

How to be polite in English

Special words and phrases

Male teachers at schools are sometimes called 'Sir' rather than Mr X. Female teachers are usually called Ms X, or Mrs X (if they are married).

Examples:

"Excuse me, sir, I've got a question."

"Excuse me, Ms X, I've got a question."

Don't be surprised if an adult person – maybe in a shop – calls you 'dear', 'dearie', 'duck', 'love', 'miss' or 'son'. That's normal. And friendly!

In English, there isn't a polite form for 'you' like the German *Sie*. To show respect, a polite and friendly voice is important. There are important polite phrases too; look at the box on the right.

Look at this bracelet, love.



Oh yes, I love it!

Dos and don'ts

- 'Please' and 'thank you' are the magic words, and you hear them very, very often. So use them when you speak English too!
- Give your seat to an older person on a bus or train.
- Hold doors open for people.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- Don't stare at people.
- Don't point at people.
- Don't bother people with loud conversations on your mobile phone.

Useful phrases

The right phrases for different situations:

When someone gives you something, say "Thank you".

When you ask for something, say "Please".

When you bump into someone, always say "Sorry".

At the beginning of a meal, you can say "Enjoy your meal".

When you want to ask someone a question, start with "Excuse me, ..."

Which rules are the same in Germany?



to bother sb [ˈbɒðə] **jmdn. stören** ○ to bump into sb [bʌmp ˈɪntə] **mit jmdm. zusammenstoßen** ○ to cough [kɑːf] **husten** ○ female [ˈfiːmeɪl] **weiblich** ○ to interrupt [ɪntəˈrʌpt] **unterbrechen** ○ male [meɪl] **männlich** ○ magic words [ˈmædʒɪk ˈwɜːdz] **Zauberworte** ○ married [ˈmæriɪd] **verheiratet** ○ meal [miːl] **Mahlzeit** ○ mobile (phone) [ˈməʊbaɪl; ˌməʊbaɪl ˈfəʊn] **Handy** ○ to point (at) [pɔɪnt.ət] **zeigen auf** ○ to sneeze [sniːz] **niesen**