to meet and study at the library last night. There was no response to your texts. Now you see your classmate at lunchtime. What do you do?*



TASK B. DIRECT VS. SOFTENED SPEECH.

1. *You believe your teacher has made a mistake on the board. You respect this teacher very much. What do you do?*



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2. A coworker just gave a presentation. It was somewhat informative, but it lacked details and examples. Her delivery was also very flat. In fact, you had trouble paying attention. Now she's asking, "How did I do?" What do you say?

TASK C. TO SPEAK OR NOT TO SPEAK?

1. You're on a date. The server just dropped a bowl of soup and half of it ended up on your pants. What do you do?



2. A houseguest accidentally dropped your alarm clock on the floor and cracked the glass. He must have not realized what happened because you only noticed as you passed the guest room and saw the broken clock on the floor. Right now he's taking a shower. What do you do?

